

# Beaten

by Damion Hamilton

I was sitting there drinking with Paul at the bar, and it was a Friday night and I was I was feelin good. I didn't have to go to work in the morning, and I had a few drinks and food in me, and I able to that on da cheap, which felt good. And Paul is one of these funny dudes. I did over a year doing standup, and have never met anyone funnier than him, either on a local or national scene. Perhaps it's because I'm drinkin and he's a hardcore boozier too. But's he is in his early fifties, and looks like Ron Jeremy, and knows it. My boy Paul is a dirty old man, and leaves me crackin up, every time. The more he drinks, the more generous he becomes. He even buys me drinks, because im black and I keep him company and will listen to him, in a mostly black bar. But the place is a hole in the wall. A half as titty bar, with a few dancers, who are always hittin u up for dollars and shit. But Paul sits there and tells me his war stories about the various dancers he's been with, outside of the club. "Well dat one dirl right there, she lit up a crack pipe in my car once, which really turned me the fuck off." I see the girl he's talkin about, and she doesn't look like the stereotypical crack head, but I have learned that a lot don't like crack heads but they are. With a caramel skin, curly afro, long Roman nose and thick body. I could see why Paul fancied her. But she sits down in the bar, and just sucks on her cigarette, in the dark smoky ass room. "Dat guy right there, his name is Phil."

"You mean the white, scrawny, gray haired dude?"

"Yep, that's Phil, Caramel's boyfriend, and sugar daddy. She's with him, because he makes forty dollars an hour doing something in construction. She don't have to dance now. He pays for everything now. Probably buys her crack too."

Working types, mostly come in the after five shift, and typically stay and hang around and mingle with some of the shadier types: drug dealers, gang members, and various types. All there to feel on some asses and tits and maybe put their finger up a girl's hole.

You can get away with it, unless a girl smacks the shit out of him or something. But this isn't the type of place do that in. Cuz everybody knows each other, and you would be drawing unnecessary attention to yourself.

Some of the girls come over, and Paul buys them shots, and keeps doing shots himself. Whenever the girls make their rounds, he takes his attention away. With me, only seeing the back of his receding skull. Which is okay with me, because when I have a bottle up to my lips, I am not truly a lone?

The bar is racially mixed in day. It used to be a biker bar, back in the day. And some of them still come in here doing the day, and they bring a few young ones from various occupations, do to the reputation the bar has. White guys: older and younger wanting to see black trim.

Well, a few construction types come in came in there today, and when I came in--they were five or six deep. Not one of them under 230 pounds. Well, they were actin a fool, and playing and dancing with the mostly black girls. They get to the jukebox and play old country songs, like rebel flag shit.

But by the time eight an o'clock roll around, they start to filter out the place. The place unofficially changes to a mostly black bar after eight. But there are still a few non-black loveable white guys who come in. And everybody likes them.

The lone construction worker doesn't leave--he's been drink heavy, and probably think of the girls really like him, and this is strange and interesting to him, so he just stays at the bar drinking and becoming more belligerent. Yelling and clappin loudly.

But im only mildly aware of him, I'm hangin with Paul. Being a cabbie, he tells me all about all the various bars in the city, when there is not some pussy in his lap, looking at him thru mascara eyes... as we laugh and laugh and laugh. Paul knows what absurd, is and I know what absurd is. We talk about Blackman's--- a nice, clean suburban bar, well lighted, with smoking and non-smoking. We both agree we don't like that bar as much as this one. Paul says, "I've always been attracted to dark sleazy bars, places like this I dunno why? Girls walking around in lingerie giving you hand jobs, he smiles slyly.

He points to a Hispanic chick with a big behind. She is attractive from the waist up with long dyed red hair, with heavy make up. Her Name is New York, which she is Rican and is from NYC. "Would you want to bring her girl like that home to your mother?"

I look at and try to figure out what he's getting at. Her face is heavily painted, her eyes are kinda washed out, and she's dressed kinda of sleazy.

"Your mom would kick your ass, if you brought a girl like that home. She'll say I know I raised you better than that, boy."

He breaks out into drunken laughter. "Damn man, she even spent the night with me!" She says as if disgusted even with himself. "You believe that?"

I focus on him, and the night bartender out of the corner of my eyes is stomping out cockroaches with her feet. A blond with a long Indian like nose. She is high strung, and I don't know if she's normally that way, or if it's the cocaine, she's rumored to be taking. Well the things freak her out, and sometimes when things are slow, I will help kill the roaches with her. It's wrong, but her phobia makes me laugh. I think she's kinda hot, but Paul doesn't pay her any mind. He likes black girls mostly, and melts like ice cream in your palm on a hot humid day for them.

But the girl keeps looking down on the dirty sticky bar floor at the things, stomping them out with her heels. Her hand is visibly shaken as she lights up another cigarette. The cigarette smoke is bad, and you are crammed into the place like sardines in a can. And the smoke gets into your clothes and your skin: Marlboros and Newport's forever aroma. Paul will glance away from me to the bartender's legs. She's wearing a short skirt, and has short nice muscular legs.

The construction dude has made his up to the brass rail, and staggers as he walks. He's gotten himself drunk. And I have seen quite a few girls get guys drunk in the bar, and clear out their wallets. They smile and laugh coyly, and get their money. He's grabbing on their breasts and asses--which he is not supposed to do. But he doesn't know the Missouri strip club laws, he's probably been the Illinois side, a few times--they have different laws over there.

The bouncer dude, which is a chick, is telling him not to grab on the girls. But the guy is too inebriated to understand what the bouncer is saying.

It's nothing but the scent of perfume and cigarettes being wafted in the place. I'm highly conscious of a lot of shit that goes on around me, while Paul is telling me his stories I have heard a few times before. But the stories still sound good to me, so I listen. But I'm half staring at the first shift bartender, who is crying, about something her ol man did--which I have heard a hundred times before. I wonder why she doesn't just get rid of the dude. And Paul is telling me that. "A woman can really ruin a man." I know what he means.

The bouncer grabs the construction dude by the arm and tells him, "He can't do that." Dude pushes the bouncer very hard in a clumsy kinda way. The bouncer almost falls on the barstool. She picks up an empty bottle of Budweiser, and cracks the dude over the head from the backside. The R& B and rap songs are still being played from the jukebox. As the construction dude staggers. The Crowd notices the swirmish, and start to swarm in on the Construction dude. Something is not right, and the girl on the stage is talking loudly. Jim finally wakes up from his story, and sees what's going on... The bar is family, and they see that the bouncer, "Blue" has been hit. They swarm on the Construction White dude. Who doesn't have a chance. The music is still playing. But no body is thinking about trickin or dancing. Just get the Construction dude outta here. Arms, legs, and fists are moving cracking against the drunken dudes skull and bones of every part in his body. Things are getting ugly quick. The dude's heavy body is being dragged. The bouncer has the lost control. The bartender has awakened from a her cock roach induced night dream. Something bad, is going to

happen and I know this. And think it is crazy. Paul just stares blank faced, and the bartender has an open mouth, and a look of TERROR.

At that point, the big dude is being pulled and dragged. One of the bartenders shriek, less than half the bar, is pounding the dude, while most of us are in shock, and try to figure out an exit plan. I look at the day bartender, and she is clearly sobbing now, with her mouth agape. A man, in dark jeans is kicking the man on the ground. A few arms from the mob, is dragging the man out of the bar. Someone has kicked open the backdoor, a few feet away.

They are taking the man outside. Blood is coming from his face. Should we stop the mob or not? Can we stop the mob?

The day bartender goes out the door, and I follow her, along with a few other people.

I have been around mob scenes like this a few times, and I mostly an observer. That is the case, with just about any mob. Most people are observers, while most of the bold ones are doing the acts.

Construction dude is holding his hands up now, "as if to say no more." But the crowd is not having it. A few people say he has had enough, but it seems too late. The damage has been done.

He keeps trying to get to his feet. He gets up leaning against a wall, and a fast dude comes up and just starts wailing away on him. There's blood on the concrete and blood on the walls. Blood is squirting from him, which I have never seen before.

Many people have left by now. This has been going on forever, it seems. And I began to think about POLICE. So I know there are other people there, who are thinking about what the law will do. "Take his shit," somebody says.

By now, the dude is lying down on the ground and he doesn't even look like he is alive. Just very still, like. And I think this scares some of the people who were beating on him, because they start to back away from him and leave. A couple of guys turn him over and check his pockets.

They find a wallet, grab it, and back away from the man and the crowd.

I go back inside, and the night bartender has called the police. There's only a couple of people in there, and they appear to be leaving. She's wearing a frightened look on her face---as if she has just witnessed the most horrible thing in her life.

Back outside, everyone has left, except the day bartender, who is drunk and crying holding the man. The man's face has swollen horribly, and his face covered in red like water, but its blood. Blood that is a bright red like death. Blood that is a bright red like violence. Blood that is the color of shock. Blood that is the definition of FEAR itself.

The man is still breathing, for now. The police sirens can be heard in the background of the night, and they appear to be getting closer.

