

# Birmingham Jones Pt.2

"People are always concerned with time, place, person, object or thing. Concerned with sex, money, drugs, orgasms and power. Concerned with speed, beauty, nature, life and love. They are all-consumed by their own abilities and the skills of others around them and how best to exploit both for profit, but all these concerns do not concern me. Nor does the gun in your hand or the mess you've just made in my home. What does concern me, what does cause me significant undue unreasonable and unrequited stress is the fact that there is a slave in my house threatening the prosperity of my lineage and the life of my daughter and the integrity of my property. What does concern me is the fact that I have to look upon your dark eyes and your strange attire and limit my actions and speech to limit yours, stranger".

"Shut your God-dam mouth old man and get on your knees like I said".

"Alright, alright, alright son, give me a moment to compose myself. I'm not as young as I once was, and you have the upper hand against me and my family".

"Now, explain to me old man. What are you doing here, dressed like a character from A Christmas Carol, in this huge house, virtually alone, and without any lights? Is this some sort of kinky game?"

"Slave, please lower your weapon. Why do you threaten us? We mean you no harm. this is our abode and you invade us like a Moorish barbarian."

"Moorish? Slave? What the fuck did you just call me!?" Birmingham loses his goddamn mind. His usual cool exterior falls, and beneath that law-abiding, law-enforcing, law-upholding persona lies the rage of one hundred million displaced, enslaved, pushed-down people. All at once the spiritual and ancestral nations of Africa rise through the blood of Birmingham Jones pumping vivaciously into his every limb until it finds an energetic release. Like a switch-blade his right arm and clenched fist fire straight up and meet with the very confused and pompous chin of John Doubleday. Doubleday's head flies back and his neck and flailing body follow in an animated fashion that was unseen in this house up until that time. The unknown flexibility of John Doubleday was unknown even to him. At that moment, there wasn't nothing nor everything known to him. His spark was gone. His lights were out. Mr Doubleday's head and body crashed down upon The Portland Vase smashing it and the table it stood on proudly into a hundred or more shattered pieces. Mr Doubleday will be very upset when he eventually regains consciousness, to know that the vase that he had spent the last seven months painstakingly and dutifully fixing and gluing back together was again broken. He had been commissioned by a private patron following a previous incident that occurred in February of the same year.

Earlier that year:

The highlight of Mr Doubleday's career came after the 7th of February 1845 when a young man unknown to him, who later admitted having spent the prior week "indulging in intemperance", smashed The Portland Vase. A beautiful example of Roman cameo glass, and among the most famous glass items in the world, into hundreds of pieces.

After Mr Doubleday's selection for the restoration, he went ahead and commissioned a watercolour painting of the fragments by Mr Thomas H. Shepherd of London. No account of his restoration currently survives, but on the 1st of May he discussed it in front of the Society of Antiquaries of London, and by the 10th of September he had glued the incredible vase whole again. This evening was September the 11th 1845. One hundred and fifty-six years later bigger things will shatter, and implications will run long into the 21st Century. Neither Birmingham Jones or Mr Doubleday will ever know that level of societal transformation or post-horror fear. They will, however, know the internal transformation of spiritual and personal change. By the time this tale runs out of time, each actor, for good or ill, will have expectations, hopes, fears and prejudices atomised.

37 small splinters from the interior or thickness of the vase were left out; the cameo base disc, which was found to be a modern replacement, was set aside for separate display. A new base disc of plain glass, with a polished exterior and matte interior, was diamond-engraved "Broke Feby 7th 1845 Restored Sept 10th, 1845 by John Doubleday". Or it would have been if Birmingham hadn't of been disturbed by the stable girl during his well-earned rest. Mr Doubleday had been destined to have been bonused by The British Museum an additional £25 (equivalent to £2,500 in 2016) for his work. Little did they know that had the bonus had been paid, had the vase been restored as destiny expected, had the work been made complete, Mr Doubleday's reputation would have been exceptional beyond the life-span of his great great great great grandchildren.

At the time undisturbed by the ignorance of Doubleday or the limited patience of Birmingham, the restoration was termed "masterly" and Doubleday was lauded by The Gentleman's Magazine for demonstrating "skilful ingenuity" and "cleverness ... sufficient to establish his immortality as the prince of restorers". But that was another time, another universe, another choice of words away. Although it was a mere 60 seconds, and a few words exchanged between two confused men, the ramifications sent a shockwave of change rippling through the universe. Both scenarios might as well have been spawned in the imagination of bipolar gods on polar opposite sides of the known universe. One path led to sanity and predictability, one path leading to adventure, and neither men knowing the implication of their violent interaction.

Now, instead of William Andrew Oddy, a former keeper of conservation at the museum noting in 2006 that the achievement "must rank him in the forefront of the craftsmen-restorers of his time." Doubleday's restoration would remain unknown, as so far as Mr Doubleday continues to lay unconscious on the floor of his study, the vase will not be restored any time soon or in the far future. The vase will not lie in a case, protected and admired by patrons and passers-by and it will not have the same adhesive for the next 100 years. The vase was never to be restored by J. W. R. Axtell in 1948–1949, nor was it to then be restored by Nigel Williams in 1988–1989. At that moment, at 7am on the morning of September the 11th 1845 the pieces of glass, painstaking glued together were once again lay strewn upon a hard floor in a terrible state of disrepair. It didn't seem fair. Or at least it wouldn't when Doubleday eventually regains his spirit from the land of the dead.

Isobelle Norma Gentry was a fine girl. Poor, but easy to look at and her father knew this. Too poor to send her to Finishing-School and to foolish to see the benefit, Mr Gentry made a deal with the Manager of Doubleday's estate to hire her cheaply in exchange for a small plot of land, enough that he may grow some vegetables there freely with limited taxation to the landlord. Marcus Wolff knew a good deal when it came to him and when he laid his eyes on

Isobelle he saw great potential. She had strong arms, broad shoulders, strong looking legs, built for carrying weight rather than parading. Isobelle also had a curvaceous figure which included child-bearing hips, huge god-like tits and an ass that just wouldn't quit. Her beauty was worth more than the measly plot of dirt her old man had traded her in for. But with 7 other mouths to feed and no dowry, she wasn't fit for marrying off, so Mr Gentry would have been stuck with Isobelle until her tits and ass sagged, her arms and legs lost their strength and her looks faded beyond the desires of even the lowliest of wankers. It was Isobelle that Birmingham Jones laid his eyes on in the stables and it was Isobelle that knew she was not alone and saw him ascend into the rafters. You see, Isobelle was there in hay laying innocently for Oliver Miller to finish his day grinding at the millstone so that he could then enter the open barn and grind something else. Isobelle was quite the minx and with all her daily chores done and food eaten, she set to relaxing in their usual meeting place. She heard someone approach, and in the playful way that she always did, she pretended to be asleep so that Oliver would take control. She liked a man who took control and Oliver was no exception. He was always ready to pound her until her desires were met. Only, the footsteps she heard, the breath she smelt, the presence she felt wasn't Oliver's but Birmingham's. She lay there still, and he didn't try to wake her. He was confused and tired, beaten down and starving. He had even less opportunity to get some Chinese food now. It was rare in his time but now, now he has no chance. He went up in the rafters and that is where he stayed until Oliver did eventually arrive and Isobelle met him with dire news.

"There's a nigger in the loft!" she hissed. "There's a what, where?" Oliver struggled to hear her. "Come closer woman, enough of your games." he continued. "Listen to me, keep your voice down," she whispered. "We have an intruder on the master's estate," she concluded as she gestured up towards the roof of the stable building. "Okay, don't worry, go to the house and let Master Doubleday know, I'll go and look" he wanted to seem like the type of guy he thought she wanted him to be, brave, able to deal with shit. "No, you don't understand, this person is black, he must be a runaway or a thief or a murderer. He's not from God. His clothes, they are very strange." her concern for Oliver pumped him up and he felt like she had taken the bait. He puffed out his chest and then gestured to his belt. "Look, if this fella gets awry then I'll cut him, simple" he was pushing his luck. Oliver had never cut bread let alone another human. "I feel like we are wasting a lot of time here Oliver. Let's just get this sorted and then we can get back to what we are really here for." she gave him a little wink and she started towards the main house. "Oliver smacks her arse as she walks away and says, "You little fox, I'm ready for your wet warm hole" he points to his engorged penis hidden beneath his sackcloth pants. "Feck off and go get rid of that nigger Oli" she sniped before heading inside the main house.

Oliver carefully and quietly had a mooch around the barn. He could hear some light snores and headed in the direction of the sound. Raising his head up above the boards he peeked up above the hay-line and there he was, our hero, Birmingham Jones completely tuckered out. There he lay, still no the wiser as to where he is, or when he is, or why he is where he is. Oliver pulls himself up with ease. His huge solid and forbearing arms lift his trim solid frame without effort. Ninja-like yet nervous he stands over Birmingham. Slowly he reaches for the nearest heavy object and before Birmingham could stir he was smacked clear in the temple with a horseshoe. Miller turned him over and bonded him. His arms tight behind his back, he gagged Birmingham and knotted his ankles together before calling out to Isobelle who now stood below the pair on the floor below with two other men, one of them Master Doubleday and the other, his manservant, Maxwell Milton. Oliver lowered the unconscious cop down to Maxwell whilst Mr Doubleday and Miss Gentry looked on. Maxwell and Miller then carried

Birmingham into the house and sat him down in an old wooden chair. The secured him to the seat and then discussed what they would do now. Stirring and bleeding Birmingham shivered and then felt the warmth of an open fireplace. The smell of the coal and peat was pleasant to him and reminded him of his time on the farm. He opened his left eye and sweat dripped into it clearing his vision. A tear then dripped down his cheek into the cut that was now freshly stinging as Miller has cut him with the sharp side of the shoe. Miller and Gentry were handed some coin for their efforts and asked to leave. Maxwell and Doubleday discussed how best to deal with their untimely intruder by candlelight in the next room. Birmingham could hear their voices but could not make out every word. They suddenly stood upright and approached the room where Birmingham was sat gathering his thoughts and enjoying the temporarily soothing glow of the fire-pit.

"Remove his gag Maxwell, good, now, tell me, boy. Where is it that you ran away from, eh?"

"I was brought here by some suspects I was tracking back in Birmingham. I haven't run away from anywhere. Who are you?"

"I'll ask the questions this morning son. Now, what do you mean, you were brought here? By whom were you brought to my estate and for what purpose?"

"Listen, old man, I don't know what kind of game this is that you're playing with me, but you have to untie me and let me go. You don't understand, I'm a detective in the Birmingham Police Force."

"Forgive my manservant and I for laughing boy but did you say you were a police officer? In Birmingham? I do believe the Prime Minister has gone quite mad! Hiring blacks in Birmingham. I mean, I knew Prime Minister Peel was all for spreading the police service to all areas, but I didn't realise he was this desperate for staff"

"Prime Mini...Prime Minister Peel?"

"Come on lad, don't you even know who pays your wage?"

"You mean Callaghan, not Peel. Callaghan"

"Callaghan? Maxwell, have we missed something, no, I didn't think so."

"Please, listen to me, my name is Birmingham..."

"...ha! Maxwell my good man, first he thinks he is a police officer from Birmingham and now the poor chap thinks his name is Birmingham. I think Miller may have hit him somewhat too hard."

"Can I have some water? I need a drink"

"Maxwell, get our guest a drink. Now listen here my good fellow, enough of your lies or I will be forced to contact our local police and have them take you into custody. I think with your ravings and the unfortunate complexion you are in possession of it may be the madhouse for you."

"Sir, please, listen to me. My name is Birmingham Jones. I come from Birmingham city. I have lived there my entire life, I am a police officer, a detective and I was brought here against my will by criminals whom I was tracking. They hit me over the head and placed me in the boot of their vehicle and brought me here, I assumed to kill me but when I managed to get out there was nobody about. I walked towards your house to seek help as I saw a dim light in the distance but when I approached I thought best not to enter before the light of day. I then sought shelter in your outbuildings and so as not to disturb the young lady there I went up into the rafters to try and take some rest. I meant no harm to anyone. Now, do you have a phone so that I can call my superior officer?"

"Outrageous! A likely tale indeed! Tell me, negro, what is a phone? What do you mean by this?"

"Negros...Son of a... Sir, I please with you. Release me and let me use your telephone and I won't press charges against you."

"Telephone...you don't suppose this negro has damaged his head? Do you think he means telegraph, Maxwell? yes...that could be it. Listen, the nearest telegraph station from here is a day's ride north back into Birmingham where you say you came from young man".

"I don't understand, what do you mean, a day's ride? I got down here in about 30 minutes by car. Listen, I don't want to get violent up in here but if you don't let a brother lose now, I'm gonna open up one hell of a can of whoop ass in this hizzouse".

"Damn it, Maxwell, the damn thing's going wild and speaking in tongues. Quickly, send him outside and tie him up in the coal shed, he sounds like he's trying to put some black magic spell on us."

Maxwell makes a move over to Birmingham, but little did he know that Jones had been stalling for time and had managed to loosen his bonds. As quick as a cat he launched at Maxwell with a poker that was by the fireplace and then scooped up some hot coals using the fireplace shovel and flings them straight in the manservant's face. They just cause a glancing blow but it's enough to remove Maxwell's attention from what is now a dangerous situation. Mr Doubleday calls out and retreats into the study area grabbing for whatever he can find to defend himself. Birmingham stands as tall as an oak above Maxwell and in an unrelenting bout of fury, he unleashes a beating that no man deserves down upon the body of the incapacitated and bloodied man. Moving now towards Doubleday, Birmingham flings the poker straight at him like a spear. Ducking quickly and retreating into the corner of the room Doubleday manages to hide behind a cupboard door from which he now peeks from, whimpering. Jones reaches into his jacket and on his left side, he felt the presence of an old friend. He was packing. Without hesitation, his training kicks in and he reverts into cop-mode. He screams at Doubleday to come out and threatens to shoot him if he refuses. What choice does he have? His home has been invaded and his manservant and long-time companion Maxwell has already been assaulted beyond repair. He holds up his hands and gathers his inner strength. He remembers his upper-class upbringing and starts his attempt to talk Jones down. It is at this point that his feet are lifted off the ground and he started to fly backwards in the air...

Birmingham Jones will return in Pt.3