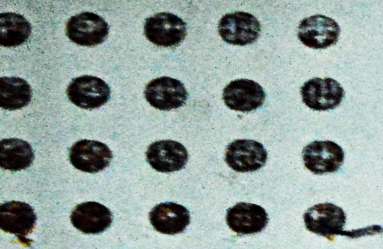


long-term

LOCKED UP

tile restriction

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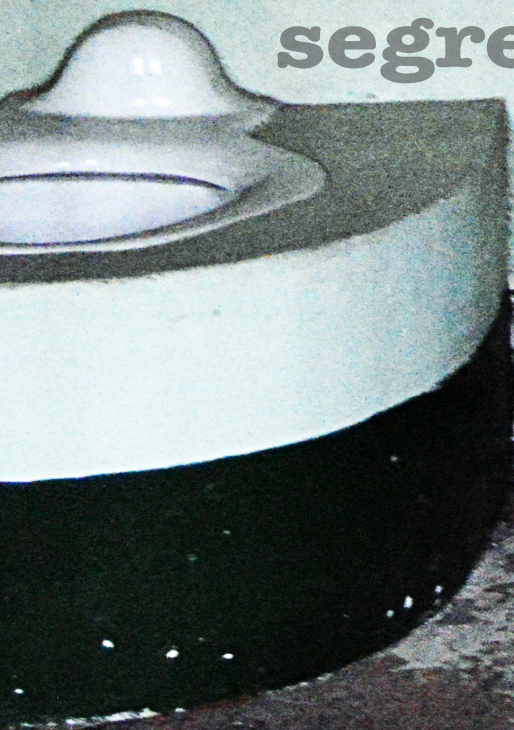


segregation

J.D. LAVELLE

lockdown

protective custody



Locked Up

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Find out more about the author at

www.jdlavelle.com

Chapter 1

“Okay,” a voice announced, “time to get out.” The side doors of the ten-passenger van opened and two men in dark blue uniforms stood, ready to greet the newest arrivals. Brian didn’t move. His hands and feet were shackled, and he was uncomfortable. He was more than ready for their trip to be over, even if the destination was prison, but he couldn’t reach the belt buckle.

One of the officers stepped up into the van and surveyed the two young men before him. The man looked at the pair, studying them for a long moment. Sizing them up. Were they going to be trouble or not? Finally, he said, “I’m going to unbuckle you one at a time. After I unbuckle you, slide to the edge of your seat and I’ll help you to the door.” There was a pause. “Okay?”

Brian nodded in agreement. He was in the second row, right behind a kid with a buzz cut and a foul mouth. Only now his fellow passenger wasn’t talking. Not a word. He simply sat and stared. The officer nodded at Brian, and then his gaze hardened as he looked at the other one.

“Did you hear what I said?” the officer asked. No response.

“What the hell?” Brian thought to himself. “What is this idiot trying to pull? He was perfectly fine all the way here. Now he wants to play dumb.”

The officer shook his head and asked again, his voice a little harder, “Are you going to play stupid?” He paused, waiting for an answer. “Is that how you want this to go down?”

Still no response.

“He seemed okay most of the way here,” the driver of the van offered from the front seat. “In fact, he couldn’t hardly keep his mouth shut. I don’t know what his deal is now.”

The officer leaned forward, unbuckled the still mute passenger, and calmly repeated his original directions.

“Slide to the edge of your seat, and I’ll help you down out of the van.” He moved back a foot, giving the young man room to sidle edgewise. No movement. Nothing.

“I’m going to give you one more chance. Move to the edge of your seat...now.”

Brian shook his head, thought about saying something, but knew better. The officer eased himself out of the van, conferred quietly with the other officer who listened, then nodded and said, “Go ahead.”

The officer reached for his belt, unsnapped a button and pulled out a small can of something as he stepped back to the van.

“Oh, no...” Brian let slip, taking a deep breath. He was still buckled and had nowhere to go.

“Are you gonna still play stupid with me?” the officer asked. “Because we can do this the hard way or the easy way. Unless you want to get sprayed, then I suggest you start listening to me and following my directions. Are we clear?”

To his credit, the young actor continued to stare straight ahead, unresponsive. The officer shook his head, then held up the can and depressed a button. A thin stream of reddish, yellow liquid shot from the can and hit the boy directly in the face.

Suddenly he wasn’t stupid anymore.

“Aaaaahhh!” he screamed, ducking sideways. “You can’t do that to me!”

The officer cut off the spray, but not before the stream of liquid caught Brian in the face too. His eyes had been open - watching the drama. Instantly there was searing pain as tears welled up in his eyes, the substance burning him wherever it touched. The smell choking him. He knew better than to open his mouth and ask for help, and with hands and feet shackled he couldn’t wipe away any of the burning liquid, so Brian sat with his eyes tightly shut, grimacing.

The officer cursed when he saw that Brian had been hit with the spray

too. His eyes hardened as he reached, none too gently, for the still squawking troublemaker.

“I’m filing a complaint,” the young man wailed, struggling to get to his feet after being yanked out of the van. “This is child abuse!”

The second officer barked, “Why don’t you shut up? Keep quiet like before.”

“I’m filing a complaint about that too!” came the retort. “You can’t talk to me like that.”

Tears still streaming down his face, Brian felt hands on and around him. The seat belt came free. He tried to help, but it was difficult with both hands and feet still shackled. He stumbled forward, and banged his head on the roof of the vehicle before falling from the van. Strong hands caught and steadied Brian.

“Easy,” a voice said. It belonged to the set of hands that guided him forward. Into a strange new place with razor-wire topped fences and long, low buildings with small windows. “We’ll get you inside and cleaned up in a minute.”

Brian was led into a receiving room where an unfriendly voice greeted them. He could barely see out of his burning, watering eyes, but his hearing was fine.

“Looks like the party got started without me,” the newest voice said.

“Yeah,” yelled the instigator. “It’s a party all right. Especially when you slow-head officers don’t know how to do your job. You can’t even use pepper spray right. Bunch of retards.”

Ignoring him, the officer asked, “Who got sprayed? No, wait. Let me guess. This bright boy with the mouth?” There were nods. “And this other one happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time.” It was not a question. More nodded heads in agreement. “Well, why don’t you take the genius to Medical so he can get cleaned up? I got this one.”

“Don’t I need to go to Medical too?” Brian asked.

“No,” the officer said emphatically. “You weren’t sprayed. Only

Einstein here was sprayed. That's what the paperwork is going to say and that's what happened. Understand?"

Brian stood silent.

The pair of officers nodded in agreement, and with their still complaining package in tow, they left. In short order the handcuffs and leg irons were removed and set aside on a bench. Brian felt better when he could move his hands and legs freely. The cuffs hadn't been too tight, but no matter how gently applied, the metal still had a tendency to bite into skin and bone. He reached up to wipe his eyes. The pepper spray still stung.

"See that door?" The officer said, pointing.

Brian wanted to point out that he couldn't see at all, but thought it best not to say anything. He nodded.

"Bathroom," the man continued. "Go in and wash your face and neck off. You need to get the OC spray washed off your skin or it will continue to burn. When you come out you need to take off all your clothes and hand them to me."

"What?" Brian was confused. Between the spray and the new surroundings, Brian was reaching his limit.

The officer raised an eyebrow slightly. He spoke very slowly and carefully.

"Maybe I didn't make myself clear." There was a pause. "Let's start from the beginning. Welcome to Perkenville Juvenile Correctional Facility. This is a maximum-security prison for young men. Some fine judge has seen fit to send you here to do our program. You can't leave until you complete this program. Part of the program is learning to follow directions. Are we clear so far?"

Brian nodded in agreement, and said "Yeah."

"Excuse me?" the officer asked. "I couldn't hear your answer."

"I said 'Yeah'," Brian coughed. "Sorry. That spray messed me up." Brian didn't feel like talking or taking off his clothes. The man in uniform

just shook his head, eyes narrowing slightly.

“That’s not my problem. Try again,” the officer said. There was a pause. “Are we clear so far?”

“Yes, sir,” Brian replied.

“Good. Now you’re getting with the program. Go wash off. When you’re cleaned up get out here so you can get searched. You will take off your clothes and hand them to me. Every new offender is strip-searched then issued a jumpsuit along with boxer shorts, socks, and a t-shirt. Do you have any questions?”

Brian thought for a brief moment about saying something smart, but decided against it. He’d already seen what being stupid could get him.

“No, sir.”

Brian didn’t want to be here. He knew he didn’t belong here, but here he was. Stuck. So he nodded and walked to the bathroom. The officer nodded, and said, “Thank you. For a moment, I thought we were about to have some trouble. Most young men don’t make such poor choices when they first arrive. Like your friend.”

Brian grimaced at the officer’s words, said nothing as he pulled open the door to the bathroom and stepped inside. After washing off as best he could, Brian returned to where the officer was impatiently waiting.

“Clothes, please,” the man said.

Brian gritted his teeth. He stripped unwillingly and then handed his street clothes to the man. He opened his mouth when told, lifted his tongue, and turned and squatted without complaint. He didn’t like it, but he did it. When the ordeal was over Brian stood and looked at the officer. The man pointed at a pile of clothing on bench.

“Those are your clothes. Put them on.”

Blinking against the pain of the lingering spray, Brian pulled on the socks, underwear, t-shirt, and jumpsuit. The jumpsuit was baggy and ill-fitting. He looked down at himself and shook his head. Brian looked like a clown. The officer nodded approvingly.

“Looks good,” he said. Brian stared at the man, jaws clenched. He didn’t say anything, but the expression on his face was clear.

“Like everybody else here,” the officer continued.

“I look stupid.”

The officer nodded again. “Like I said. Just like everybody else in here. Just remember. How long you stay in that jumpsuit is up to you. You act like your friend back there and you’ll get more than just OC spray in the face. You’ll stay here for a long time. And with lots of people just like him. Think about it.”

Brian didn’t say a word. He was already thinking about it. He was already thinking about what he had to do to be free again.