

Give Blood and Thanks

By: Daniel Machal

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Chapter 4: Plymouth rock blues.

Beep Beep Beep!

Remy blinked his eyes, 'What the hell did I drink last night? My head hurts like hell.'

He looked up at the starry night sky in the moments between full consciousness and sleep. Then he felt the weight on his chest and the memory came rushing back to him.

Beep Beep Beep!

The microwave sat square on his chest, but it felt heavier somehow. He slid out from under it and laid it to rest on the ground next to him.

'Hell of a price to pay for a good meal. You are a heavy son of a bitch.'

Remy got to his knees using the microwave to push, it was warm to the touch. He squinted and braced himself as he reached up for the blood inspection on the back of his head. A huge lump is all, but it still hurt pretty good. The bum leg was throbbing and pulsing

with a mild pain, nothing he couldn't handle. He inspected the microwave for damage - still looked like it came out of the box, even his finger prints were gone from the buttons. He opened the small windowed door on the front.

"Holy shit! Double dose," he said aloud to himself.

There it was, another turkey dinner. Emerald peas, fluffy white potatoes, gravy lake, turkey slabs and the delicious cranberry sauce. He took the plate out and sat cross legged. His trusty spork in hand he enjoyed a second hot meal of the day. Someone was really up there watching over him. He didn't much believe in that god stuff, but there had to be something out there. They could have helped him get the damn microwave off his chest, but he wasn't going to argue with another free meal. If the meal was still this hot, they must have just put it in moments before he came too. It was too bad, he would have liked to thank them proper.

Remy sat and stared at the microwave, it stared right back. It looked different somehow. The street light outside his little alley made the glass front into a mirror. Mirrors were something to be avoided in a situation like Remy's. The oily grey streaked brown hair would soon need to be cut, he couldn't have it at the shoulders. The short wiry beard would also have to go soon, he could never grow

a full beard. Genetics kept him out of the height of fashion in the 70's. Remy was having second thoughts about selling the microwave. If this thing was going to be used as a drop off point for food from his Guardian Angel, then he better keep it around and accessible. Despite being knocked out most all the day, he was still tired. He put the microwave next to his Maytag home so that it was sheltered from street view but still accessible. The laces on his boots gave with ease and he slipped them off and set them on top of his new mechanical friend. No one would steal anything if it was under your shoes, it was one of the unwritten laws of courtesy amongst the homeless in the city. As the sandman made his decent, Remy decided he would keep the microwave until he needed the money bad enough. Or at least until he was hungry enough and it stopped producing.

Chapter 5: Jumpy alien boy!

Detective Martian's squeaking breaks broke the stillness of the night air. The neighborhood Snoogins lived in was dead. The residents were no doubt locked down thanks to the fantastic media coverage. It was just like he thought it would be. The pictures that were beaming to people on the 7 o'clock news contained footage

of the coroner rolling the body out and his own brother carrying what was left of Emily's arm in a clear plastic bag for the whole damn world to see; the blender at least was in a dark container. Although the news coverage mentioned the blender too. Some asshole was spilling everything and probably on the take for it. He would need to bring it with the Chief tomorrow. He parked his car outside Snoogin's residence and ducked under the crime scene tape.

He got to the door and used the key he had copied from the evidence room. He reached inside to flip the light switch on. Nothing happened.

'They cut the power on the first day of investigation, what a bunch of fucking morons.'

Arthur felt around in the pocket of his oversized tan trench coat for his flash light and clicked it on. The beam of light revealed the innards of Emily's house. Arthur began to make a quick mental inventory and room assessment like he was taught to do in the academy.

One baby blue lazy boy couch with matching reclining chair, one dark oak table with clawed feet, four matching chairs, crocheted coasters on the end tables, one cat litter box, one scratch post with

the name Mittens carved in the side, things are clean, and nothing is noticeably out of place. He made his way through the living room and dining room bypassing the kitchen for now. The hallway had plastic lining the floor, this is where things were bagged and tagged by the forensics guys. The plastic crinkled under Arthur's size twelve brown Dunham Windsor shoes.

The bathroom door was propped open with a plunger stuck to the white tile acting as a doorstop. Arthur examined the high window above the bathtub for any scuffing marks or tiny specks of anything that would be out of place on a window ledge that high. The window was locked tight and didn't show any sign that it had been opened in the last five years, just judging by the depth of the dust. He clicked the flashlight off, put it on the counter, kicked open the toilet seat and unzipped to take a piss. Staring at his moonlit face in a mirror that hung above the toilet, he released his stream of justice into the waters of crime.

Arthur looked at himself in the mirror. He hated mirrors, he looked too much like the damn old man he had been trying to forget but just couldn't shake. Walking in his father's shadow was bad enough, why was he cursed looking like his twin brother? They both had the high cheek bones, the thin dark hair that hung down the forehead, the broad chin, the constant neglect of shaving which lead

to their identical stubble as soon as he was old enough to grow it. Arthur was giving his junk a third firm shake when he heard a window creak open in the bedroom.

Cautiously and quietly, he withdrew his .357 Magnum revolver from the shoulder holster. He pulled the hammer all the way back effectively giving his hand cannon a hair trigger. He gripped the wood grain handles with both hands and peaked out into the hallway.

Slipping out of his shoes he carefully placed his steps on parts of the plastic that flushed with the floor. There was a draft coming from the open bedroom window, the entrance to the room was two feet away. He waited about ten seconds for any signal of movement, a sound, a shadow. He raised his gun chest level and leapt into the door way prepared to fire.

The only sound to be heard was his heavy breathing, a combination of adrenaline and cigarettes. Arthur looked down the sight of his gun into the lifeless room. The breeze from the open window blew the hair down into his eyes, he shook his head to put it back in place. The bushes outside rustled with movement, Arthur locked his elbows and reinforced his stance.

"Come up slowly, hands first," he called out.

A bright white flash came through the window.

Human reaction time is easily tested. Remember that van back in school, the one where you would go in, put on head phones, and push the button when you heard sound? Or maybe the one with the brief case with the red light inside, with the button to push when it went off? These are ways of measuring the health of your eyesight or hearing based on the reaction time to visual and auditory stimulus. The average reaction time for a visual stimulus is about 190 milliseconds for a young adult. As we grow older reaction times increase, tiredness and distractions also increase reaction time.

Our reaction time no matter what state we are in is always the fastest when there is only one response that can be performed. Hick's Law states that choice reaction time increases in proportion to the logarithm of the number of response alternatives. Essentially, more options means more time, we have to think about it. Is the light red or green? What does that mean? What action do I take?

Law enforcement can not afford this kind of time for decision making when their lives are at stake. There is only one reaction to be taken for certain worldly stimulants programmed into the mind of a

cop. A muzzle flash, fire your weapon. The glint of gun metal elevating, fire your weapon. The unmistakable auditory direction of a weapon being discharged within ten feet, fire your weapon.

Arthur Martian fired his weapon at a target eight feet away.

A one hundred twenty five grain .357 hollow point bullet will travel at about 1300 feet per second, or 1.3 feet per millisecond. To travel the eight foot span of Emily Snoogin's bedroom, the bullet would only take 6.2 milliseconds, the point is, it takes Arthur longer to decide to pull the trigger than it does for the receiving end to feel the effect of his decision.

To say a grenade was tossed in a bucket of open red paint would be putting the scene before Detective Martian in a conservative made for TV horror film. Emily Snoogin's trundle day bed sat below the window, her pink floral quilt was spattered in blood. The porcelain dolls placed with such precision and care all cried hemoglobin tears. The white painted trim oozed blood, and shards of broken exploded red stained glass clung to what was left of the single pain latching window. Arthur stood engulfed in a wave of astonishment and surprise. He couldn't make out very many pieces of what he shot, they were too small. He inched toward the bed.

A glint of what looked like cheap rhinestone caught the moonlight beaming through the window. It was sitting in the lap of one of Emily's dolls; a happy faced doll that had a hand up waving at passers by, to bad she looked like she just ate a cherry pie face first. Arthur picked up the remaining half of the jeweled band. Spelled out in cheap bedazzled plastic rhinestones was the same name on the scratch post in the living room, "Mittens."

"Fuck me," Arthur said.