

(Excerpt from ‘Stains on The Gavel’ – Charles W. Massie)

The environment in the prison cell was somewhat controlled, but with an undercurrent of violence. Most everyone here was incarcerated because of some overt act against society. There were many who had been convicted of drug related offenses; like myself.

But I was a puppy compared to some of these other guys. Meth, Heroin and Cocaine dealers were the three biggest group of traffickers. But there were a lot of murderers and 1st degree assault cases too. Probably 50% of the assault offenders were gang related and 99% of them were members of the African American community.

These were not what you would call Blacks. These were dyed in the wool Niggers. I felt lucky that the guard controlled the TV selections because without this control, we would all be watching RAP videos or BET channel. And the bro’s stuck together too. Sometimes it was quite humorous to see one end of the cell all black and the whites at the other end.

One individual, Reggie, was a particularly bad ‘gangsta’. He was loud-mouthed and rude, and prone to bragging about bringing ‘whitey’ down. You could tell he hated whites. He wasn’t especially big for a Nigger, but he definitely had a big mouth. And he was the ring leader in his group of compatriots. Even though he was always spouting off about something, I thought it best to just avoid him. On one particular night, he decided to confront me.

“Hey Old Man,” he said, “What the fuck are you in fo ... molesting granny?”

“Nothing so cool, my man,” I answered, trying to inject some humor. “They got me for taking too much time Jaywalking.”

“Oh,” he continued, “you a funny dude. Ahs only joking about molesting anyone cause’ I don’t think you could get it up.”

I ignored his bullshit and went back to my reading. I could hear them talking about me in the distance but I wasn’t about to get involved. Maybe they would just go away.

“Hey Old Man,” Reggie continued, “don’t you ignore me when I talkin’ to you.”

I thought about giving a smart-ass answer but then reconsidered. The last thing I needed was to rile some arrogant prick up ... in prison. I just continued to ignore him. His grumbling continued but I couldn’t tell what was being said ... and I pretty much didn’t care.

Later that night, I decided to take a shower. The shower facility was at the very end of the cell and it consisted of an enclosed area with three shower heads, offset from the section with the sinks and toilets. I had been keeping an eye on things, since sometimes there was a waiting line to get in, but now it looked like most everybody had showered and was back at their bunks. I grabbed my towel, soap, razor and the rest of my toiletries and headed for the open spaces.

I had no more gotten into the stall and got lathered up when Reggie popped his head in my stall and asked if I would like some company.

“Get your black ass out of here,” I said, with a bit of shock. I couldn’t believe he was being so forward.

“Ah thought you might like a little bit of ma licorice stick,” Reggie taunted.

It was apparent that Reggie was indeed looking for a bit of trouble and I happened to be the target. I turned my back to him and casually slipped the bar of soap into a waiting soap dish mounted on the wall. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Reggie start moving into my stall. I knew that this meant trouble.

Without any hesitation at all I turned around, dropped to one knee and came up with a solid fist; *right square into Reggie's balls*. The move caught him by surprise and before he could even cry out with obvious pain, I grabbed hold of his head with my left arm, and slammed him face-first into the faucets mounted on the wall.

Blood spurted from his mouth and nose and two of his teeth, one white and one gold capped were laying on the shower floor. His eyes had a dazed, wandering look as I knocked him down to a prone position and stomped on his head three times. Just for extra measure, I kicked him in the balls and rapidly dashed out of the shower.

I wrapped my towel around me and left the shower. I didn't even bother to try to dry off because I just wanted to get out of there. As I came into the cell area, three of Reggie's buddies were standing there, looking like they had seen a ghost.

"If any of you other fucking Niggers want to play games with me," I said, "I hope you have the hospital on speed dial."

Nothing was said as I passed them by and returned to my bunk. I arrived without any further molestation and dried myself off. My bunkmate Fred was there and he noticed a spot of blood on my shoulder.

"What the fuck happened man?" he asked.

"I had to deal with that smart-ass Reggie in the shower." I told him. "He was looking to find a hiding place for his licorice stick and I stuck it in his ass."

Fred cracked up and gave me a high-five.

"Well you old bastard," he said. "I didn't know you could fight."

"Freddy," I replied, "I thought it best not to advertise. Besides, he came on to me first. Just take a look at the bro's back there helping their 'fearless leader' Reggie. As I said that, one of Reggie's buddies came running up to the front cell doorway and pounding on the door. When the guard answered, he told him that he needed a medic for his friend.

"You know," Fred said, "that you are probably in the shit now. Fighting is a no-no in the cell."

"There was no fight," I said. "Did you see a fight? I didn't see a fight."

Fred smiled and gave me another high-five.

THE FULL VERSION OF 'STAINS ON THE GAVEL' IS AVAILABLE AT WWW.STARSHOWPUBLICATIONS.COM