

Embryo Gangster

In our one room apartment, which included a kitchen, living room and a bedroom, I learned to crawl early. Mom said that I was always banging the pots and pans that they kept in a box. One day, as my dad slept across the bed, I crawled onto the open window ledge. In doing so, I knocked over a flowerpot that went crashing to the sidewalk, which in turn woke my dad up. He snatched me up quickly. After that situation, he and mom decided to send me back to Alabama until they had gotten better settled.

The train smoked and made all sorts of noises as it approached the station in Montgomery, Alabama. Awaiting our arrival was my mom's 5 brothers and her 5 sisters, along with Jon and Willie Mae Canty. For the next two and a half years, I thought that my grandparents were my real dad and mom. The nights there, I recall, were filled with weird sounds from the field across the road. In the daytime, there were hogs and chickens in the backyard as well.

One day, loving to climb, I climbed upon the ledge of a well, which we had out back, to view my reflection and John C. silently came along and snatched me up without speaking a word. That ended my Alabama upbringing and now my mom was on the next train to get her baby son.

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From the Guttermost to the Uttermost

by Ron Larry

You can buy the book at www.RonLarry.com

Hooked

Trying to function with a semblance of normality, neither I nor Solomon could keep up with our habits with the nine-five job. When we were not working we were robbing John's, homo's, and stray prostitutes. Solomon was so tall that he soon got tabbed not only by the cops, but by the boys on the streets too. It was just a miracle that we didn't get blown away by some gang member or some pimps. We were bold as lions, but we stayed too high to watch our backs, night and day. Everyone knew that we carried guns or had them stashed nearby where we could quickly get our hands on them. We had magnets that held them firm under the hood. ...

Mentally, I was hooked because all I thought about was getting money to get high. Physically, I was hooked because my body cried out with every fiber of my being for dope. Also, spiritually, I worshipped drugs, they were my god. My whole existence revolved around getting high from the very depths of my being. I was "hooked up" down and around, caught up in a web that was seemingly inescapable.

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Addicted

I had told Deb that I was going to get some smokes and here I was being booked for burglary. I sure enough needed a shot, or drink of something now as my head began to ring like a bell. I called Deb the next day after I was arraigned, “You’re where?” she yelled, “Why, you were supposed to be going to get cigarettes—what am I going to do now?” she cried.

I had a high bail, a probation hold, a new charge and one of the strictest judges in town, and this time around the system had my full record and sheet. For two nights I yelled and kicked and moaned as I withdrew from a multiple of drugs and alcohol. For years, I had been cross-addicted and it seemed like I was dying from drug withdrawal. My hands were swollen like boxing gloves and my arms resembled a pin cushion where I had tried to pop without any luck.

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Redemption

The officials were shipping inmates out of the O.P. like 90 going north. Unfortunately, we were the last group of cons to leave the prehistoric house of cruelty. We marched past the gas chambers on our way to our bus as it sat silent with many hidden stories of execution. The wooden chair with its leather straps, looked like a rapacious animal, waiting to pounce on its prey any minute. It seemed rather eerie and uncanny to know that men's lives had been snuffed out at the drop of a capsule or two.

Many of us, the vast majority, were taken to Mansfield, Ohio, to the Mansfield Reformatory as a temporary holding place. We'd be reclassified there to our more or less permanent housing facilities. But, Mansfield was antiquated also and quite dilapidated. However, we were only fed there, but housed in a newer sector, which is now the Richland Correctional Facility. I had heard that Mansfield is where the film "Shaw-Shank Redemption" was filmed. It did resemble the yard scene somewhat.

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