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A Big Mess

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From: j. carson pulley <jpulley@richmond.edu>
Subject: A Big Mess
Sent: February 20, 2000, 11:48 pm
To: Messenger <messenger@richmond.edu>
Cc: Zinc Design <etownsend@zincdesign.com>

I haven't always been a violent man. However, before I disclose the nature of my condition with the following narrative regarding an actual event in my life, let me first acquaint you with a little about myself. Unlike so many others who become what I am, my childhood was what most would describe as average, even nurturing. I was diagnosed with diabetes at the age of 14, but this did little to influence an alteration in my lifestyle. I always felt a natural aversion to school; however, I was extremely successful. This fact had led many into pressuring my attending a prestigious university upon graduation. I had given into the pressure and enrolled at Columbia University. The social scene there hadn't particularly intrigued me, though I did manage to make plenty of acquaintances. Some I could even have called friends; yet somehow there was always a sense that I didn't quite belong. I attributed this condition to what others perceived as an overly cynical attitude. Those who ever carried on a serious conversation with me often remarked that I displayed an uncanny ability to find fault in just about everything. I can't say that this wasn't true, because it certainly was. I never imagined that the imperfections of a human could evoke a sense of rage. True, I had always desired the complete elimination of anything with less than admirable qualities, but the manifestation of that desire was quite surprising.

It had been an abnormally humid day in late March. I was drinking coffee in my favorite Starbucks just outside my apartment on 104th. Recently, I had begun to spend more and more of my free hours there drinking espresso and reading the Journal. The tables and floor were kept exceptionally clean and I was often able to enjoy relative solitude. Although it was not yet noon, the day had already proven itself quite unsatisfactory. I had cut myself severely just beneath the nose while shaving and the bleeding had taken an inordinate amount of time to stop. I have impeccable shaving skills and such a blunder is particularly rare for me. My Intel and Pfizer stocks had dropped 1 3/5 collectively in the first 30 minutes of trade. I suspected that they were poised to plunge many more points by the day's end. Most infuriating of all was that my dog had presented me with vile, watery excrement in front of the refrigerator. Sammy was a remnant of a failed relationship with a Barnard student. She had always loved dogs, so much that the methods normally used for training them to evacuate their bowls outside were viewed as cruel and unusual. My keeping the dog had been vindictive, a mistake I was beginning to regret.

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While I lamented these events and sipped my coffee, which fortunately tasted exquisite, a grotesquely obese man in a generically tailored suit entered the shop. His mass was overwhelming.

His pants hissed as he shuffled over to the counter. "I want three ice cappuccinos. That heat will wear on you," he said, pawing the counter.

I looked on in disgust. It seemed that the room revolved around the globe-like man. I hated him. He looked over the room, his eyes investigating me. Would my face reveal my contempt? I wasn't concerned it if did.

Sweat trickled down the fat man's face and over his swollen neck. The collar of his shirt served as a reservoir for excess sweat. His minuscule ears pulsed red. "Here is your order, Sir. That will be \$12.35," the boy said. The fat man squeezed a paw into his front pockets to extract loose, crumpled bills. He slid the boy several of the soiled bills. One massive forearm hugged two of the cappuccinos, while with the other he greedily slurped down the third. Frozen cappuccino spilled from the sides of his mouth, mixed with sour sweat, and soaked into his filthy collar.

I felt ill.

I was reminded of my obese aunt who constantly insisted on hugging me, pressing my face into the collection of food and sweat that perpetually covered her, caked deep into the grainy fabric of her clothes. My sphincters tightened as something inside me shattered.

The fat man lumbered over and sat down several tables away. Air passing in and out of his nose whistled sharply. He was contaminating my space. On a mirror across the room appeared my reflection. My dark brown hair was noticeably thinner than it had been several months earlier, and although my blue eyes were bright, they seemed tired and occupied. I smiled at myself;

I finally had a solution for everything - for life and his.

I approached the man. "Mind if I join you?" I said. He raised a thin eyebrow. "No, no. It's nothing like that. I am certainly not one of those homosexuals. Just kind of bored with the complete absence of conversation," I said.

"Sure, I guess. You're lucky I am not a native New Yorker, else I would never talk to some shady character like you. Ho ho ho," he said. I sat down. "So, I am Chad, Chad Connely. I appreciate you letting me join you."

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"No problem at all. Greg Turner. Good to meet you," he said. We shook hands. Mine was swallowed by a moist, doughy mass. I felt, in those brief seconds, as though it weren't only my hand being suffocated, but my whole self, buried beneath heaps of lard. I would need a thorough scrub down.

"You say you aren't a native, eh? Nor am I, at least originally. I am out of Maryland, just north of Baltimore. Yourself?" I said. I looked directly into the blacks of his eyes. Any other part would surely provoke a reaction likely to disclose my intent.

"Yeah, that's right. I hail from Ohio. Right outside Cleveland actually. I moved out here not quite a month ago after my wife and I separated. Back in Cleveland, I was an engineer, but I haven't secured a job here yet."

Darwin would have laughed. Naturally he couldn't have secured a job; such a pathetic human specimen could never compete with the sophisticated. Only the fit survive. Or only the fit should survive. "Sorry to hear about your wife, but New York City is a great place to be a bachelor," I said.

"Actually I am hoping she will have me back, but I would rather not get into that. So how long have you been here, you sound like you have some familiarity with the life around here."

"Yeah, you could say that I suppose. I have been here since my freshman year at Columbia where I majored in business. Now I am a broker for a small firm," I said. I couldn't continue this much longer. Talking to this man was nearly unbearable, but for the plan to succeed I had to be absolutely certain that he would be willing to assist me back to my apartment.

"Columbia, huh. Yeah, I had some friends go there. I attended Brown myself. Graduated '83. It's always nice to meet another Ivy leaguer, even if he does wear a crown. Ho ho ho."

"Yeah, always wonderful to meet someone who can appreciate life in the Ivy. People just never can understand it, you know?" I said. "They think we are just a collection of rich shmucks that buy our way in somehow. My dad was a very small-time attorney, we only had the absolute necessities."

"I know exactly what you mean. I didn't grow up with many luxuries either, but people thought I had. About the best thing I had as a kid was my mother's cooking. She sure could make a fine pot roast..."

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It was incredible. This son of a bitch was talking about food. He was so stereotypical it was laughable.

As his husky voice droned on incessantly about the wonderful things his probably equally fat mother stuffed into his filthy hole, I thought about ways to minimize the mess surely to be made during and following the cleansing. It presented an interesting challenge, and deriving the solution was going to be thrilling. "...her apple pie was even better. Wow," he said, staring off into space, seeming to visualize mounds of food. "I apologize for talking so much about her cooking, but damn if it wasn't good."

"Sure. No problem. I know how a mother's cooking can be. Although my mother was never an extraordinary cook, it was hard not to love her meals."

"And your grandmother's was even better, right. Ho ho ho," he said.

It was time for it to end. I just hoped the first part of my plan was complete. Establishing trust. Now I was ready to lure him into the slaughterhouse.

"Exactly. Well, listen, Greg, it was nice to meet you. I should really be heading out. Maybe we will run into each other again sometime. We can compare more notes on food," I said with a smile.

"I would really like that. Nice to meet you too, Chad."

This was going to have to be performed flawlessly. I hoped that he was as ignorant about the physiology of diabetes as I suspected. If so, I would be feeling much better, much cleaner, soon. I stood up with the remainder of my coffee in hand. I paused and shook my head. I dropped my coffee, spilling it over my pants and blanketing the floor. Taking a small, feeble step, I collapsed. A chair crashed to the floor along with me. Just as I expected the fat man jumped up to help.

"What's wrong?" he panted. "Should I call someone?"

"No, no. I am diabetic. I just need some insulin. My apartment is just across the street, if you could help me get there." His gigantic frame loomed overhead. I felt that at any moment his gut might erupt, cascading its putrid contents over me.

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"Sure. Sure," he said. He was every bit as ignorant as I had suspected. He had no idea that when a diabetic feels faint giving him more insulin could kill, while glucose is really what is needed.

"Is he ok?" the coffee boy asked. "I think I can take care of it. He says he just needs some insulin and that it's in his apartment across the street," said the fat man. He helped me to my feet. This was going to be the most difficult part of the scheme, additional physical contact with this behemoth. He rapped his heavy arm around my back. Initially, all I smelled of him was Old Spice, but I soon detected a distinct pungency. With the odor and the weight of his arm, I felt trapped in a trash compactor. I need clean air.

Space.

Freedom.

We lumbered out into the hot street. As he walked, rolls of gelatinous flesh brushed over my entire frame. I thought of the years I had spent as a child in cotillion. I was forced to dance with Nancy Fisher, the fattest girl in middle school. Quite possibly she was the fattest girl in the entire world. Her white gloves were always covered with brown oily stains and as she pressed her blubbery body to mine, I imagined giant pustules infecting my neck from contact with those revolting gloves. It had been nightmarish.

"It's up there, on the second floor. Room 2356. We should hurry," I said, motioning with my head. "No problem." Sweat pored from his face, leaving streaks. Beads of sweat clung to his first and second chins before dripping onto my shoulder. It was nothing when compared to the gore that would surely cover my clothes shortly.

We took the elevator up. It was terrifying. Every possible angle of his malformed frame was visible simultaneously on the mirrored walls of the elevator. Each angle was multiplied millions of times as they reflected back and forth between the mirrors. I clinched my eyelids shut.

As I unlocked the door, I inventoried all the possible tools I had available in the apartment. There was a nice array of knives that had seen minimal use and were consequently still exceptionally sharp. But knives seemed overly cliché for my first kill. I remembered hunting wild boar with my roommate in Florida over one Spring Break. The beast had squealed violently when my spear pierced its tough hide. Perfect. The spear hung over the couch as a crude decoration.

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Sammy appeared to greet us. His odor preceded him, indicating that he had again defecated some where in the apartment. "Nice dog. I have one just like it. Always so friendly, but it smells like he might have made a little mess" he said.

"Yeah, sure does. It's nothing that can't be cleaned up. Could you just set me down over there on the couch? The insulin is in the refrigerator... hope you don't mind," I said. "Not at all. I am more than happy to help. So, what does it look like exactly?"

"Just a little glass cylinder."

Alone, I quickly detached the long spear from the wall. I couldn't help but break out into a wide grin as I examined the serrated edges of the seven-inch spearhead. It was razor sharp. I crept behind the couch and listened for my approaching prey.

