

I've spent my life speaking my mind and as a result, offending the fuck out of people.

My primary purpose is never to offend, but that's always the collateral damage. The problem is that my honest opinions always turn out to be highly offensive to 99 percent of the public. And I realize that the offended groups are often well-organized, psychotic, or, worst of all, well-organized *and* psychotic. But that has never deterred me from opening my yap and talking shit.

In the course of a long, dubious career of shit-talking, my thin Caucasian lips have never feared flinging feces at anyone.

Anyone except the Masons.

I'm not a superstitious man, but something happened nearly a dozen years ago that made me afraid to ever shit-talk the Masons in public discourse or even in private thought.

It was the morning of July 4th, 1996—exactly two hundred and twenty years since our noble, wig-wearing forefathers (many of whom were Masons) signed the Declaration of Independence and told England to blow them.

It's hard to think of a day with more political significance to Americans. Maybe 9/11 can compete in terms of importance, but July 4th is a lot more fun. July 4th means hot dogs and watermelon and keg parties and the reckless igniting of multicolored incendiary devices.

As part of the research for a book I was writing, I was awake at 8:30 AM on that particular blindingly sunny and hot July 4th, interviewing an expert on so-called "indentured servitude"—a pretty name for white slavery—in the early American colonies.

At the time, I had the bad judgment to be living in the mossily self-righteous town of Portland, Oregon. I was conducting the interview by phone. My interviewee lived in the mighty-whitey town of Coeur D'Alene, Idaho.

Apart from possessing a near-frightening amount of knowledge regarding slavery in the early American colonies, he also claimed to be an expert in the arcane history and alleged evil machinations of Freemasonry—specifically reputed Masonic-directed assassinations such as JFK's.

At the time, I knew nothing of the Masons except that they were allegedly very powerful, secretive, and that something like every president besides Kennedy and Reagan had been a member. Those things alone made the Masons scary.

During the course of our conversation, the topic drifted to a friend of mine who had recently posed in an authentic vintage Masonic costume in some gay-ass San Francisco satirical magazine.

DON'T FUCK WITH THE MASONS



THEY FUCK BACK HARDER

"He never should have done that," my interviewee warned gravely. "You don't EVER mess with or make fun of the Masons. They take these sort of things far more seriously than you can imagine. They will retaliate against him. It will be swift, final, and on a day with heavy political significance."

Very well, I thought to myself. You're out of your fucking mind.

Six hours later...

Let me repeat that...

Only SIX HOURS LATER, the friend in question was over the river from Portland in Vancouver, WA, buying himself some firecrackers.

It was, after all, July 4th—a day with undeniably "heavy political significance" for Americans.

Suddenly, right at the firecracker stand, my friend was stricken with a violent seizure that knocked him to the ground. I heard it took a half-dozen men to restrain him and shlep him to the hospital.

We weren't sure whether he was going to live or die for a full week, but he finally pulled out of his coma and was sent, against his wishes, to a psychiatric hospital. He would remain a ward of the state, forbidden to move around at will, for something like the next six weeks.

I visited him in the mental ward. It was the type of place where the security guards have to click open the electronic door before you can enter. The door is like that, of course, to keep the cuckoo birds from flying out. When I walked back to my friend's little hospital bed, he was wearing a white gown. It was sad to behold. He was easily one of the smartest people I knew, and I feared that half of his brain had been knocked out by whatever happened on July 4th.

Over ten years later, he seems as if his mental functioning is completely restored. But doctors were unable to determine what happened to him that day. There were other factors that could have contributed to a seizure—things such as the fact that he was a diabetic addicted to smoking the big "H" who had recently suffered water on the brain when he was sent hurtling through his pickup truck's front window during an accident. Any one of those factors, or a combination, could have contributed to a sudden seizure and subsequent hospitalization.

But it's hard to think it wasn't the Masons.

So I'm here before the world to declare for the record that I got absolutely NO BEEF with the Masons. Hey, Masons—even if you sent high-tech brain-debilitating sonic waves to punish my friend straight into a coma, that's what he deserves for publicly disrespecting your noble legacy.

Shit—I hope that the fact I'm even *talking* about any of this doesn't offend them.

I'm going to be tense as fuck for the next six hours.