

Another One Bites The Dust

By Roosevelt Fitzgerald

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article was written by Prof. Fitzgerald several months ago. We are printing at this time due to its continued relevancy and timeliness.

The crew of the Enterprise was preparing to "beam down" as I was reading about the Rebels latest effort at getting back on the winning track. Up to that point, my day had pretty much been as most of days are --- routine.

Earlier, I had gone to the campus to do some research and during mid-afternoon, I had gotten a haircut. Later, I dropped some things off at the cleaners, washed the car and did a little

grocery shopping. I had managed all of that without incident, and now I was safely at home. Like most people do, I slipped into something more comfortable, poured up three fingers of J.W. Dant and was prepared for quiet evening of reading and television—provided I didn't get a better offer.

Out of the clear blue, there was a loud knock on my door. It startled me. Without realizing it, my pulse increased and

I began to perspire profusely. I got out of the chair like a sprinter gets out of the blocks and rushed to the door—disrobing as I went. In an instant, I had turned on all of the lights and put all five locks in neutral. I swung the door open with such velocity that it created a vacuum which sucked in a rush of cold air.

My next conscious memory was that of a shriek, closely followed by a scream—my own. Covering my face I tottered backwards over a coffee table. When I looked up and glanced toward the door, I espied a very smallish lady who was carrying an "Avon" totebag. She turned on her heels, after what seemed like an eternity, and ran down the walkway screaming "pervert, pervert, pervert."

I managed to regain my senses, got off the floor and went to close the door. As I did so, an elderly lady, living across the way, peeked out and saw me in all my

glory. Her door was slammed with such force that it shook the common wall between our adjoining apartments. I closed the door and secured all of the locks and stood there with the coolness, which had permeated its hallow thickness, against my naked back.

Nervously, I gulped in huge lungfuls of air but, try as I might, I could not get my breath. All of the above happened before Kirk and Spock had discovered the space travellers who were in suspended animation.

The phone rang just as I was about to get a drink of water. I lifted the receiver but I could not utter a word. My throat muscle had constricted to the point that my voice box was completely incapacitated. However, I could still hear. The voice on the receiver was that of my apartment manager. He said: "Fitzgerald, I just got a serious complaint on you, and I'm afraid you're in big trouble. We run a respectable place here and we aim to keep it that way. We do not condone 'flashers' and I've been told that you are running around naked and opening your door and exposing yourself to some women in the area. We're not going to have that. Now, you go to school and you're an educated man and a college professor, so you should know better. If we get one more complaint, I'm going to have to kick you out." Click.

Stunned. That's right. I was stunned. Everything had happened so fast. Why, Ricardo Montalban had not even been revived by Spock. Having something of a photographic memory, I sat down and tried to piece together those events to see if I could sort them out well enough to determine the cause. Then it hit me. Just before the knock on the door, I had just finished reading the evening newspaper. On page one was an article concerning the inquest into the shooting death of Larry Demark Shelton on the morning of Jan. 21. An hour or so earlier, I had watched a report of that same matter on

television news.

For those of you who are not familiar with the case, it seems that a warrant had been issued for the arrest of Zel Norman, another Black man. According to the paper, police investigation had

sed up, awaiting the worse and generating the adrenalin which might be necessary to ward off an intruder—after all—does not Las Vegas have one of the highest crime rates in the country?



CRAIG HARDEN
...officer describes shooting

shown that the apartment at 4801 E. Tropicana was that of Norman. Upon their arrival, I suppose the five officers secured the perimeter. They then knocked sharply on the door. When there was no immediate response, they repaired to the manager's office and secured a pass key for the apartment. Obviously, they did not ask for a key to enter Norman's apartment because, had they done so, they would've discovered that there was no one by that name leasing or renting an apartment in that complex.

Sheldon was home minding his own business, whatever his business was. Most Las Vegas do the same thing. As some are wont to do, in the privacy of their abodes, he was scantily clad—probably nude—when the knock on the door was heard. Ms. Young, his housemate, reports that they were upstairs. As he came down the stairs, putting on a robe, his front door opened. Chances are he was startled. Who would not be if they looked up and saw their front door opening when they had not said "Come in?" Who was it? Friend or foe? Most people, in his place, would have ten-

Luckily, it was not a burglar. Sheldon saw the uniform of an officer of the law—patrolman Craig Harden.

The mind races swiftly in such situations. Why is he here? An unpaid traffic ticket? No. Just days ago, the sheriff had announced that arrests would not be made in the case of unpaid tickets—no room in the "inn." Was it because of skimming? No. Black men are only in a position to skim butter off milk. Was it because of going into a cash in spite of the fact that his name was in the "black book?" No. There are no Black people listed in the "black book"—strange—it should be called the "white book" but, what the heck. Was it because of that fellow I shot in a Christmas tree lot last month? No. The person who put that guy's lights out was as gentle as a—"lamb?" Was it because of that warehouse burned down in an adjacent county? No. They don't permit Blackmen within yards of those places even if they're willing to pay.

The questions went on and on and on. A matter of seconds—the amount of time it takes for your whole life to flash before you. The printout on his mental computer simply

said: "No sweat. You've done nothing, and therefore they must be at the wrong place."

Realizing his state of undress, an unconscious reflex caused him quickly to turn away and reach for the belt of

especially if the suspect is involved in an activity which does not warrant capital effort at apprehension.

Deputy District Attorney Don Campbell asked, during an inquest, "Why did you

one." I thought to myself "good procedure—good police work."

Ninety-five percent of the time, or more, good police work is done. The larger portion of the missing five percent,

police work.

The consistency of the differences are much more than coincidental. There appears to be a duality which cannot be whitewashed. Black Las Vegas are very familiar with that kind of system. Most of us have seen it in other places before and we are seeing it here. The psychological connections with those systems of dual law enforcement, are still with us.

What we must do, as Black men, in order to protect ourselves, would involve a certain degree of danger and embarrassment. We must remain nude while at home and each and every time there is a knock on the door, we must answer it immediately, nude and "in the position." Hopefully, it will only be the Avon lady or a thief.

Get rid of those robes, guys. Get rid of those robes.



ROSIE LEE YOUNG
...Sheldon's girlfriend

pull the trigger?" and if the suspect was "looking" at the officer? The officer reports that the suspect "took two steps down the stairs. Suddenly, he turned to his right and started back up the stairs...He had the look of a desperate man." It is important that the suspect did not approach the officer and, as far as his look of desperation is concerned, what Black man would not have a look of desperation in similar circumstances—looking down the barrel of a shotgun. No weapon was visible and no threatening action was taken by the suspect. Why shoot? How many ways can you get out of an apartment?

All officers are not that way. Several months ago, while driving through the parking lot of the Mission Center Shopping Center, I was stopped by a uniform patrol officer. He inquired of the paint job on my car and complimented me on its appearance. After a moment's conversation he said: "Actually, I'm looking for a suspect in an attempted fraud case. He was described as being a Black gentleman, about six feet tall and slightly built. You do not fit that description. Have a good


usually involves acts of violence perpetrated against Black men and Hispanics. Every now & then, a white victim is thrown in, for good measure, to make it appear that the former have not been singled out as targets. The latter are the victims of an even greater injustice because they are "snuffed out" simply to create smoke screens. Within the past twelve months, there have been four cases, in Las Vegas, which are of particular interest to me. The first had to do with a Black man who was shot and killed by an officer of the law. The initial complaint was that he was playing his stereo too loudly. The second had to do with a white man who had barricaded himself in a house, fired shots and "talked out" without anyone being injured. The latter case was good police work while the former was lousy.

One day after Larry Sheldon was slain, Robert John Rabikowski, who fired numerous shots at officers from his apartment at 4620 E. Charleston Blvd., was taken into custody. When he exited his apartment, he had several weapons and one was pointed at the officers. He was shot in the leg and disabled. Good

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Insurance Corner

By ALEX THOMAS
Ebony Insurance Agency


FAMILY INCOME POLICY

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