

Amos Branson-Part 6-Fini 2

I have to say, the peach pie sucked. Have you ever had a piece of fresh pie, home-made and then, within a few days had a slice of frozen pie? It's kind of like seeing a movie about scenery such as Yosemite in black and white, thirties vintage maybe, and then actually going to the park for real. The sweet smell of the forest knocks you off your feet. The Merced River is running right at your feet and the pines smell as fresh and clean as if God just planted them. Yeah, that's how the peach pie tasted: black and white. The coffee was pretty good though!

The cook, his name was Dan, Dan Spiner (in case you know him), was just getting off work and out of the hazy blue asked me if I wanted to go to the sheriffs department and find out what was going on with Amos.

"Hey, if you're interested, you and me can take a ride down to the sheriffs and find out what they're going to do with Amos. The sheriff and I went to school together, same grade, and he won't mind if we drop in. Shit, he's probably got a rope tied into a noose already. A rope for Amos, not for us." How could I say "no?"

Riding in his car was a journey of power versus intelligence; if that makes any sense. He was driving a '56 Chevy with a 427 cubic inch engine. At least, that's what he told me; with a grin on his face. It felt like riding on a bomb. I could feel the engine rumbling right through my stomach and when he accelerated, which he did in fits and starts, he laid me back in my seat with a snap that told me he could probably pop the nose off the ground if he wanted. I thanked God we were in town. Out on the highway he would have scared me to death. He used his head though so it turned out to be just a fun ride with the potential of mayhem. It was interesting!

At the sheriff's office we went right in. Dan waved at the desk Sergeant who, in turn, motioned us to follow and took us to the back of the station; to receiving. The back of the station wasn't anything you will ever see in a cop movie. There was a bench with steel eyes in the concrete floor to which "customers", as the sergeant termed arrestees, were manacled until their disposition or cell was made ready. That was it. One door and what appeared to be just old plywood walls. Certainly not the atmosphere of San Francisco's Mark Hopkins. Sitting there was Amos, hunched over. He looked up at Dan and I when we came in. As he did so his expression changed from one of boredom to one of deep and utter contempt laced with deep and abiding hate. I remembered, long ago, seeing a mug shot of Charles Manson with wide, satanic eyes. I couldn't imagine seeing worse but the eyes of Amos were burning right through us. "If looks could kill" is an expression which fell short because it doesn't mention the method of killing. Amos' eyes said he wanted to peel strips of skin from me and pour acid on the open wounds all the while suffocating me with filthy, excrement laden rags. It did, in fact, make me nauseous.

The sergeant, seeing sweat break out on my brow, told me not to worry, "He ain't going anywhere. You can put the blood back in your face." Dan chimed in:

"What'd you guys find out there?"

The sergeant looked around almost furtively then whispered, "I ain't supposed to tell anyone this but"...hesitation and more looking around..."We think we found the mom and dad." He then shut up as the sheriff, who had been out at the farm most of the day, came in.

"Danny boy! What the hell are you doing here?" Dan introduced me as the one who originally called the "Amos thing" into the sheriff's office. "Well, son, you did us a huge favor!" he slapped me on the back. "That was quite a mess. Worst I've

seen since I've been sheriff these last 11 years. Mom and dad we found in an bedroom upstairs; all splayed out and posed; mummified. Been there, it looks, like at least two years. This piece of shit had it all walled off. We had to break down the whole damned wall but we knew they were there because of the stench. I guess that was what you meant when you said you were pretty sure something was dead out there. Gotta run but, thanks again." He looked back at Amos. "You sorry piece of shit! You're gonna fry for this. Your folks was good people. To good for the likes of you you son of a bitch!"

Amos smiled hugely; flipping the sheriff off from behind his back.

#

Continued