

It's Just A Matter Of Time

HELLO, DEAR READER;

IN MY INITIAL LETTER (i.e.: "ALL BY MYSELF") I MENTIONED THAT I AM IN PRISON; I DO NOT HAVE A PAROLE RELEASE DATE...AND WILL NEVER BE GIVEN ONE. SEVERAL YEARS AGO A STATE POLITIAN WAS REPORTED SAYING: "THE ONLY WAY A MURDERER IS GOING TO LEAVE PRISON IN THIS STATE, WILL BE IN A PINE BOX." THE JUDGE THAT OCHESTRATED MY MURDER TRIAL BACK IN 1974, WROTE AND TOLD PRISON AUTHORITIES: "... MR. FRITCHIE SHOULD BE KEPT IN YOUR CARE AND CUSTODY FOR THE REST OF HIS NATURAL LIFE." AND, TO THAT I SAY: "THANK YOU, YOUR HONOUR." IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME, ANYWAY. MAKES NO NEVERMINDS TO ME WHERE I PARK MY WEARY OLD CARCASS NOWADAYS. ONE PLACE IS ABOUT AS GOOD AS THE NEXT WHEN YOU'RE DIRT POOR AND JUST TWO STEPS AWAY FROM THAT DREADED REST HOME ANYHOWS, ME THINKS.

THE DAY I WAS SENTENCED, THE JUDGE SAID HE WISHED HE COULD GIVE ME THE DEATH SENTENCE, BUT HE COULDN'T, BECAUSE OF MY LIFE-LONG HISTORY OF INSANITY. SO, I WAS SENTENCED TO SERVE SEVEN YEARS-TO-LIFE, INSTEAD. IT WAS SIMPLY A MATTER OF **HOW MUCH TIME** I SHOULD SERVE IN PRISON FOR WANTONLY, NEEDLESSLY TAKING A HUMAN LIFE. TIME DIDN'T MUCH MATTER TO ME BACK THEN, QUITE FRANKLY, BECAUSE MY HEART WAS SO POISONED BY GUILT AND SHAME, I CONSIDERED TIME TO BE A LUXURY I NO LONGER DESERVED TO OWN. BEFORE THE JUDGE MADE THAT DAMNING REMARK IN MY REGARD, I'D STOOD UP IN COURT AND LITERALLY BEGGED THE JUDGE TO SENTENCE ME TO BE EXECUTED... IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME, ANYWAY, BEFORE THAT REAPER COMES-A-CALLING, BECAUSE LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE IS NOTHING MORE THAN AN EXTENDED CONTINUANCE ON A DELAYED DEATH SENTENCE, OR, LIFE ON THE INSTALLMENT PLAN MAYHAPS? WHAT ME WORRY? "DON'T SWEAT THE TIME, MR. FRITCHIE. JUST DO YOUR TIME, AND KEEP YOUR NOSE CLEAN, AND YOU'LL GET OUT OF PRISON IN SEVEN OR EIGHT YEARS," MY ATTORNEY TOLD ME. OH, REALLY? HE TOLD ME I'D DO ONLY SEVEN OR EIGHT YEARS, THIRTY-SEVEN YEARS AGO... AND I'VE BEEN LOCKED UP, CONSTANTLY, EVER SINCE. IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME, RIGHT?

THE PRISON PSYCHOLOGIST ASKS ME: "WHEN ARE YOU GOING HOME, MR. FRITCHIE?" I GIVE HIM A PUZZLED LOOK AND GO: "I **AM** HOME." (I'VE BEEN IN PRISON LONGER THAN HE'S BEEN ALIVE.) SO, HE REPHRASES HIS QUESTION: "WHEN ARE YOU GETTING OUT OF PRISON?" I SMILE AND REPLY: "WHEN I DIE." HE CLEARS HIS THROAT AND GIVES ME THAT MAGICAL TWO-WORD PSYCHOBABLE REPLY: "I SEE." (SEE WHAT?) I AM TOLD THAT PSYCHOTHERAPY IS PART... A VITAL PART... OF MY RE-HAH-BILL-ITATION (WHATEVER **THAT** IS??), TO WHICH I REPLY: "I SEE."

YA'LL HAVE YERSELVES A NICE DAY, AND I'LL CATCH YA LATER.....