

Two archetypes.

I'M ED Bradley for the *CBS Evening News*. We're in Detroit for the Republican National Convention and also for our on-the-street interview series, "Faces of the Recession." Nineteen-eighty has brought hard times in Detroit. Today we're on Cass Avenue talking with "Victor." Thanks for talking to us, Victor. And he's got his dog with him. His three-legged dog. Care to introduce America to your dog, Victor?

"This is Jesus."

Your dog's name is Jesus?!

"Yessir! Jesus. Only dog I ever know."

That's a different name for a dog, for sure. Do you work, Victor. Your job?

"Out of work twelve years. My job, fin' somethun' to eat evry day."

Are you able to do that?

"Usually."

What was your last paying job?

"Paperboy."

'Paperboy'? How old are you?

"Goin' on fifty - I think. Yah, fifty, 1930, 1980."

What happened to that job?

"Someone register my gun for me, boss foun' out. That burn me. I'm a law abidin' citizen. You never know when you gotta protec' yaself."

Do you have a gun now?

"No sir, no, they took it. Haven' had it for years. Coulda use it a time or two."

Written by K.G. Jones.

© 2021. For copyright permission, go to codelldetroitfiction.com/about

Do you feel safe without a gun?

“No, no. Las’ week these three punks jump me on Warren. Knock me down, go through my pockets, three seconds. Three seconds! I can’ believe it, I sat there.”

You weren’t hurt badly, then? What did they take?

“My bottle! Smash it and ran. A waste, that what it was. Total wase.”

Did you report it?

“Report it?”

To the police.

(laughter)

You didn’t report it.

(laughter)

You’re having a little difficulty with your balance, Victor. Are you okay?

“Yessir, yessir. Holdin’ my own.”

Do you have a place to stay tonight, Victor?

“Oh, yes; yessir. I got a good place. Regular place.”

That’s a bright spot. That’s good.

“Real good. Rent-free. Empty buildin’. All to ourselves, me, Jesus, the rats.”

I see.

Victor, do you get the news? Have you heard of the Afghan Freedom Fighters?

“Freedom fighters? No, sir. I got all the freedom I can stan’ righ’ here.

“You got any change, man?”

#