

Of Alleys & Ivory

by Anton Terrell

The alley below was as good a place to die as any. Staring at the rising sun, the falling moon; the blaring sirens a constant reminder of what must be done. The knowledge that the 78th floor of this skyscraper was indeed his final vantage point began to sink in, it was surprisingly painless. This city had already taken his soul, now he would feed it his body. Perhaps it was his inner-martyr, but he suddenly wanted nothing more than to be the toxic meal that poisoned its bowels and forever halted its insatiable appetite. "impossible" he nearly smiled to himself, "this city's got bowels of steel."

He pushed open the blood spattered door, which called itself PRESIDENT GORDON JEFFERY. The office behind the door was more in shock than anyone. Only ten minutes earlier it had been the ideal environment for paperwork and sexual harassment of secretaries that it had always been. Now it was the sole witness of murder via an old wooden baseball bat; littered with teeth and high-priority corporate policy statements. He approached the dripping desk, on which the fresh corpse of PRESIDENT GORDON JEFFERY took residence. It was Ivory.

The more time he wasted standing in this room, the more reality dissolved the adrenaline pumping through his blood. Headaches and stomach pains had constantly crippled him..ever since childhood. He would not allow them to stop him now. Without thinking he leaned in to grasp that sacred bat, a gift from his grandfather, but it wasn't there. He had left it right there. He remembered the relief of setting it down, walking away watching it stand, leaning exhausted on that damned Ivory desk. But. It. wasn't. (FUCKING!!!). There.

His tranquility was the third death of this early morning, joining the

likes of PRESIDENT GORDON JEFFERY and the security guard who had attempted to apprehend him in the elevator on the 27th floor. Without it he had no control of the situation, his thoughts became his worst enemies, stabbing him at immeasurable speeds. He fell to his knees, squeezing his own head, attempting to pull off his own scalp. There he felt the bat, nearly floating in a sickening puddle, camouflaged by the blood all around it. He picked it up instantly, not at all disgusted by its sticky wetness. "It just fell. It just must have fallen." He attempted to assure himself repeatedly. But what if somebody had knocked it down? What if the job was not complete?

He lifted the red, splintered bat high above his head. This was the only way to put his insecurities to rest, to satisfy the raving lunatic who had so often owned his innermost thoughts. He stared passionately at the Corporate Executive beneath him, now reduced to nothing but an empty suit. Just what he'd always been; An empty suit, working the graveyard shift to yet again avoid his masses of minions and their constant yearning for raises and approval.

The bat crashed down hard for the final time against the back of his corporate skull, but crushed nothing. There was nothing left to crush. Instead there was only a grotesque squishing sound as blood splashed against his sadistic face. The effect was a strange combination that both calmed and sickened him. He held on to the bat, which now bared the cracks of a job well done. The sirens had grown much louder, the building was surrounded.

This was it. Without thinking he grabbed the metal cigarette case from his pocket. He used to be a rabid chain-smoker, but he'd quit cold-turkey exactly 8 months ago. In this dusty case were 3 things: His letter, his lighter and his reward.

He dropped the envelope on PRESIDENT GORDON JEFFERY's back, the only spot he could find that wasn't soaked in blood. It wasn't written to explain, nor was it written to justify. It was written to let

the scumbag's wife and children know what kind of man they had been claiming to love; it was written to feed the city some truth for a change.

He put his reward in his mouth and lit it up; inhaling deeply to the pleasantness of 8 months of cravings finally satisfied. He could hear the blood-filled elevator ring open and he tossed the bat, his instrument of justice, straight through the giant window. It ripped open the glass, and the void it created seemed to spread itself, collapsing the glass like bowling pins. "it really was a sacred goddamn bat"

He took one last drag and truly savored it. Many footsteps were quickly approaching; he had no time to even spit it out. It was time. He bolted toward the remains of the window... such a beautiful view of the hellhole that had been his home for nearly 20 years. He heard them kick in the door behind him.

Passing the window, he envisioned becoming that goddamn cartoon coyote as the ground disappeared from beneath him.

"FREEZE!!" he heard from above, just a mere second after it was completely pointless to say.

The wind pulled his body apart as the alley flew toward him. The cigarette had blown into his throat in those final seconds. It choked him and burned through his vocal chords, but the pain was as fierce as it was instant. He had been correct. The city gladly swallowed him whole, yet it wasn't even 2 seconds later before it was hungry once again. It was always so hungry.

* * *

Two hours and an excessive amount of crime tape later, the cities finest were finishing up their work. The forensic scientists and detectives stood around, drinking coffee and waiting for the

ambulances to bring up their stretchers to remove the bludgeoned bodies from the building. They were all naturally curious about the letter, as everything else was pretty obvious. But of course procedure would not allow them to tamper with it.

“You think it's a self-castrating suicide note or a self-righteous freedom speech?”

“Probably just the ramblings of a madman, pissed he lost a company baseball game.”

“Fuckin-A, Pete! Double-murder suicide for a baseball game? Ain't nobody that crazy.”

Unable to resist this ideal set-up, somebody proceeded to make a joke about their ex. Polite laughter automatically ensued.

Days later the envelope was finally opened, after multiple tests for toxic powders and chemicals. It read:

To whom this may concern,

I wanted to be like everyone else and start this note off with a good old fashioned “GOODBYE CRUEL WORLD!” But I know this world isn't going anywhere. It'll keep spinning as always; taking the constant abuse of humanity until either it or we cease to be. What's the point of saying goodbye to something I never really knew? I, much like you, spent my last 20 years of life being kept in check by this city's smog and blinding lights. Nature is about as real to me as Disneyland. I know it exists, I've even seen it once or twice. Yet I digress, industrialization isn't what brought me to knock the head off of this figurehead.

It isn't simply the fact that he was wealthy either. If everything went my way tonight, you should be quite aware that cash was obviously not my motive. The bastard did owe me, but that's just the beginning

of this dirty laundry list of mine.

I worked for old Gordon up til about a year ago, serving as his mouthpiece to both customers and employees. He never had the balls to confront people face to face to deliver bad news, so it became my job. This was a decent little arrangement, until things started going good for the company. I don't claim to understand this fucked up economy of ours, but somehow being an insurance loan company was apparently very profitable during a recession. All this hard earned money from the unemployed meant less and less bad news for G.J. so he fired me right before tax day. In other words I did not get to pass go. I did not collect my two-hundred dollars, or the other money he legally owed me. I was the one lucky bastard he fired face to face.

My wife, of course, was disappointed. She insisted that she would go talk to him for me, which was humiliating enough. But she was a stubborn woman, and her mind was set. Gordon must have been a more convincing man than I ever was. Maybe it was the money, the office, the power? He was able to convince my wife to suck and fuck him raw in order to convince him to even consider giving me my job back. Oh but it gets much worse.

See Gordon didn't actually give me my job back. Instead he simply sent me a thirty dollar check that said on the back

“GOOD LUCK Mr. Tucker. IT WAS TRULY A PLEASURE TO MEET YOUR WIFE. —GORDON JEFFERY, PRESIDENT”

Naturally I was oblivious. Those words didn't start to even sting until I fully understood the situation. I just thought he was cheapskate, and I went on for the remainder of the month unsuccessfully applying for jobs. I started becoming concerned when my wife was constantly sick in the morning.

For this all to make sense, I guess you have to know that I was

sterilized at a young age in a high school baseball game. My cup was way too tight that year, and slowed down my running. We were too old for cup checks anyway, so one game I just didn't wear it. This proved deadly, as the ball hit me dead center at at least 80 mph. Swear to god! I puked, cried, coughed up a little blood. Went to the doctor, he said "no babies for you." which believe me, came in handy a few times later. But finding out Tiffany was pregnant was not one of those times.

She was catholic, born and raised. She decided to keep it, and I decided I wanted revenge. Not on her, but on PRESIDENT GORDON JEFFERY. So I confronted the bastard. I told him what was what, and he called security immediately. It's not like I could test the guy's dna, in this city money buys the right to refuse that sort of thing. My wife and I never got over our trust issues, and she was out the door a month later.

So 6 months later, my life is still in shambles. I've given this a lot of thought, and I've come to realize I'd rather die than live the remainder of my life as a victim. My grandfather gave me this bat, autographed by Babe Ruth himself, for my 12th birthday. Grandad was a lawyer; he understood how corrupt our system truly is more than anyone. He always said that sometimes justice must be forced instead of served. When I bash in C.E.O. Shitlick here's skull tonight, (and god-forbid the skulls of anyone who might try to stop me from doing so) I'm doing it for Grandad, for Tiffany, and for their daughter he refused to acknowledge.

But when I jump... I'm doing that for me.

Sincerely,

THE MADMAN

