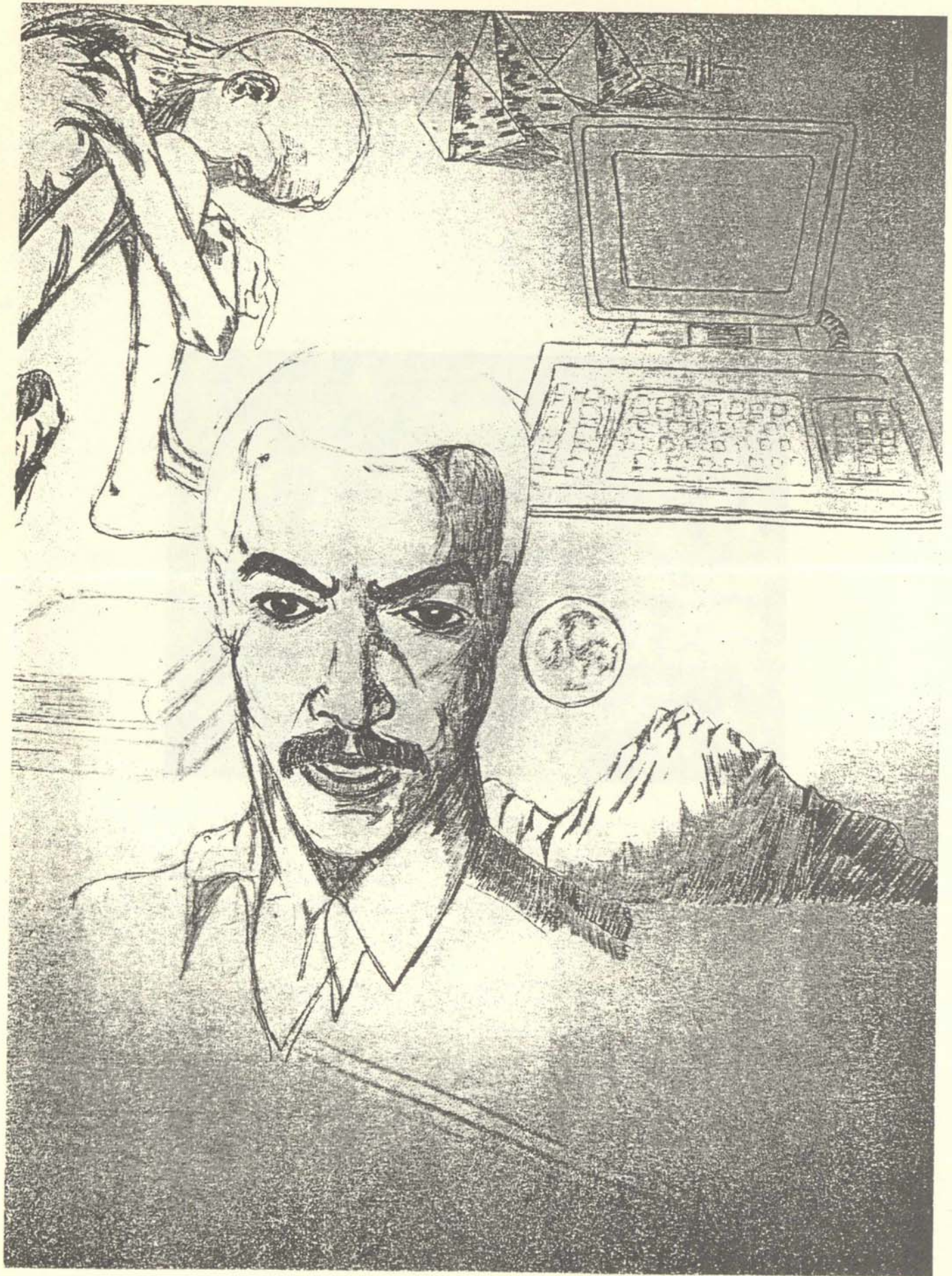


## The Creative Impulse

“The world is owned by men who cross bridges on their imaginations miles and miles in advance of the procession.”

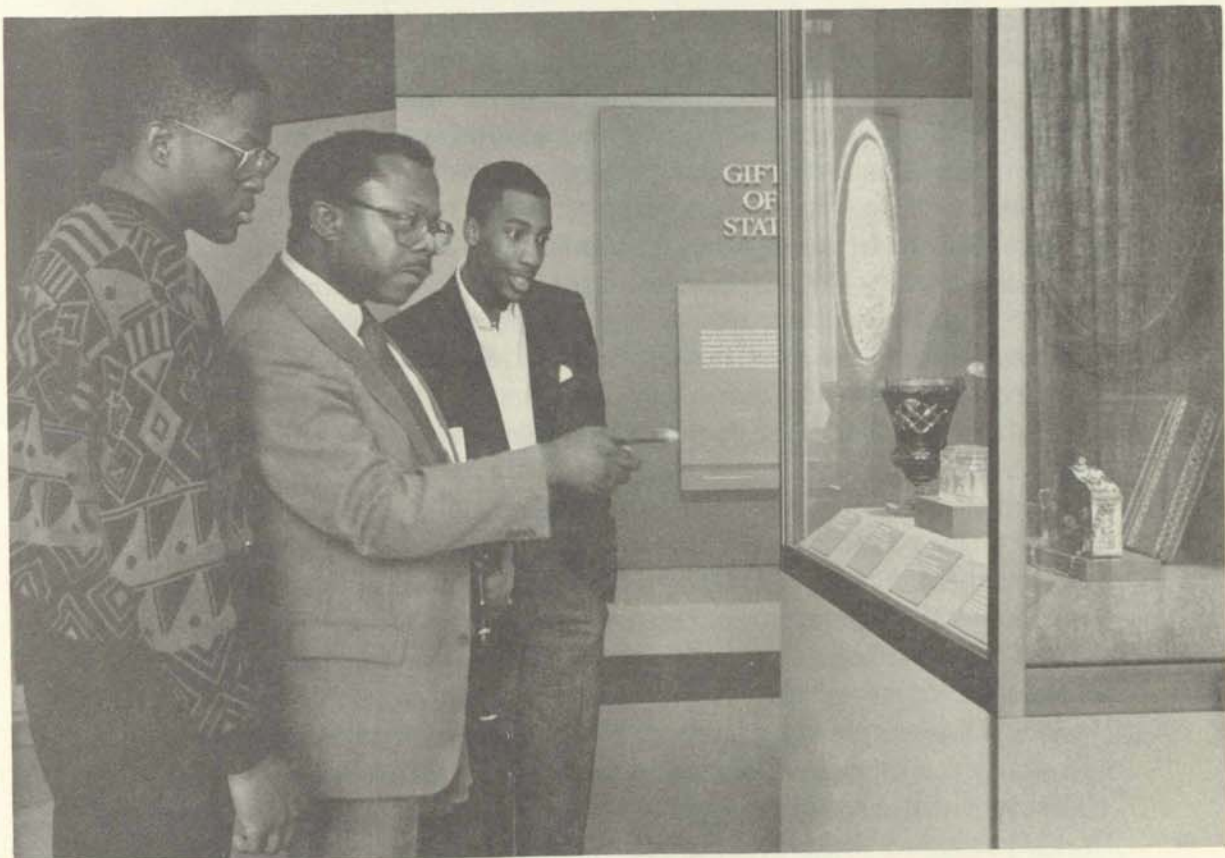
— Bruce Barton





# Uncle Walter's Pharon

In 1962, we believe that our country should be proud to have a museum that is dedicated to the history of the Negro people. It is a place where we can learn about our past and our future. It is a place where we can find inspiration and courage. It is a place where we can find the strength to overcome our challenges. It is a place where we can find the love and support of our community. It is a place where we can find the hope and faith that we need to move forward. It is a place where we can find the peace and harmony that we deserve. It is a place where we can find the joy and happiness that we need to live our lives to the fullest. It is a place where we can find the meaning and purpose that we need to make a difference in the world. It is a place where we can find the love and support of our community. It is a place where we can find the hope and faith that we need to move forward. It is a place where we can find the peace and harmony that we deserve. It is a place where we can find the joy and happiness that we need to live our lives to the fullest. It is a place where we can find the meaning and purpose that we need to make a difference in the world.



The man on the left is looking at the display case. The man in the center is pointing at a framed document. The man on the right is looking at the display case. The display case contains various artifacts, including a large vase and a framed document. A sign on the wall reads "GIFT OF STATE".

—Doris Jones

## Uncle Walter's Prison

In America, we believe that only captured criminals are prisoners, those who are kept in maximum security institutions. However, a prison does not always consist of iron bars and cold rigid cells. Most prisoners in our society reside in invisible prisons, which they have created and from which there is neither parole nor escape. My Uncle Walter was one such prisoner. He had created his own jail and eventually died because of it. For, my Uncle Walter was an alcoholic.

Uncle Walter broke ground for his prison during his tenure in the army. As a soldier, he began to drink heavily, participating in numerous drinking sprees with his companions. After he was honorably discharged from the army, he laid the foundation for his prison as he continued to drink. He became what is generally referred to as a "social drinker," as he would indulge in an occasional drink during the week and faithfully engage in the weekend ritual of beer and football.

As the years crept by, Uncle Walter's occasional drink during the week became a customary drink after a day of work. The weekend ritual of beer and football became two days of constant inebriation. Any activity at his home always involved drinking, and his refrigerator was never void of alcoholic beverages. At this point, the walls of his prison were beginning to form.

As his alcoholism progressed, Uncle Walter's daily pleasure evolved into a constant craving. Every free moment not spent working or sleeping was spent drinking. His daily after-work routine consisted of first stopping by the store to buy a couple of beers, even though there was plenty of beer at home. He would drink the beers he purchased; then he would continue to drink until he passed out.

Uncle Walter's prison was now complete. He became more and more like the typical prisoner—isolated, depressed, and broken in spirit. His character changed drastically, for he was not the open and jovial person that he once was. He had lost touch with his loved ones, especially his wife, who separated from and eventually divorced him. His body became stooped and emaciated as age, heartbreak, and especially alcohol took their toll. Appearing always to be fatigued, as if a two-ton weight were tied to his neck, Uncle Walter was a prisoner, stripped of all pride and trapped in a bottle-shaped cell.

Uncle Walter died due to a diseased liver brought on by his life-long consumption of alcohol. At his funeral, we cried not only tears of sadness, but also tears of pity. He had died alone, trapped, unable to extricate himself from the prison that he himself had created. Death was his only escape.

—Derrick Butler

## A Ghostly Occurrence: Believe It Or Not

As captain of a sea-going vessel, I have encountered and conquered numerous perils and dangers of the sea. Though I would like to credit my sea-faring success to the courage and bravery of my crew and me, some incidents can only be explained as good fortune, with perhaps a little assistance from the unknown.

My ship, the **Midnight Glory**, was unique, for she was a compact luxury liner that retained all the good qualities of a large cruise ship. She had four comfortable decks, two of which contained luxurious passenger cabins. The uppermost deck housed the bridge, which contained the most sophisticated and the most efficient instruments available. The lowermost deck housed our exquisite gourmet restaurant (which was always alive with tempting aromas), a cozy ballroom, a casino and bar, and a number of other entertainment facilities.

The **Midnight Glory** was as magnificent on the outside as it was splendid on the inside. Her smooth, sleek, yet powerful, hull was strikingly handsome as it glinted in the noonday sun or caught the flirtatious wink of dancing moonbeams. As she sailed, she became an extension of the sea, in shimmery silver brilliance, swaying with the waves and moving harmoniously with the mild turbulence of the murky waters.

After we had been out to sea for several hours, night fell and the full moon shone in all of its glory. The night air was crisp, clean and fresh, as I took in a deep breath and blew it out. My nerves tingled, for I could taste the danger the sea air carried.

Shortly after nightfall, a huge blanket of fog began to creep in upon us--silently, ominously, like a hungry predator stalking his prey. I could barely see my hand in front of my face. We decreased our speed only a few knots, confident that our state-of-the-art equipment would navigate us through the fog. Checking the radar screen, I discovered that there was another ship within miles. Using sonar, I perceived that there were no land masses nearby. We had smooth sailing ahead.

The **Midnight Glory** sliced through the fog swiftly and silently. Suddenly, a fog horn sounded close by, very close by. It sounded again, this time even closer. There was not supposed to be another ship within miles of us! I checked my equipment, and there on the radar screen as plain as day was another ship! My sonar equipment was also picking it up; the other ship was huge, almost three times larger than the **Midnight Glory**, and it was headed straight for us. Its crew obviously had not seen us.

I blew our foghorn, more a sign of our impending doom than a warning, for we certainly could not stop in time to avoid disaster. I was stricken with panic, knowing that hidden in the fog was a menacing danger.

Suddenly, I felt a powerful jolt, strong enough to knock me off my feet. By this time, I was almost unconscious. I could have sworn that the **Midnight Glory** had risen out of the water and rotated one hundred and eighty degrees!

When I awakened, I was startled with the knowledge that the **Midnight Glory** was docked in the harbor that we had left just twenty-four hours ago. There she sat, shining in the sun as if nothing had happened! Upon further inspection, I discovered that she was in perfect condition, as if nothing had happened. Now, I was beginning to question my sanity. No one else, passengers or crew, remembered the incident. They were all asleep. There were no witnesses and no evidence, except for me.

On a hunch, I went back to the ship and took a look at the sonar equipment. The printout on the "mystery" ship was there exactly as I remembered it. I read the figures. There was something that seemed familiar. When I compared these measurements with those of another ship, they matched exactly. That ship was the **Titanic**!

We had been sailing precisely the same route that the **Titanic** had taken on her tragic maiden voyage decades ago. I never sailed those waters again.

— Gregory Allen

## **Bleak Memories of the Past**

Growing up in the Southern town of Warrenton deep in the Black Belt of Georgia, one realizes the horrid past that Blacks once lived. The hate and prejudice survive in the hearts of men and in the structures which dot this desolate community. Subtle reminders of the past which enslaved our minds and bodies still rear their ugly heads as an apathetic majority struggles to make ends meet with a second rate education.

Though the year is 1986, a sole 1930's movie theatre stands before the statue of a confederate general, Joseph Warren. Two distinct doors can be seen on the facade of this building. One leading to the air-conditioned, padded-seated section where there is plenty of light and spacious seating. The other, a narrow, coarse, unpainted door, leads to a narrow stairway which is the only exit of a gloomy, pine-benched, balcony section which seats less than fifty people and surrounds the noisy projection room. Although the Civil Rights Act has prohibited segregation, the traditional southern values send the Blacks to the balcony and the Whites to the floor section.

Across from the theatre and beyond the statue rises the dominant courthouse with large white columns, shuttered windows and grand balconies. Housed within this building are the political heads of the majority-Black community. Every office is governed by the minority. The insecurity and illiteracy within the Black community lead to the election of White officials. As a result, the Black school system receives little if any support from the city government.



As one strolls across the street from the courthouse and down the once segregated wooden-planked sidewalk, a restaurant appears with broad screened doors and large rocking chairs. Only a few Blacks have patronized this business through the front door for the sacred Southern back door still swings free for Blacks as they do on all the remaining businesses in Warrenton.

Just outside the city limits there is a grave reminder of the significant impact that integration had on this small community. From the tree-ridden countryside rises a single story brick building appearing out of place surrounded by a comfortable football stadium, an air-conditioned modern gymnasium, a first rate baseball field accompanied by a vast playground. A visitor would ask why would anyone build a school in the middle of a wilderness when the city is a few miles away, unaware that this is not the public school system which is 90 percent Black, troubled by lack of funding, and disrupted by the letters KKK which appear on her face, but the \$1,561-a-year private White school which was hastily organized on the eve of court-ordered desegregation.

Warrenton, it seems, has not changed since the Civil War freed slaves. She remains standing as a glowing coal slow falling victim to the cold Southern environment which has served as a ball and chain around the legs of Black people.

— Lewis Roberts, Jr.

## Allein Bruder

There he lay in eternal sleep, the long lost friend I thought I would never see again. My throat swelled with a mellow agony of intense sorrow. As a salty tear rolled down upon my trembling lips, nostalgic memories of our past arose in my mind like a dream.

It seems ironic now that Allein, a second generation German, and I became best friends in our small rural high school. I was a young black teenager who was discriminated against in both school and community. He was ambitious and hopeful, full of notions of the American Dream of happiness and success (although his idealism often led to disappointment). He would therefore look to me for practicality, and I to him for inspiration. And, while I lived barely above the poverty line, his lifestyle was more than passing comfortable. Nevertheless, we were friends, matching like pieces of a puzzle.

Then came college. Our bond was unexpectedly severed when we each decided to attend separate schools: he to a four-year private college; I to a two-year junior college. I remember our last meeting--the disbelief, the already aching loneliness, and the withheld tears. Constant promises and proclamations to write often went back and forth as we parted.

At first, the letters came full of enthusiasm and his customary idealistic outlook on life. But, gradually, his letters became more depressing and less frequent. Brief statements concerning pressures from his family to achieve academic excellence and his inability to adjust to the demands of college life permeated

every letter. Soon, he began to isolate himself from everyone, including me, and his letters became more factual and less personal. I now know that he was falling apart mentally and emotionally, but I could not see it then. No one could.

Before long, the letters ceased altogether. I began to worry because the bonds of our friendship had been too strong to dissipate so quickly. Then, when Allein did not return home for Christmas, his mother notified me that something was wrong. I volunteered to go see what I could learn concerning his whereabouts. After talking to his teachers, his acquaintances, and everyone who had had any contact with him, I began to piece together the story of his last days.

And now, here he is, starved, ragged and cold. Dead from a drug overdose. Look at him. I am almost too ashamed to admit that he is, or rather was, a friend of mine. His deeply soiled and torn clothing resemble the gray of storm clouds. His skin is masked by a layer of dirt, his hair uncombed, and his feet bare. No, this is not the friend I knew. The friend I knew must have died long before this stranger before me emerged.

Allien Bruder, a strange name I once thought, until I looked it up. **Allien** is "alone" in German and **bruder** is "brother." Well, "Alone Brother," I do not think I can let anyone know I found you. To see you now would be too much. I will pretend that you are still out there somewhere. At least they will have the hope that you may still live. Hope is bearable. Death is not. Goodbye, brother.

— Damon J. Phillips

## **Based on a True Story**

### **\$384**

The old wooden stairs creaked as I approached the door that read "13th precinct." I remember thinking how shameful it was that after only two months on the force, I regretted going to work. As I opened the office door, I met a wave of chatter, apparently ignited by the controversial headlines of this morning's paper. My entrance almost immediately reduced the chatter to silence, but it arose as quickly as it died upon the recognition of my face and the acknowledgement of my status as a rookie--a black rookie. Alone in the locker room, I dared to dress slowly, listening to the muffled voices and thinking of the precious tax dollars of which Sgt. Harris insisted I was a total waste. Then noticeably, the chatter ceased, as it did when I entered the office, only this time its resurrection was not so immediate. The silence was broken by a turn of the knob on the locker room door, and up from the office emerged a pale Sgt. Harris.

Mario Harris was rookie when the precinct was established some twenty years ago. Now he, Rizzo, Jenkins and Carlisle, all classmates from the academy, form the core of the thirteenth as the precinct's twenty-year veterans. They were pillars of the community: loved by the righteous and feared by the delinquent, but recognized by all as forces of good in a world full of evil. In fact, it was often argued that respect for Sgt. Harris and his colleagues rivaled that of the mayor himself. And amidst their admiration the community showered them with countless honors and awards, including keys to the city, bestowed upon them in appreciation of valor displayed in an eviction-turned-shootout in the winter of '80.

Slowly along the lockers Sgt. Harris walked, as though his mind wasn't his own. He arrived at his locker, stepped robotically over the bench, and sat; eyes fixed straight ahead, but staring at nothing.

"Welcome back Sgt. Harris," I said at him absent mindedly, but the greeting seemed only to bounce off the side of his head and roll quietly into the corner. It was obvious that Sgt. Harris was a troubled man. Sure, his public image had been destroyed, his status was on the chopping block, and his resignation was on the grapevine, but I sensed that it was something more . . . .

"Have a seat Kyle," the Sgt. said suddenly, his voice cracking as though he hadn't spoken for some length of time. I eased toward him, trying unsuccessfully to look calm and collected, and sat, heart pounding and palms sweating, as he cleared his throat in preparation to speak. I regretted having to be the one to hear what he was about to say, for that was the first time in my brief career he had ever called me by my first name.

"They set me free, Kyle," he said in disbelief.

"They said what I did was okay, and they set me free." I didn't know quite what to say.

"Did you tell the truth?" I asked.

"What happened?" I interrupted in a tone of voice that suggested that he was no longer my superior.

Exhaling deeply and slumping forward with his elbows resting on his knees, running his hands through his straight, red hair, he began to tell his story.

"That Tuesday afternoon was mild, but humid, he said, "unusually warm for the season.

Rizzo and I were passing gossip over a soda in the Tenth Street Cafe when we got a 10-13 over the radio. "Tenant resisting conviction," the dispatcher said and gave us the address. As we jumped into the squad car and sped away, the last words of the dispatcher echoed in our heads: "Tenant considered dangerous. Proceed with caution."

We arrived on the scene with a screeching halt at what had to be the most depressing of projects in Lower Manhattan. A dull stench ruled the air as little black children sloshed through a sea of garbage overflowing from the dumpster onto a sparse lawn. I saw teenagers painting graffiti around a huge crack in the wall of one of the substandard complexes. And across the street in a line stood the adults of at least two generations, waiting in front of the liquor store like prisoners to enter their cells. Welfare checks in hand, they were seeking some means to escape from their sordid environs.

There were two cars in the parking lot: a '72 Ford on bricks and a brand new Cadillac with Florida tags that read "HORSE." Rizzo and I, standing just inside the open doors of the squad car, stared at each other in amazement, as Rizzo whispered, "Why do they live like this?"

A sinister screech seemed to answer his question as a big white van skidded to a halt, and out jumped Jenkins and Carlisle clad in riot gear. Rizzo and I ran around to the back of the van where our equipment was stored. The landlord, a short, inexpensively dressed white man with a receding hairline, pointed out a second story window, to which Jenkins issued the warning through the bullhorn: "Occupant of apartment 2D, the city hereby orders you to vacate the premises. Please signify your compliance or risk prosecution." There were fifteen seconds of silence; then I grabbed the shotgun and motioned everybody forward. Upon reaching the apartment, we surrounded the door, and I pressed my ear against the wall.

"I hear a voice. There could be two of them," I cautioned. Once we were all in position, I counted to three and kicked in the door. Armed with the shotgun, I was the first to enter the apartment, with Jenkins, Carlisle, and Rizzo close behind with enlarged billy clubs, which some call "nigger beaters." To our surprise, we were met by no opposition. We were even more surprised to find that the only occupant of apartment 2D sat in the back of the room staring out of the window at which Jenkins directed the warning: a black, grey-haired old lady mumbling something about the mess she made in her kitchen when she killed Abraham Lincoln. "The landlord said the old wench was retarded," Rizzo snarled as Jenkins proceeded by the book. 'Are you Elanor Bumphus?' he called out to which she responded by nodding her head in a circular motion as though she were trapped between yes and no. 'Well the landlord says you owe four months back rent, so unless you can produce \$384 I'm afraid we'll be forced to remove you from the premises.' The lady just sat there, still mumbling, still nodding in circles. 'Come on wench!' Rizzo growled, snatching the woman to her feet and knocking over the chair in which she sat. A struggle ensued. The woman tried desperately to wrench the one arm free from Rizzo's grasp while pound-

ing his face and chest with the other. Surprised by the attack, Rizzo released his grip and drew his billy club, landing three solid blows to her collar, temple, and forehead. Dazed, the woman staggered back against the wall then dropped to her hands and knees, blood dripping down the front of her face and onto the carpet. Rizzo holstered his billy club and turned, motioning Jenkins and Carlisle to place her under arrest. 'You shouldn't have hit her Riz,' I said calmly still standing to the side clutching the shotgun. 'Hey she asked for it. She came at me first. You saw it, right?' I said nothing as we exchanged that old familiar blank stare. But before Jenkins and Carlisle could reach her, the woman rose from the floor and drew from a pocket in her apron a large carving knife, charging Rizzo while his back was still turned. 'Look out Riz!' Carlisle screamed but the warning gave him no time to react. Before I realized what I was doing, I had raised the muzzle of the shotgun. Jenkins and Carlisle snapped their heads around and froze, eyes as wide and saucers. I felt the shockwaves of the blast travel from my shoulder to my feet and on into the floor. The smoke for a moment obstructed my vision. And I could hear little other than a few window panes crashing on the sidewalk below, amidst a constant ringing in my ears.

As the smoke began to thin I could see that Jenkins and Carlisle lay chest down on the floor. Rizzo had stumbled back over the coffee table and the lady stood over him, still thrusting her arm in Rizzo's direction even though the hand that held the knife had been blown completely off. Soon the room was clear and the scene that the smoke revealed resembled a battlefield: Broken glass, overturned furniture, and blood-splattered walls all contributed to the horridness of the entire situation. 'This has got to end now,' I thought to myself. And with that I once again pumped the shotgun and fired. Immediately after the second blast there was a dull thud. The woman was knocked off of her feet, through the doorway and into the kitchen where the dosy skidded to a stop, and blood began to gush from a vast crater in the middle of her chest.



A crowd gathered in the hallway and began to shout obscenities as Jenkins and Carlisle struggled to hold them back. 'Good thing we brought the riot gear,' Rizzo commented. 'Shut up and call an ambulance,' I replied. I stood and stared at the body until the paramedics took it away. I remember vividly how the lady just lay there, with her hand blown off, a hole in her chest and an expression of something wrong with a society that breeds a man who could do something like that and not feel any more remorse than I did . . . ."

Sgt. Harris' story left me in a cold sweat. For a moment I couldn't speak. I just sat there with my mouth gaping in disbelief.

"How did you get off the the hook?" I asked finally.

"The judge ruled in my favor saying that the D.A. couldn't prove beyond reasonable doubt that the first shot disarmed the woman, and that therefore the second shot was justified since an officer's life was at stake."

"But that garbage you guys called testimony wasn't even close to the story you just told me."

"Look boy, one word of this to anyone and not only will you be the first rookie dismissed dishonorably in the history of the precinct, but so help me you'll never work in this city again."

Before he could finish the sentence I had arisen from my seat and began changing my clothes.

Clad once again in civilian clothes, I closed my locker and started toward the locker-room door.

"Where do you think you're going?" he asked. I paused at the door with my hand on the knob and said, "All over \$384; libertines, all of you" and slammed the door behind me. Once again the office returned to silence. I charged past the secretaries as quickly as I could without running, and as I approached the door that read "13th precinct" I noticed that this time the room had remained silent. So, I closed the door behind me, never to hear the chatter rise again.

— Damon Dixon

## **“Tsunami, Tsunami, I Want My Mommy!”**

Many prophets throughout history have tried to predict the end of the world, but who would think the end of the world would commence in Oregon? A few months ago, I was serving as a counselor on a sixth grade camping trip to the Southern Oregon coast, and I was sure that doomsday had finally arrived. In fact, I was scared for my life. On this trip I received my first real scare from nature in the form of a Tsunami, which taught me never to take Mother Nature for granted.

The first few days of the week long trip were uneventful. The weather was excellent, save for a few rainy days, and we were able to take daily excursions to nearby beaches and coves. I became acquainted with most of the sixth graders and really enjoyed my feeble position of power. Until the fourth day, the trip was extremely blissful.

The day itself had been very enjoyable. We had visited a small fishing town, the storybook type with barnacled docks and drab, weather beaten houses. The sixth graders had engaged in the addictive art of crabbing and had collected bucketfuls of the little alien creatures. That evening we went to a secluded cove where we had a cookout not more than thirty feet from the crashing surf. Suddenly, we were interrupted from our gala picnic abruptly by the loud thumping of a Coast Guard helicopter hovering overhead. The kids stopped all activity and stared up at the chopper in awe, as if an extraterrestrial spacecraft were present. The mechanical voice from the loudspeaker said only one sentence before swooping away in a gust of wind and swirling sand.

“Move to higher ground!”

Even though ignorant of the situation, the head teacher had us immediately moving up the steep trail to the main road and our prized yellow bus. On the way up, we were informed by a park ranger that a tidal wave or Tsunami had been generated by an earthquake in Alaska and would hit the Oregon coast in a little more than an hour.

At this news, the sixth graders began to get excited. A tsunami is a once in a lifetime experience. Everyone quickly packed into the bus, and we drove up the coast searching for a safe spot from which to view the spectacle. We ended up at a viewpoint nearly two hundred feet above the ocean. As we sat there counting the minutes, another Coast Guard helicopter appeared and again told us to get to higher ground.

At this point the kids' excitement turned to fear. We were nearly two hundred feet above the ocean and still considered unsafe. The bus immediately turned inland and we became entrapped in the throes of a large traffic jam while traversing a small city. Most of the residents in the area were being evacuated and the roads heading inland were jammed. Some of the sixth graders began to panic and I was feeling slightly nervous. I couldn't believe that a Tsunami was coming in less than an hour and we were glued to the pavement a stone's throw from the beach. By some miracle we found a back road which led us to the main highway, but the tension and anxiety continued to build. As the bus sped inland, I began to have more doubt about our safety. Even though I appeared very calm and confident to the kids, my mind was flashing images of towering walls of water crashing into the shore, stripping away all signs of life. What contributed to my fears was the fact that I had read an article earlier saying that the great prophet Nostradamus had predicted the world would end that day. I kept asking myself, "Is this the end?"

I still appeared to be in good spirits, and the other counselors and I tried to cheer up the kids, many of whom were crying and had the look of the condemned. Considering the fact that the school bus was bright yellow, it must have looked very dark and depressing on the inside. Within fifteen minutes we were ten miles inland, (an incredible feat for a school bus), and had pulled over to wait the remaining ten minutes to impact.

Ten minutes had never seemed so long. I kept telling myself that Tsunamis just don't get big enough to come ten miles inland. Somewhere in the back of my mind, though, Nostradamus' prediction kept chipping away at my pyramid of confidence.

After ten minutes of fearful anticipation, we waited another twenty minutes and then another hour. The bus seemed to deflate as the tension was slowly released during the wait. After nearly two hours, a state trooper stopped to inform us that the Tsunami had struck. It was barely noticeable. In fact, it only produced a four inch change in the tide! This report generated relieved laughter from everyone, and we again boarded the bus for the campground. Upon our arrival, the usually rowdy activity of the sixth graders was absent. The experience of the day had worn them out. I slept that night, very soundly, with comic dreams of Nostradamus turning in his grave because of his wrong prediction.

This experience really taught me not to underestimate the power of nature. Even though nothing serious occurred from my brush with the Tsunami, I found myself going from skepticism at first to frank terror as the minutes to impact ticked away. I will never forget that trip to the coast and also the fears of the impending wrath of Mother Nature brought to me.

— Derrick Butler

## Later . . .

I do not want to do it, but I do.  
If I could break through it, I would.  
And after all that I have been through,  
Staying up long past two,  
It does me more harm than good  
To continue to procrastinate.

The first time this dreaded condition manifested itself was when I was in the tenth grade, the night before the science fair. I remember dragging my exhausted body to bed at four o'clock that morning. I had finished my project, but I was very dissatisfied with the results of my long, hard labor (or what I perceived to be "labor"! ). The project was not working properly, and I had no time left to fix it. Procrastination had gotten the best of me.

Although this was the first time I had lost sleep over anything like this, signs of procrastination had surfaced many times before: doing homework in my homeroom instead of at home, turning in assignments at the last possible moment, and trying to study for tests during class changes. During this time I was extremely confident in my abilities, for I had never missed an assignment and I always did well on tests. I also knew that I would finish my work even though I never knew **when** I would get started on it.

"Why do I procrastinate?" I often ask myself. For, when I tell myself, "Do it now!" I begin immediately to make excuses. "Now" is never a good time to get started because I want to do something else at that time. And then I am off, my important work left undone . . . until later.

When night comes, I find myself faced with the problem that probably underscores all forms of procrastination: getting started. If only I had started yesterday, then I would not be faced with this formidable task today. But yesterday I was not pressured to get started; after all, I still had today to do it. This is how a procrastinator gets caught in his own web.

This is the story of my life. I am a procrastinator. I do not want to be one. I do not even like being one. And, although I am fighting it with all the strength I can muster, I am losing. It is now five-thirty in the morning . . . .

— Gregroy Allen

## Confessions of a Morehouse Procrastinator

Girls, drugs, and alcohol--these are a few of the commonly known enemies of any academic pursuit. One that is often not taken seriously and is equally detrimental to college studies, however, is procrastination. This hellish malady manifests itself in thoughts such as, "I can do this paper tomorrow--why should I waste time on it now?," or "Hmm...we have two weeks to do this project, but I will probably be able to do it the last three nights before it's due." The trouble with this kind of "future planning" is that it leaves nothing for one to do in the present. A procrastinator, however, is accustomed to occupying this "free time" with a repertoire of time consuming activities. Being an inveterate procrastinator, I have developed a time wasting scheme of my own. As unhappy as this scheme makes me, I indulge in at least one of its activities every night.

From the window of my room in Hubert Hall, I can see Graves Hall, the dismal Units, Robert Hall, and Chivers Dining Hall. The same people walk up and down the "hill" each day. Uninterested and bored, I watch them--while piles of homework lie untouched on my contemptible wooden desk. When I become tired of gazing out of the window, I sleep--with the hope that I will be refreshed and ready to work when I awake. When I finally rise, I am too groggy to accomplish any reading or writing, so I sleep for a couple of more hours. I listen to radio station WVEE or play tapes when I am not napping. Music allows me to forget my responsibilities for at least an hour or two and provides for me a sheltered world of contentment, reflection, and hope.

On some evenings, I would rather avoid my room altogether. I can usually run into a group of fellows down the hall who always seem to be talking about their plans for the weekend or the events of last weekend. I usually spend some time with them if they decide to go to Spelman or somewhere else. The dreadful knowledge that work is waiting for me in my room haunts me as we roam around the campus.

When I finally return to my room after spending the evening in search of "AUC action," or wake up, at last, from a few hours of slumber, I feel depressed. Life, at these times, seems like an endless cycle of assignments to be done and negligent wasting of time. Resolutely, I tell myself that it is time for me to change my unsatisfying lifestyle. A part of me invariably responds, "Yes, we'll definitely have to try to tighten up and do what has to be done without reluctance or delay," and then adds irresistibly, "...starting tomorrow."

— Brian S. Register