

The Execution of Jay Shorry B.

By Zoe Lewis

Chapter One: friends

The Westborough Red-Cross Emergency Care Unit was in a big white building on the edge of town and inside the building the orderlies were congregating in their newly acquired off duty staff room decorated with the usual papery hospital wall trim featuring seashells in various shades of pastel. The topic of discussion at hand was the infamously well-covered case of Peter McMallamn. Brady Smart was of the opinion that Peter had been the man behind all if not most of the crimes he had been accused of. While Keenan Walker saw them all as crimes of passion and therefore not having been premeditated they were not deserving of capitol punishment, while Danny Evans subscribed to the "just fry the guy" school of thought. Liz Parker stood by the newly acquired bulletin board examining staff scheduling chart.

"Has anyone noticed that Jay hasn't been in for two weeks?" Liz Parker wondered aloud to the rest of her colleagues. Danny Evans exchanged a look of great meaning with Rick Staves feeling at that point in time that his own particular and singular knowledge of the situation made him overtly important when in fact it made him no more important than the hundreds of other people with secret though admittedly trivial knowledge in the entire state of Texas. Keenan Walker who had been left out of the loop of Jay's recent doings was curious and inquired of the rest of the party as to, "Yeah, What's up with him?"

"Well", began Rick Staves with an air of mysteriousness, which signified the importance of the situation. "I think he's been, you know.. In a bad place lately, you know. Anyway I'm pretty sure he might be taking some time off", the vagueness set off a need in Brady Smiths head to be Accepted, "what could Rick Staves possibly know about the life of Jay Shorry B. that I don't already know" he thought to himself. "Maybe I'll pay him a visit, I was thinking of doing that anyway, you know just to catch up, shoot the breeze, whatever." said Keenan to which Rick Staves just shrugged his shoulders in an effort to gesticulate the supposed lack of interest Jay might have in a visit from Keenan Walker and then the conversation turned to baseball effectively shutting off all thoughts of Jay from the minds of the men except, that is, for Keenan who had made it a plan to visit Jay Shorry B. that afternoon regardless of Rick Staves unspoken discouragement. As usual the talk of baseball turned to something else, Liz Parker flirted, shamelessly with Danny Evans and then finally it was time to go back to work and most of all the orderlies were relieved to be away from the uncomfortable subject of a colleagues most uncomfortable breakdown.

Chapter Two: family

Keenan parked his sister's 1996 Toyota Camry in the small run down looking patch of grass that stood in front of Jay Shorry B's modest two story country home, the door was answered for him by a tired looking blonde with watery eyes in her mid thirties although none of Jay Shorry B's friends, or acquaintances knew her real age and when inquired upon she simply said that it was impolite to ask a lady's age though Keenan Walker was well aware that Brook Haegler was no lady. She stood there looking at him mouth agape and eyes facet less and unfocused before uttering a punitive, "what"

"What's happenin'? Jay in?"

"What is you two gay now or somethin' ?" Brook replied as she held open the screen door for Keenan to slide past her,

"You gotta be gay to check up on a buddy?".

"Brokeback buddy" muttered brook under her breath, Keenan sat himself down on the worn leather couch and Brook steeled herself to explain to him the rather precarious situation. Brook pulled a cigarette out of the pack sitting on a side table and paused to light it, "well Keenan", the name was said with a certain amount of vehemence "he up an lef me"

"he what?"

"Well just after that business down at Pentonville, he up an' left. Stayed one wordless night and then he was gone. Gone when I come back from the supermarket, ain't seen none of him since, so if your jist looking for him don't bother coming round here no more" Keenan lay a hand on her leg and said "Oh, I'm so sorry" Perhaps implying that it had not been solely Jay Shorry he was looking for.

Chapter Three: life

Jay Shorry Braverman was born on December 17, 1978 to one Ms. Juliet Braverman, a middle class lawyer living in Austin Texas and working as a partner in a small though somewhat well to do firm. The father (who had been solely the result of one or two many margarita on one of Juliet's few weekends off) had not stayed around to watch the birth, and Ms. Braverman as a devout Christian had felt it was her responsibility to raise the baby herself and forego the two other perhaps simpler options. The baby was named Jay-Shorry Braverman in respect to both of its grandparents and though the hyphen was later taken out of his legal name in an attempt to shorten a rather cumbersome title, but in the end it was the raverman that was dropped and Jay-Shorry Braverman became just Jay Shorry B.. As a young boy he excelled at sports and sciences as well as social relationships. He was the quarterback on his high school football team and always seemed to be dating someone important in the capsule like world of a small

texas high school. While to the untamed eye Jay might have looked like an average and frankly unoriginal student Jay Shorry B. Had always felt that the absence of his father had lent his life a certain poignancy and it was this singular and completely original, melodrama that raised his significance and aptitude far above those of his so called "peers". Despite some misconceived notions about himself Jay Shorry B. was in fact a rather sensible and down to earth kind of guy and had realized (far before this sort of a realization was necessary) that his aspirations of being a pro football player or an astronaut were not to be realized so he settled instead for that of a doctor, a relatively attainable goal for someone of his background.

After high school Jay-Shorry B. progressed to a state college where he improved his previously mediocre grades just enough to apply for (and be rejected by) a transfer to a somewhat more prestigious out of state university so after four years financed by his mother at the local school Jay was qualified enough to be accepted into the San Diego State University Post Graduate Medical program and from there on out his life was a jumble of lecture classes, graduate degrees and tuition fees and at the age of twenty nine he found himself back in Texas planning on a doctorate in liver cancer and supporting himself by working two jobs part time, one as a medical attendant at the Westborough red cross emergency care unit and the other as a prison orderly at the Pentonville Men's Facility.

At this point in his life Jay Shorry B. not only believed but also without a doubt knew himself to be ordinary. In fact he knew himself to be very ordinary so very ordinary in fact that in his particular case he believed the situation to have turned itself around for him to have become so ordinary that he was now extra ordinary or extraordinary. He believed as was dictated by the personal philosophy he had developed some time around his fifth year of med school that it is the simple and everyday things that are the most fantastic and in that way, by being consistently ordinary he could slip the bar and become extraordinary and his girlfriend thought so too.

Her name was Brook Haegler and when she met Jay Shorry she was hard at work making a name for herself as the town slut. She remembered thinking when she met him how he looked like a good specimen at least and if not that surely someone to take care of a girl like her and when, to everyone's surprise, the two started dating she couldn't help but compare the two of them to a modern day Jesus and Mary Magdalene without the hassle of needing to be preachy. When Jay headed further south towards the border she followed him and then when he moved back to Westborough she tagged along once again until he found the little country cottage in Pentonville just a twenty minute drive away from Westborough and within walking distance of the prison, and so it was there that they settled and on his weekends off they spent their time in antique shops and at home depot collecting various wood polishes and lacquers as well as several impressive mounted animal heads and a bearskin rug. Jay bought some rifles to display about the house as well as a collection of taxidermy birds for the bedroom. Ultimately turning his new home into what he believed to be an ironically surreal Texas hunters lodge.

Brook was chicken frying a steak for Jay's dinner when she began wondering to herself "isn't there more, I mean really there should just be more. It was great at first belonging, having him be, my man, but at some point I just got bored. We don't even go out anymore and really what is life without booze?" It was at this point that Brook developed the undeniable urge to throttle her long time boyfriend every time

they made love. Upon surveying his completely decorated home Jay Shorry began to wonder if maybe the irony of his taste wasn't lost on their infrequent guests and visitors but then dismissed the idea chalking it up to the naiveté of most Texans.

The promotion came at around the same time as the trial did. The promotion being that of Jay Shorry B. From underling orderly on the psych. ward to managing orderly on death row. Sure, it was a dirtier job, but the pay was up by ten percent and Jay had never had much care for the prisoners to begin with anyway. The trial in question was that in which Christopher Dorian was accused of murdering two women who had both been found shot in the back of the head at two different hotel rooms, three week apart. He was found guilty and sentenced to death by judge David Carr.

Chapter four: death

The trial itself had been somewhat unremarkable and it would have been clear to anyone who attended the affair that Christopher Dorian, Chris D. or Christy (this being a childhood nickname, which sadly stuck with Mr. Dorian throughout his adult life) was in fact far beyond a reasonable doubt the killer of the two women and was therefore (in consequence of Texas state law) rightfully to be put to death and as managing orderly for the prison currently serving as Mr. Dorian's residence Jay Shorry B. would be the one to do it.

At first Jay was unfazed by the circumstances feeling no sympathy whatsoever for the man whom he was to kill and also feeling that any display of emotion at so ordinary and inconsequential an event would be altogether unmanly and would be mocked by both his coworkers and longtime girlfriend so as the weeks leading up to the execution date moved past Jay's life proceeded to be unaltered in its routine he worked his two jobs and studied his two medical books stopped off at a little corner market every evening at around seven to buy a tin of chewing tobacco or hamburgers for the grill. He was as always unremarkable.

But the weeks flew past as soon the execution date was drawing closer, Jay was becoming more and more unnerved his feet began to drag, his head began to ache and every night he would wake in a cold sweat from some new kind of nightmarish dream. One day after work he found himself walking down to the room where the execution would be held, he found himself fondling the three hypodermic syringes, one to paralyze, one to numb, and one to kill, and then the relentless crying began at any point in time he would have to excuse himself to the restroom when the anguish became unbearable and from there he would wail and pound upon the walls for reasons even he himself could not fathom. At first he tried to deny it told himself he was making a deal out of nothing and that as a man he had no right to cry. For weeks he pretended not only to his friends but also to himself that the outbursts were inconsequential and then that they had never really happened at all and were simply a figment of a sleep addled imagination. Brook might have suggested a therapist if she had noticed the change in Jay's demeanor but the point was moot because he would never have agreed to one to begin with.

Soon though his own mental deterioration became undeniable and Jay realized that he must simply accept the truth that his brain was crumbling under its own weight that he was collapsing in on himself, coming undone.

Chapter five: the execution

The week preceding the execution Jay Shorry B. used up every single one of his sick days. He told brook he had caught a stomach bug and there was no need to fake the vomit. As soon as she left for work every day he would commence the sob fest sitting all day long in bed wallowing in a state of delirium.

God prayed Jay on the second day of his retreat “just stop this stop this pain let me be a man god please, just let me be a man.” For the rest of that particular day he proceeded to bable incoherently to unseen deities he had never really believed in. By the fifth day he was more lucid and began to reason with himself “there is only one real reason I am in this condition” he told himself “and that is because I am special I seen the furtive strife of mans trivial existence because I am unique and I realize now that it all goes back so far back to the days of my fatherless childhood, yes! That is when it all began that is when it started” and from that point on Jay began to feel the pain, to really truly feel the pain, to revel in and embrace the pain, and then it overtook him swallowed him in a sea of his own sorrow and ate away at time until it became the seventh day, the day of the execution.

Jay awoke early on Monday and proceeded to shave and dress himself smartly in khaki pants and a lab coat he said nothing to himself but his mantra, which he repeated in his head for his own benefit, “I am a man, I have a job to do and I will do it without emotion.” He drove to the prison with this statement in his head but upon entering the room all the words flew from his mind all he could hear was the blood pumping in his brain and a voice in his head screaming at the frequency of a siren. He was the last to enter the room and he stood behind the police officers in the corner and waited for the prisoner to arrive. The room seemed to be moving and in his head there remained the dull terrible ache of before and then as if out of a dream the prisoner entered. To Jay Shorry B. it was as though he floated in on a cloud of air and the world became still Jay could not bring himself to look directly at the man at the proceedings began. Christopher was strapped to the gurney and then the hand of the nearest law officer beckoned Jay to his waiting table of syringes.

The man’s chill flesh had surely been crafted in hell for all its throbbing life and peering away from the prisoners face with the screaming in his head growing progressively louder Jay commenced to deliver the first two shots. Then it was time it was the final shot to be injected to the mans neck vein and at last Jay would be forced to look him in the eye. Jay’s hand trembled as he lifted the little bottle of Potassium chloride up to the light and shook it until the milky white solids had risen to the top. Slowly oh so slowly he drew the liquid into the syringe through the cap of the bottle. Jay turned to the neck and prepared the needle to enter it and then finally he turned up his head to face the man at last.

Though it was just for a second their eyes met and suddenly the earth was howling with the furies of a thousand winds and the air around his head turned icy cold and with every beat of his heart Jay could feel the blood moving about beneath his skin. The eyes had sucked him in had trapped him suffocated him and refused to free him from their grip because Jay realized as he slid the needle into the vein was that they were the eyes of a grandmother, a lover, a son and that they were human. And then

as the eyes closed and the poison hit the veins Jay believed he had reached an understanding a realization he had seen in the eyes of that man, the light of god.

Jay went home that night and slept fitfully next to his wife and the next morning packed his bags and headed to the airport to catch the first flight out of Texas, and two hours later, he was gone.