

# Swing For The Fences

by John Fowora

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I'm sitting in front of the courthouse waiting for John Doe #6. I picked him at random. I number them according to my quota.

He went into the courthouse about five hours ago.

When he walks back out, I get out of my car and follow him. I stand behind him. See my heart flutter, pitter, and patter. See the sweat on my brow accumulate and wait. Wait.

Here I go.

I pistol-whip him and drag him back to my car, just a short distance away. I put him in the passenger side seat and put on his seatbelt. We're going home.

When John Doe #6 wakes up he is visibly disoriented. I sit on a stool in the stark light of my basement and I watch him until he stands up.

"This isn't personal. It's more of a statement," I say.

"What are you talking about? Where am I?" he says.

"Someday, they'll read about you."

He looks like he's going to make a run for it, so I run toward him, out of the light. Then I swing.

Anytime you decide to swing, swing for the fences.

That's what my mother always told me.

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The first time you see brains splattered on a wall like a Pollock, your initial reaction is shock. This is natural. What follows is the rush, a Bluetooth connection with the person you just introduced to mortality.

John Doe #6 slumps backward to the ground. His head lands with a thud and more gray matter spills from his nappy head onto the slab concrete in my basement.

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But first, more practice.

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I kill more people. A lot more. Mounds of people. It's sort of strange that no one suspects I'm a serial killer. It's unsettling, even. I mean -- they'd rather think I was out to rob them. They'd rather think that I have nothing on my mind but the contents of their wallets. They'd rather offer me their Movado and Brietlings. They'd rather placate me, give me what they think I want.

Jane Doe #9 is tied to a chair in the part of my basement that isn't torn up yet. Her head is hanging backward and there's a trail of drool from her chin to her shirt. She offered me her ATM card and her American Express card when I grabbed her by the hair. I felt like smacking her in the face for being so obvious. So I did, and knocked her out with a punch to her temple.

So now she is sitting here in my basement, disoriented, with her head tied to the back of the chair and her mouth held open by hooks in her cheeks and jaw. She wakes up. She's screaming, sort of.

So I give her something to scream about. I ram a fistful of fiberglass insulation in her mouth until my knuckles are tickling her tonsils.

She has the look on her face that most of them have when they realize that they will die. They lunge and they gasp at life because life put them here, with me. The randomness of me finding you, of me doing this to you. Right now she isn't thinking about her family, her husband, her son, or her daughter. She's thinking of herself, numero uno, which is how we all go out, I've found.

When I pour bleach into her mouth, she no longer screams or coughs up yellow clumps of fiberglass onto herself and my basement floor. When I pour the bleach in, she gives up. She gives up like she never had a chance in life, like she didn't aim high enough.

Bleach mixed with bile. This is how I clean my floor.

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It is late in the evening again; I'm not sure what time. I'm watching MTV's *Cribs*. This rapper has a solid gold toilet bowl. I'm tired, but I can't forget what he said about that toilet bowl. Solid gold.

Now there is a commercial on with a hip-hop soundtrack. It has nothing to do with black people.

Another commercial comes on with a loudmouthed, Afro-wearing, black doll that spews all sorts of cliched Negrocity.

Yo.

That's when it hits me.

We've been forsaken by the new media.

We aren't black. We're a reflection of reflections. We were probably better off picking cotton and talking real low when the white folks came around. (Sometimes we still do; that's why I watch "The Cosby Show.")

We don't aim high because we don't have anything to shoot for. Hope was the new slavery. Then it was crack. Now it's digital cable.

I have thirteen channels of hip-hop and black grooves. We don't aim high because we're too busy watching the rims spin.

*Look--this nigga is rolling on twenty fours!*

*They spinnin' nigga, they spinnin'.*

Where does MTV come from? Sumner Redstone is the Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer at Viacom and Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer at National Amusements, Inc.

I'm going on a road trip. I'm going to travel across the country and kill Sumner Redstone.

Along the way I'm going to kill my online Professor.

I'm going to kill a lot of people, actually.

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The sign says: you are now leaving California. I'm driving a jet-black Cadillac Escalade on 24-inch Dub rims with spinners.

I have always been (and always will be) a very good student.

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In Nevada I kill John Doe #30 and Jane Doe #15. I leave them at the Bunny Ranch in Vegas. Palm Pilots are stuffed into their necks where their heads should be.

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In Utah I kill John Doe #35. It's easier to kill men than it is to kill women because men always think it can't happen to them. They're always wrong.

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In Indiana I kill John Doe #38 with a 4-iron and the element of surprise. First, I knock his left eye out of his head in the parking lot after a Pacers game. And to think: he had home court advantage.

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In West Virginia I kill a mountaineer.

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In Pennsylvania I drive by my mother's house and I want to go in and say hello and give her a big hug, so she'll be proud of me. She always said she was proud of me. I never believed her.

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I finally find my professor in New Jersey.

His home office is three miles away from Rutgers University. He is sitting inside drinking a cup of whatever, typing away on a laptop. He's typing more irresponsible blather, I know it. I stare at him from across the street. Apparently he lives alone, and he never seems to have company. I've watched him do the same thing for about a week now. This guy doesn't get out much.

I sneak in through his back door and quietly make my way through his house until I'm directly behind him.

And just when I'm about to chop into his skull with an axe, he says something.

"Not yet."

I'm not sure if he's talking to me.

"Before you swing, tell me, why are you here? Are you a student?"

I put the axe down -- for now.

"Yes, I was a student of yours," I say. "But you shouldn't be allowed to teach anyone anymore."

"You've been killing?"

"Yes. Quite a bit, actually. Why?"

"If I'm such an ineffective teacher, why are you here right now? If I'm so ineffective, how come you've been killing -- and doing well at it, apparently? Tell me why you're really here."

I tell him about the emails from him about my final paper. I tell him how I didn't appreciate being told I wasn't good enough to be a serial killer for something as inconsequential as the color of my skin. I tell him about my theories on the media and Sumner Redstone, about how he deserves to die and how maybe -- just maybe - - killing him might make it all better.

The professor listens to me. Finally he says:

"I want to go with you. I want to see where this goes. Plus, I haven't killed anyone in a while. I'm sorry I offended you. I just didn't want to see a student of mine go through the same things that I went through."

Oh, yeah -- the Professor: he's black too. Apparently he was killing for a little bit in the seventies and the early eighties, but he stopped because he wasn't getting any recognition. He quit doing that and he decided to get an M.A. in English instead. He's been teaching ever since.

He doesn't pack anything when we leave, like he expects us not to get caught.

When we get to New York City, he asks me about my methods.

"Anything I can get my hands on, really," I say. "Mostly golf clubs and blunt objects. But sometimes I get creative. How about you?"

"I just like to choke people," he replies. "I don't know why. I just like to."

"Oh."

We park the Escalade a few blocks away from where we have to go: 1515 Broadway. I'm wearing a blue, orange, white, and green striped button-up shirt with an oversized New York Mets baseball cap. I have on a pair of baggy, two-year-wash jeans and tan Timberland work boots.

I'm dressed like your favorite rapper.

Here in New York, people are famous for being famous, and that means I'm going to be famous for the wrong reasons.

My Professor is acting as my manager today. We're going on MTV's "Total Request Live." From there, we're going upstairs. We're going to see my boy Sumner.

*ABOUT JOHN FOWORA:*

*John Fowora sets low personal standards and consistently fails to achieve them. John was born in Brooklyn, New York where he was almost placed in special education in the first grade because he pulled his pants down to give his peers a free show. Look for him to pull similar stunts in his writing. John was previously published by Horror Quarterly Magazine and his dead mother's refrigerator (via pizza-slice-shaped magnets.) You can email him at juicyjayjj279@yahoo.com because he welcomes that sort of thing (send nudies pls, kthxbye.)*