

THE FALL OF TOM SURLY

Another ridiculous story by

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Every morning he would be first to waddle to the chow hall in his grey pants. No matter what the breakfast was being served, he always seemed to wind up with two or three portions- especially so if it were the rare occasion of a cake on the tray. Tom was quite large, and not at all fit and healthy.

He was tops at making deals. Whether it was trading semi-legal electronic items, or used sneakers in good condition, or even a pair of eyeglasses with an unusual frame, Tom was Johnny on the Spot to clinch the deal before anybody else could get a chance to get in on a trade. His lockers held more wealth than any other prisoner. But alas poor Tom- he had his troubles. His schemes, although sinister and brilliant, were completely distasteful, and many despised him behind his back.

Tom in his later years, would weigh in at around 500 pounds and lost the use of his legs due to complications of diabetes. He, once that obese, had to be pushed with considerable effort in an extra wide wheelchair. This no doubt from his peculiar after-breakfast snack of three or four large bags of potato chips every morning.

But the fall of Tom Surly actually took place long before that, when he was a spry young man of only 300 pounds. All his life he was a remarkable dealer; and although some of his

deals were strictly illegal, not this caused the fall of Tom Surly.

But one and only one which I mention in detail out of his many schemes might shed light on just how the peculiar fall of Tom came to be. He knew sports inside and out. He was never an athlete, but he could regurgitate sports trivia and statistics at will. He was rabid fan of all professional sports, and he could tell you all about salaries, stats, trades in the works, he knew it all. AND he had a remarkable rare book with all the names and addresses of every prominent athlete's agent Well?

Tom had a mail drop. Someone outside the prison agreed to be his official pretend residence. Daily scanning of daytime tv talk shows revealed the names of children with terrible diseases- most of them temrinally ill. Tom would pen a letter to perhaps a dozen different professional athletes at a time, and pretend to be a sick little boy with an incurable and hopeless ailment. The letters were ~~XXXXXXXX~~ dripping with sorrow and depression. He would close with the hook:

"But your'e my favorite _____ star.

football
baseball
basketball
hockey
soccer
boxing

If you could just find it in your heart to send me an auto-graphed _____ I would be forever in your debt."

jersey
ball
baseball bat
hat
photo

Remarkably, it worked well for him for a long time.

Most people would be surprised to discover just what an apartment stuffed full of sports memorabilia could actually fetch at auction. And so the gravy kept flowing to Tom. But nothing lasts forever, or almost nothing.

Tom had his other dalliances. In addition to his love for food, he was also absolutely addicted to young boyish looking men who were new to the prison and very vulnerable to an expert manipulator.

The poor boys with no facial hair were his favorite. He would grant items to them up front on the condition they eventually pay for them; sneakers (any size), sweets, potato chips, clothes, (also any size), and when the naive mark could not pay it back- somehow the young fool(s) would end up in an embrace with fondling and other things theres no need to be specific about.

Then there were Tom's political connections. Members of Tom's family were holding office in various capacities. To be brief, Tom was untouchable, or so everyone thought. Any prisoner or even officers giving Tom a problem, they get transferred to some other place far distant. Scary stuff for a prisoner.

The favorite venue for Tom's romantic interludes turned out to be the not so secret place of Tom's handicapped cell. He had a special cell for handicapped people, and a specially welded super wide bed. But its proximity to the correction officers vantage point led to repeated embarrassments for Tom and any young fool he caught in his web. Many times caught in flagrante delicto.

But he was quite a schemer. He had to find a love nest somewhere else more private.

In addition to his life now becoming a scandalous joke, the Justice Department suddenly started paying alot of attention and was barking up the tree of his sports memorabilia empire. You see, Tom failed to learn from all those tv shows that he watched all day that professional atletes sometimes like to turn a charitable gift like a signed jersey into a media event. You know, tv cameras at the child's bedside in the hospital; into the room strides the "surprise" sports hero who gives the sick child a hug and and armful of gifts. A few sound bytes, some flashing cameras, and then turn to the next story.

But when these savvy sports agents who were arranging for Tom's alter ego as sick child to receive an autographed sports item, and tried to arrange a media event, some of them found out that the residence was a mail drop run by two hucksters. They informed John law, and suddenly even Tom's politically connected family couldn't wrest him free from the long arm's grip.

So with all that heat climbing up his britches, Tom wanted some solace and loving. While sometimes twice a week investigators were searching his cell and taking photos, Tom was creeping with one of his young fools into a cramped crawlspace in the ceiling of the prison chapel. Among the backs of steel light fixtures, wires, pipes, and framings, Tom was having his way again by the dim light that seeped through the backs of the fixtures.

Can you imagine the sacrilege?

The two sneaks naked together in the space above the ceiling quite doing who knows what, while below in the chapel, the minister delivering a fiery sermon about the evils of alcohol and adultery. The two sneaks becoming more and more belabored and enthusiastic, and the minister below becoming louder and more animated- his green and gold thread vestments rippling as he gesticulated wildly.

In an instant light fixtures, wire, plaster dust, pieces of frame and two naked men embracing came plunging down upon, as luck would have it, one of the few empty pews in the chapel. The pews splintered and shattered. Quickly recovering from his shock, the minister began to howl his invectives. The emergency button- pushed. The emergency response team came quickly. Tom and his embarrassed fool handcuffed and although they both walked out of the chapel on their own feet, each were covered with scrapes and bruises. Everybody back to their cells immediately. Lock in. Tom and the young fool went directly to the "hole".

In later years Tom refused to talk about it. He weighed 500 pounds. He would have been out of prison when he died if it were not for that sports memorabilia scheme which added years after his original sentence. He refused to sign the papers to amputate his legs (they were covered in ulcers and were gangrenous), So in a short time, they buried him whole.

And that was the fall of Tom Surly.