

FROM THE INSIDE, OUT! # 2

BRANDON LEWIS[∞]

This is the second piece in an ongoing series of short stories by the author, who reports on his experiences being incarcerated. In this report, Lewis makes observations about how the conditions humans are born into shape behavior, the human capacity to change, and the role of society in interrupting these cycles.

As I write this I am on solitary confinement, awaiting a transfer to another Level Four facility. For recreation I go to a room where a pull up bar is bolted to a concrete wall. The ceiling is open, giving me a view of the sky.

While taking laps I looked down to behold a mosquito, freshly trapped in a spider's web. Suddenly a fat, black spider climbed out of a small hole in the concrete wall and the battle was on! The mosquito thrashed about trying to escape and when I looked closer the spider was patiently repairing broken strands of web keeping the trap strong.

Captivated by this situation I watched as the spider got a hold of one of the mosquito's legs, covering it in its silk! Then it got another leg, and then a wing!

The mosquito was in trouble!

For a brief second I had an impulse to take action, to break the web and set the mosquito free! But then I thought:

"What about the spider?"

I then realized the spider wasn't trapping the mosquito for fun, but for its very survival! I'm sure mosquitos don't taste very good but the spider couldn't just up and change its diet or find a more humane way to provide nutrition. From the womb it had been conditioned to be a spider and at that second it was stuck within its role.

This is so profound to me because now my recreation is over and I sit back in my cell realizing that I am surrounded by spiders, human ones, many of whom were fed crack and meth while in the wombs from drug addicted mothers. They were born into roach- and rat-infested houses, never forced to clean or do chores, which led to irresponsible children. The food in the ice box was molded, their clothes poor, which led to a poverty, scrape-to-get-by mind state.

The gangster or drug addict men in the house cursed every other word so that's how the children learned how to talk and they used and sold drugs, that showed the child how to go about making a living. At school the kids made fun of the poor kid's clothing until the kid lashed out in violence and suddenly the jokes stopped, teaching the child violence was the answer, and if violence is the answer for that it must be the answer for this, so boom! "Give me those shoes!"

[∞] Brandon Lewis is a writer and author who has been incarcerated for the last 16 years and has engaged in revolutionary work for the last ten. He has written novels, screenplays, articles and essays, and hopes to continue developing his prolific literary career for years to come.

No one notices. No one cares. Class A robbery upon another little boy and the only result was everyone complimenting him on his new sneakers. So now forget going in the store stealing something to eat he'll just rob the entire store!

He has the answer!

If he or she wants something they'll take it and you'll give it up or they'll show you the answer too! Now the OG that everyone respects takes the young kid on a robbery! Someone puts up a fight and boom! In that instance that child was that spider, literally not knowing any better, impossible to be anything other than what it was, locked into its role.

The unavoidable reality is they need to be removed from society and reprogrammed, they need to understand right from wrong and make amends the best they can for the people they've harmed or killed, but at what point do we as a society understand them holistically and embrace even them as a part of one human family? I was once that spider, a horrible person but after 14¹ years of incarceration I have changed! Yet I still have decades left in prison where I continue to help spiders transform into people.

By the time my recreation was over the battle had come to an end. The mosquito was dead, almost neatly folded in the web's corner and the spider was back in its hole. I thought, "One day this society will create a world where spiders were no longer manufactured and mosquitos were no longer trapped." This is America's task!

Just another report, From the Inside, OUT!

¹ As of the time of publication, Mr. Lewis has been incarcerated for sixteen years.