

## the simple facts of a kansas city confession

By Joseph Taverney

You don't hear too much bout no prison breaks any more. Heck, in the thirties and forties, you had every dang fool in the joint busting loose. Dillinger, Nelson... But it's just like any other hustle, see, you gotsta be in on the ground floor or it just don't work. I mean, once a trick is tried and the law gets wise, well... you jess gotta think up a new trick. That's a simple fact. Even a fool don't get fooled twice. And let's say even in the small cunt's-haired chance you got of bustin' out - you do, where you gonna go? Whatcha gonna do? They got your social security, your prints... heck; they even got your D-N-A. Might as well stay put in jail, you ask me. Or you can always try to fake a fit or go nuts or sumpin', but them tricks been tried too. You land your ass up in front of ten state quacks, prodding and poking you, and them boys can smell a faker. And even if you fool them Harvard boys, whatcha' s'posed to do? Drool and shit yerself till they let ya out? Till you finish your stretch? Fat chance. The way I see it, now'a days, you caught, you caught. Simple fact. And jess as sure as I'm the best stud player the good side of the Missip, I know... KNOW, I cannot do, not one minute in the state pen. That's the God's honest. Not one. Not that I'm not a tough ole boy, see, I just know I couldn't. And a man who knows his limitations, knows hisself... well, that there; that's a smart man.

So what's a man to do then? Go on the straight and narra? Nine to five it, live in a trailer? Work at Mac Donnels? Not likely. I have grown accostumed to a slightly higher standard of livin'. And besides, I got my pride. So what to do then? I'll tell you what. You don't get caught. Straight forward and simple.

Don't - get - caught.

See, for me, crimes more than jess a profession; it's a goddamned philosophy. It's gots its rules, jess like everything else. And you study up dem rules, and well, you can jess bout get away with anything.

Sound easy? It ain't. Jess look in any jail. Cooler's filled with boys weren't 'sposed to be caught. See, any fool can wave a gun around, intimidate a cashier, open a safe. It's not rocket science; it's crime! But it's a pro who can do all that, AND... get away with it. It's knowing your angles and playing them. See, jails is filled with amateurs. Boys who didn't know shit - boys who didn't plan. And let me tell you, a man who fails to plan... well, he jess plannin' to fail. Simple fact.

Now take your average crook, he burst into the Stop n' Shop with his pecker out, yelling, "This a stick up", before ever steppin' foot in the store before. Can you believe their nerve, never casing a place? Thinkin' alls you need is guts. Guts got no one nothing 'cept kilt. That's a simple fact.

I knew this fellar out a Knoxville, never loaded his pistol. Never. Always went out shooting blanks, empty barrels. Said, "Loading the piece is what makes it a felony". (Ha-ha), loading the piece... HORSESHIT! Man, it's only a felony you get caught. Which don't make no sense if you ain't planning on being caught. Know what I'm saying? Bunch a negative thinkin'.

It's like going to the track. Most guys'll tell you, "Oh, I can't afford to be throwing my money away at no horses". What in the shit kind of negative thinkin' is that? Who's goin' to the track to lose? Bunch a suckers, that's who.

See, if you know your horses, the jockeys - got a little inside in-for-mation - you know the angles... you ain't gonna lose. It's jess like a job. You do your homework, you play your angles, and you ain't getting caught... (ha). Empty gun, loaded gun. What's the fuckin' difference? Only a fool goes out naked!

Besides, there come a day you might need them bullets. Find yerself in a tight spot, all wrapped up in law. Might have to blast yer way out.

See, most guys're scared to shoot a cop. But let me tell you, only scary thing I know, is the prospect of doing time. Cops bleed, jess like the rest of us sinners. Don't believe me? Shoot one. I did.

Not that I'm a cold-blooded mad dog killer, don't get me wrong. Jess I do what I need to. A fool gets in my way, and... well, he gets dealt with. That's a simple fact.

Anyway, them bullets not all jess for jobs, see. Sometimes they're good fer jess like... tying up loose ends and such. Like you got yourself a partner you can't trust, or a witness seen too much. You know what I'm saying? Them's the type of things wind you up in jail quicker than a goose fart, you don't take care of 'em.

Now let me see... six. There has been six, if you count that croupier I ran over up in Reno. Didn't mean to do that one. He jess jumped right in front of my car. I mean, it...it was his car, and I...I was sorta stealing it. But...but he jess leapt out in front. Playing cards and blood flew all over the dang place. A real shame. I do most of my gambling on the river boats now.

And then there was that night cashier at the Donut'orama in Tulsa. And once again, this was not my fault. See I'd been casing this joint for a good 10 days. Had it all figured. It's out in the middle of nowhere, there was only one camera and it don't work, I knows where the alarms at, and where the safe's at too. And they only gots one person working there - one pimply-faced-18-year-old-high-school-drop-out-night-shift-retard. Easy score. I figure the safes good for a grand, at least. Register, four, five hundred. Enough to make it worth my while.

So I bust in there, guns blazing and I announce my intentions. But this dimwit don't reach for the cash, he goes for the fuggin alarm. So...POP! Not like I wanted to. But anyone who decides his life is worth four fifty an hour, well!

I was doing him a favor, putting him out of his misery... shit; I never did get that safe open. Punk had the combo, and dead men... well; they ain't likely to tell you things. That's a simple fact. Register only had \$87. And all the Boston Creams and jellies were covered in the boy's brains 'n skull and such, but I did manage to get me two dozen of them sugar raised donuts and one of them refillable mugs of java. So... all things considered, it wasn't a pure waste.

See, that's the attitude you need. You can't be kill happy, but you can't be all hesitations neither. It's a tightrope. See if I'da hesitated to kill that boy, I might be in jail now. In Tulsa!

"Its you or him." That's what my uncle used to say. "Its you or him boy, what'cha gonna do?" (Ha) Earle, good ole Earle. Taught me most everything I know. He was a big man. He had some adversity with weight, 300 pounds at least. Wore a Fu

Manchu mustache and a pompadour. Drove a Harley. Robbed the San Antonio savings and loan in '86. Acquitted in '87. Kinda a legend down in the Amarillo area.

Now there was a man who knew the angles. Over 200 jobs pulled, and that's only counting the ones what I know of, and he never spent, not one day in the pen. Now that there is a professional.

He's the one took me out on my first job. Bought me my first piece. Got me laid, drunk, you name it. Fine fat ole Earle. Taught me about marked bills, die packs and surveillance cameras. Taught me credit card scams and identity theft. Told me about ballistics and such and how I gotta change my piece after I use it. Showed me how to hotwire a car and where to lie low if the heat was on.

Also told me about that bank job in San Antonio, and showed me the key to the locker where he got twenty-five grand hid. Up in some bus depot in Kansas City. Said he was waiting for the heat to die down before he went and got it. Old fool.

Now I know kin is kin, and blood is thicker... and all that. But twenty-five grand...shit, well, that's a lot of green backs. And a bus locker, now that's an easy score. Fellar could lay low for a long time with twenty-five large. Call me cold blooded if you will, I just saw the angle. Earle would done the same. Besides he was sixty-four. What in the shit he gonna spend the money on?

And then again, he coulda' jess been messin with me. Earl always had a common and likable tendency towards exageratin'. Shit, he could a spent that money years ago. Which would be unfortunate, seeing how I already shot him deader than shit. But there is only one way to be sure about these things, and that's to drive the ole Caddy up to Kansas City and have ma'self a look-see in that ole locker. Now that's jess a simple fact.

*Jersey City Born, Brooklyn based, Joseph Taverney began as a writer/actor/producer with the award-winning HORSE TRADE THEATER COMPANY from '96-'00, enjoying a successful run with his campy, over-the-top THE FINE DINING ACID TEST. He then turned to filmmaking, writing and producing for CHRISTIANA PICTURES with '02's CAGED & '05's THE GOAD, where he is currently writing and directing the documentary, FINDING A NUDIST. Presently working on a collection of short stories and a non-fiction film history while contributing regularly to MOVING PICTURES MAGAZINE, his many eclectic credits include; animal-wrangler for '03's AS LUCK WOULD HAVE IT, cover-model for the cult vampire novel AGYAR and his nine-to-five; tour-guide in NYC's Central Park via Horse-drawn-carriage.*