

# CONFIDENTIAL

A Very Short Story

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*[Author's note: I wrote this flight of fantasy in 1974 as a lad barely out of grammar school. I based it very loosely on some obscure political events then current. Any similarities inferred between the characters and real persons, living or dead, or between imaginary and real organizations are mere coincidence and will be forgotten at the passing of the next squirrel.]*

Office of: Jim de Shrink, MD, Psychiatrist

Patient: Mr. Jack Dane

To whom it may concern:

Mr. Jack Dane has this psycho problem. Every other night, since the watergate broke open, he has these weird nightmares. In these nightmares, he dreams that a wizard, who calls himself Tricky Noxim, is out to get him. The following is one of the frightening dreams that he related to me.

“Roast and toast! Roast and toast! Roast and toast!” chanted Mr. Noxim, while he prepared his next dinner. Mr. Dane was turning on the spit, and becoming quite dizzy.

“I’m getting very dizzy! Let me off this thing!” pleaded Jack.

“Nothing doing. I am determined to get my revenge on you and your pals,” stated Mr. Noxim, firmly. He reached for the tobasco sauce, and sprinkled some on Jack.

“Achoo!!” sneezed Jack. “Please let me off!!”

Tricky replied, “Okay, I’ll let you off; that’ll be when you’re done.”

Jack was, by this time, really complaining. “But it just isn’t fair! Why couldn’t you have taken one of them first?”

“Just shut up, will ya? I’m too busy to have a conference,” said Mr. Noxim. Tricky noticed that the flames were getting low, so he pumped the bellows and, soon, he had a blazing fire going again.

For several minutes he wafted in the aroma of crackling, smoking flesh, and exclaimed, “My, that does smell so appetizing!”

Jack calmly asked, “How can I smell appetizing?” As you can see, he is beginning to lose his mind.

Tricky noticed that Jack was golden brown, so he decided to turn off the energy crisis. He needed the fuel to run his private Boening 707 around the country.

“Is my back red? I think it is burned,” said Mr. Dane. “May I have a glass of water? I’m hot!”

“Hi! I’m Tricky! How are you?” joked Mr. Noxim. “I’ll give you a glass of nice, ice cold water later, if I remember, that is. Hee! Hee!”

Tricky checked Jack’s temperature, and upon finding that he was still too hot to eat, he strolled down to the Toocamp River to wash his hands, there-by allowing Jack to cool off a little. While he was scrubbing his hands, he resumed the chant, “Roast and toast! ....” He skipped happily back to the table, chanting away. Tricky set the table, using all the proper utensils. (He was a very mannerly wizard, you know; maybe not too civilized, but very mannerly!) Mr. Noxim carefully checked to make sure that he had plenty of milk to go along with Jack. Happily humming to himself, he hopped over to the cooking area. He took Jack off the super-sized chicken rotor, and placed him on a wagon.

“Well, Jack, I have decided that I should at least be fair and grant you your last wish. Ever since you began, you wanted me to let you off. So, I am letting you get off the rotor, and climb onto the wagon. Good luck!”

“Yea! Thanks!” replied Jack.

Tricky started up the ten horsepower tractor and drove over to the table, hauling Mr. Dane behind.

Again he resumed the chant, “Roast and toast! ....”, while he was hoisting Jack up onto the table. He sauntered over to the pentagon shed and fetched his giant electric knife and his twenty-five horsepower chain saw. Tricky planned to use the knife to slice through the crispy skin and the tender flesh, and the saw to cut the thick cranium to get at the juicy brain meat. Then he reached for the salt, set it within reach, and began chuckling to himself, fairly audibly, as he proceeded with the carving.

While all this was going on, Jack noticed that his three pals were getting fairly neurotic. They were pacing the floor and trying to break down the door of the cell they were in. The cell was right near the

new watergate, where Mr. Noxim could keep an eye on them. At one point during the ordeal, Tricky stopped by and tried to cheer them up by saying, "Stop worrying. I can assure you that this will not happen to any of you." He delivered a short, five minute speech, which began with, "My fellow Americans, ...."

Handy-man pleaded with Mr. Noxim to give them a break, but Tricky replied, "You took your break-in a long time ago. I am now just getting my revenge."

"But why the revenge?" asked Erlimbürger.

"Because you practically ruined my reputation!" said Mr. Noxim. My establishment doesn't exactly approve of what you did to those Jackasses! You are just being punished for the crime! OH! My roast is burning! See ya later!"

"Boy, what a little rat he is!" complained Mithcello. "If this goes on much longer, I'm going to lose my mind!"

At that moment, the chain saw began to sink into Jack's head, and he woke up. He was shaking so bad that he needed to take a sedative.

As our discussion proceeded, I discovered, through Jack's remarks, that the problem began a couple of years ago, when he and his three friends were posing as exterminators. They had been requested to get rid of some bugs in an office building; but, instead of killing the bugs, they added some of their own to a certain office. These were not ordinary bugs. They weren't even alive! They were composed almost entirely of metal and electronic materials!

In the days that followed, they collected quite a bit of information. The news media hadn't even a notion of what was going on!

The day that it all broke open, the news media came out with such stories as how the president was behind it all, the president was paying the four hush money (to keep them from talking,) and stories about how the four 'broke into' the office.

As the trials got underway, the prosecutors found themselves very lucky, in that the president had recorded his conversations with the four. Then they found themselves not-too-lucky, because someone had erased parts of the conversations on the tapes. Whoever did it, did a good job, because he fixed the tapes so they would sound as though there had been a malfunction! As time went by, the prosecutors and the jury found the president refusing to give up the tapes. So, they threw all sorts of subpoenas at him, which he ignored, until lately. It has been just recent, however, that the nation's leader has not only given up the tapes, but he has given up the transcripts as well! Either this man has decided to get it all done and over with, or he is getting terribly old and weak.

The four finally found themselves on trial, and they each received light sentences. Jack finished his first, so he has been at home, where he's been having these recurring dreams.

As Mr. Dane's psychiatrist, and having analyzed his problem, I feel that Jack should apologize to his rivals, the Jackasses, for having participated in the break-in. This ought to be done with a public statement. But, if he doesn't follow these instructions, he may lose his mind in its entirety. So, he has a choice between apologizing to those Jackasses, or losing his mind. I have advised him to take the first choice, and I hope that you will advise him likewise. (The solution couldn't be simpler!)

Jim de Shrink