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As I lay there in excruciating agony caused by the severe infection that had resulted from my untreated burns, I tried very hard not to cry. My salted tears only exacerbated the wounds on the left side of my face. The pain was crippling; it paralyzed me. My wounds bled profusely and oozed pus incessantly. My sheet and blanket were ruined—stained with the essence of my tortured being. I wondered how much more that my body could bear before it yielded. Unconsciousness would be my only source of relief; I prayed for it.

Early one morning while I was singing Chinese Friendship songs a short asian offender appeared in front of my cell. He was wearing black basketball shorts and he did not have on a shirt. The majority offender populace had gone to the gymnasium for recreation—I never went. That was my time to relax and enjoy peace of mind. I assumed that the asian offender was at the wrong cell until he spoke.

"WUZ your name?"

"Why?"

"CUZ I want to know."

"Why?"

"CUZ..."

"Thanks, but no thanks. I don't want any friends—I'm good in that department. Would you mind leaving now?"



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"My name Thin."

"I didn't ask!"

"Your smart ass mouth makin' my dick hard."

"Well then I pity you because your lack of a bulge indicates that you're not very well endowed."

"What?"

"You have a tiny dick."

"My dick ain't small!"

Thin flashed his penis which was not too much bigger than a baby carrot. I threw my head back and burst into uncontrollable, boisterous laughter. I refocused my gaze upon Thin.

"That Has Got To Be The Smallest Dick That I Have Ever Seen In My Whole Life — Get da Fuck outta here asian Marky Mark!" I began laughing again as Thin walked away.

I entered Dr. Bolding's office and sat down. I was required to meet with her once per week for three months, then once per month for three months. It was a mandatory condition — and really some bull — subsequent to my return from New Castle Prison's psychiatric unit. We were having our last session, but I was not ready for



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the big finale, though.

"It has been brought to my attention that you have a crush on someone. Don't you have some stalking charges?"

"With all due respect, you have an advanced degree in behavioral science—perhaps you should stick with that. Might I inquire where you heard that ridiculous accusation?"

"I can't tell you that."

"You just did. Listen ma'am—I have complied with all I.D.O.C. policies, since my return here. I am a volunteer suicide companion and I am being trained by your superior—Dr. Perry—to be a mentor. Has he raised any issues with you about my conduct?"

"Of course not!"

"Has any I.D.O.C. employee at this facility reported to you at any time since my return here that I have failed to follow their direct orders?"

"No...Not at all."

"Then please dismiss the gossip of jealous offenders—to even consider their defamation of my character is unbecoming. Soy contains an estrogen mimicking hormone."

"They do gossip like little girls, don't they?"

Dr. Bolding and I laughed in unison.



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"I'm releasing you from mental health Mr. Cherry - Take care of yourself."

"Thank you - You too ma'am!"  
I departed for H-Cellhouse.

D-Boy and I chatted on the walk back from lunch that twenty-first day of October 2017; It was a Saturday. Even though D-Boy was a white supremacist, I tutored him so that he could acquire his GED before his release. As we drew close to H-Cellhouse, I noticed that B-side's offenders were loitering in front of the building. That was not unusual, however, the fact that there were no officers outside monitoring offender movement was strange. Suddenly as D-Boy and I walked up the stairs - mixed in with A-side's other 133 offenders - I felt a searing pain. A scalding hot chemical mixture had been poured onto my head by offender Thin Lam. Adrenaline kicked in along with my animal instinct - fight or flight - and I swung both my fists with all my might, but was impeded by the railing after Thin struck back. I stormed through the crowd down A-side's steps and blew up B-side's steps ready to engage my enemy. Thin ran into B-side and secured its front door just as I reached it. The loud click of that metal door



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snapped me out of my bestial state.

I headed toward my cell once I entered A-side. Adrenaline had begun to wear off and the pain was becoming more and more unbearable. Sergeant Wiley stopped me on my way.

"What is that shit all over you Cherry? What happened to you?"

"You'd know if you were outside doing your job you fucking Nazi."

I rolled my eyes passionately then went to my cell and tried to rest. I woke up less than thirty minutes later to find that my head was leaking blood mingled with Pus; My sheet and blanket were saturated. I leapt to my feet and rushed over to the mirror—I was horrified by what I saw. The left side of my face was peeling—I was a freak—hideous—I was a monster. I ran to the door and began yelling frantically for Sergeant Wiley. When he arrived, Sergeant Wiley radioed the yard crew. They came at once and transported me to medical.

The medical staff in Pendleton's Infirmary were always cruel, unethical, and unprofessional, but the ones who worked on the weekend epitomized unconstitutionality. When I arrived there—escorted in handcuffs—medical staff did not assess or treat me—They began an intake form for solitary



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Confinement.

"Why in the hell am I not being treated?"

"We were told that you are going to lock-up."

"I need to go to the hospital."

"Only the doctor can authorize us to send you there."

"Then call that goddamn veterinarian!"

The yard crew supervisor — Sergeant Lunsford — interrupted.

"Lieutenant Collins pulled rank. You are being placed under investigation."

"For what? Looking like Two-Face?"

"No. None of us are writing you up — you are not in trouble — we watched the video several times. You didn't do shit jwe are just following policy."

"Oh, now everyone is adherent to I.D.O.C. policies — How lovely."

"Offender Lam is going to lock-up too."

"Marvelous! I just have one itty-bitty question... What does policy say about cover-ups?"

I was taken to R-Cellhouse without having received medical care.

I could hear the chaos — banging, screaming, cursing — that was coming from R-Cellhouse as Officer Spangler and I entered the side door; It was my version of hell. The



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rancid smell of unwashed asses filled my nose as Officer Spangler and I ascended the stairs and only got worse as we neared the top. Fecal matter and urine covered R-cellhouse's walls and bars from the innumerable times that offenders housed there had assaulted staff and each other with bodily waste. My stomach churned at the sight of it all especially my new abode - cell ten on range four. The steel toilet was caked - inside and out - with dried feces, the pungent smell of urine burned my nostrils, and the sight of the rusty bed frame was revolting. I felt Pukey, but there was no way in hell that I was going to put my face in that bowl. Instead, I did what any delicate boy would have done in that same situation; I balled up into a fetal position on the floor and cried for my mama.

When I was taken to see Dr. Paul Talbot - two days later - I was at the point of no return. The severe infection's pain had driven me insane with misery and I was looking for company. Dr. Talbot did not even look up at me when I entered his office or when I sat down directly in front of him.

"What brings you here today?"

I closed my eyes and wished that he would go back to Africa or Jamaica or wherever the hell he was from - I reopened them.



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"I'm here because I heard that you are giving a lecture on quantum thermodynamics."

Dr. Talbot's eyes grew large as he looked up at me.

"What the Fuck... Why the hell wasn't this young man treated?"

No one answered. Dr. Talbot stood up and began to examine me.

"This young man has an acute infection!"

"I assume by your reaction that you will be contacting St. Vincent's at once and having the chauffeur bring the car around?"

"No, No, No. We can take care of you here."

Dr. Talbot began barking orders for various medications.

I received an antibiotic shot in my right buttock, a packet of antibiotic pills, burn cream in a specimen cup, and pain pills that were about as effective as Flintstone multi-vitamins would have been.

By the time that I was taken to Internal Affairs, the infection had begun to subside diminishing my suffering in the process. Pendleton's Internal Affairs Office was located in R-cellhouse - Downstairs. Once I was seated, Investigator Duncan hit the button of his camcorder and began questioning me.

"Who attacked you?"



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"You tell me. You're the one who has the video—Not me!"

"I haven't watched it yet!"

"Then your guess is as good as mine!"

"Do you owe any debts?"

"Why would I? Check my account balance.—My finances are in order."

"Are you paying protection?"

"I'm 6'2"—230 lbs—Do I look like I need protection?"

"But you are gay, right?"

"So was the greatest conqueror that this world has ever seen—Alexander the Great."

"Well I saw Argans all around when you were attacked—You think they were involved?"

I had caught Investigator Duncan in a lie—He had watched the video.

"With all due respect, in this fantasy world you're living in you are more likely to find out that I am the bastard son of Donald Trump before you ever found out that White Supremacists hired a gook to kill a faggot nigger!"

Duncan shut off the camcorder and took me back



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After Investigator Duncan had secured me in my cell, I inquired of him.

"When will I be sent back into general population?"

"After we interview the person who allegedly assaulted you?"

"Come again?"

"We have to interview Offender Lam to determine whether or not he is guilty."

"You're joking, right? You have a video recording of him maliciously attacking me. That evidence is impartial, unbiased and therefore absolute. Moreover, clearing me cannot be decided by what he says - I did nothing wrong."

"That's my job."

"No... your job is to investigate internal corruption, but you are corrupt yourself - This is beneath me."

I gave a twirl and sashayed away.