
RAID! (NF)

The Unwanted Gift, From a Gym
(Summer 1981)

From the ANCHOR CHAIN series

This is the original story (with a few minor edits) that was written while living in Norfolk Virginia and stationed aboard the USS Eisenhower (CVN-69), based at Naval Station (NA) Norfolk, Norfolk, VA

RAID !

Part (I) The Backdrop

It was the mid-1980's, still living in Virginia, when I took up working out at a local gym in Norfolk. Not that I really thought I needed the extra muscle mass back then, it was just something to do. And like today, I got a year-long membership and was there working out about a month; then never went back. It was during one of these visits that I picked up some very unpleasant and unwelcome homesteaders. Can't recall the exact date, but I know I was still living in an apartment near the Naval Base, enjoying my last few months of stateside shore duty. I remember everything being as it should be and then, I started itching; itching "down there" if you know what I mean.

Part (II) The Itch

I think Baseball players have been "readjusting"/itching themselves on the field for as long as I can remember. I know I must of looked a lot like one of those players, but I was a sailor, not on a field of dreams but in a world of unmatched itchiness that never really subsided. I scratched and scratched and anytime I could find a corner or vacant office at work I'd sneak in more scratching and digging. It wasn't Poison Ivy or some childhood disease like measles... it was..... The CRABs!

Part (III) The Investigation

The Crab Louse is really tiny, smaller than a BB, but you can see them with the naked eye, although I hope none of you have reason to meet one live and in person. I recall visiting the base library, itching constantly, researching this tiny little creature called a Crab and wondering why it had been given such a name. I found some books that provided me that answer and more, one book in particular, had detailed pictures of these tiny creatures magnified hundreds of times over using one of those Electron microscopes. There before me was a picture of something I wanted nothing to do with, my first thought was self-preservation, nothing this ugly and dangerous looking should be near, let alone living on, one's most sensitive and private of areas.

Part (IV) The Plan

This creature with the huge claws and oddly shaped body parts had set up house and was procreating whenever it wanted, hidden from view, and that was just too much for me to handle. I had to rid myself of “Them” anyway I could and there was no way I was going to see a Doctor about it. This habitation was supposedly caused by, and classified as, an STD (sexually transmitted disease). I wasn’t chasing women back then, and reading that in a book really ruffled my feathers. I got “These” things and I wasn’t even doing something associated with getting “Them”. Ruffled or not, my main focus was scratching, all the time remembering those pictures of their legs and freaky bodies. I could feel them moving about, unseen under my clothes and scratching sure didn’t slow them down much. Didn’t matter, I kept scratching at a rate comparable to a dog digging for a bone. “They” had to go, “They” had to die!, “They” had truly ruined my ability to concentrate on anything but finding temporary relief by scratching; having fingers with nails was such a blessing.

Part (V) The Remedy

Three days or so after “They” moved in, I was a mess, 24/7 itching and it was time to take my life and manhood back (literally), it was time to stop the infernal itching. I went to the base pool, sliding in to the shallow end, keeping my self-declared demarcation line, which was my belly button, underwater for as long as possible; I was going to drown them. The itching stopped and cool water felt so good against my very irritated and nearly destroyed epidermal layers of my crotch. By the time I drove home... “They” were back! I went with Jergen’s Body Lotion next, I recall squeezing it on me so thick (I had a flashback of my first days aboard the USS Eisenhower, in 1980, and what happened to me during the initiation into my division... but that’s another story) then pulling my underwear back up to cut off all the air to the area. I figured they were like fish, able to find air in water but you can’t breathe immersed in lotion can you? The lotion cooled the area and provided the much needed relief until I showered it away... “They” were back! I tried soaking in my Bathtub with Mr Bubble in the hottest of water, again feeling better but again... “They” were back! I was really at wits end and beyond desperate from the constant itching but I didn’t want to tell anyone and I didn’t, not yet.

Part (VI) The Desperation

I'd all but given up, didn't have a clue what to do but seek medical help but I hated the thought. This was before HIPAA and I was not confident this would stay a secret. Then it dawned on me... there was something that always worked as advertised for exterminating bugs. That day, I purchased a can of Raid and violated Federal Law, using the Raid in a manner inconsistent with its labeling. I sprayed my "boys" and surrounding areas quite abundantly, till saturated. Didn't feel one Crab or one movement... didn't feel much of anything now that I think of it. Then, a few minutes later I learned how clearly my "boys" could express pain to my brain by way of my central nervous system. It was about then I could quote a song that best describes how I felt the moments just BEFORE I sprayed the Raid, and how I felt in the minutes just AFTER the saturation spray. The song is Meat Loafs classic, "Paradise by the Dashboard Lights". Only the last couple verses applied to those moments above: *"... I couldn't take it any longer, Lord I was crazed and the feeling came on me like a tidal wave..."* (BEFORE). And then the lyrics end with *"... So now I'm praying for the end of time to hurry up and arrive, 'cause if I gotta spend another minute..."* (AFTER).

Part (VII) The Effects

Needless to say, not following instructions had a much worse consequence than just violating Federal Law. From those minutes after to what became days and weeks. I was literally on fire. Thank God "They" were dead! My "boys" didn't swell up but they did take on the appearance of something their owner hadn't seen before. Their color changed, you know that deep burgundy red color of a plum, take that and the black of a billiards 8-ball, mix it together, and now you know what I saw of my "boys" after Raid saturation. Shortly thereafter, the peeling began along with the burning pain, which continued no matter the showers I took and squirts of Jergens' applied. And then, though not sure just how long it was... "They" were back! Their eggs had survived everything I could think of to kill them (obviously, I had totally ruled out the use of explosive and incendiary devises). It was obvious that hurting them was taking a back seat to the hurt I was putting on myself. Adding insult to injury, not long after the peeling slowed, the skin on my "Boys" transitioned to what felt like burlap and looked like a piece of

rawhide left out in the elements for decades. I was now at a point in my life that any dream I had seemed to have the same ending, a vision my “Boys” just dying and falling off, like two old apples on a tree. That image can sure contribute to insomnia. “They” had beaten me down, I’d been thoroughly whipped by a Louse. I gave up and waved the white flag, admitting to myself I needed outside intervention to resolve this issue.

Part (VIII) The Visit

I forced myself to visit Medical on base, and was seen by a Corpsman almost immediately. As luck would have it, the Corpsman, an HM2 (second class Petty Officer) turned out to be one of the most attractive women I had seen in quite some time. I can’t convey the trepidation that consumed me. I wanted to leave but the pain and “Them” over-ruled my desire run off in embarrassment. I knew then and there, she’d never go out with me, and no one she knew would either, after hearing about this guy... Arrrrgh! I told her what I had, what I did, even about the Raid, to which I still recall the frown she shot my way. She had me pull down my pants so she could inspect the war zone and battle scars, using a fine tooth comb to capture a few of the invaders. Obviously, nothing in that moment was exciting so to speak; retreat was still on my mind as I stood there, that was apparent too I’m sure. Then she paused and asked me, ‘why didn’t you just shave the area, you know “They” lay their eggs on the hairs’ she quipped. All the research I’d done and that never crossed my mind and the look on my face let her know that too. She sent me away with a shampoo to kill “Them” and some burn cream to help with my self-inflicted wounds.

Part (IX) The Epilogue

The shampoo worked pretty quickly, in less than three weeks from that unlucky visit to the gym, “They” were gone for good. Even today, I’m still not comfortable in a gym. Unfortunately, the Raid effects hung on much longer, a year later I still had the pains while on my first tour in Iceland. Everything looked as it should but there were times I felt like I had dropped a cup full of Vick’s Vapor Rub (liquid form) in my lap... not something I’d do voluntarily. I knew enough to figure the Raid was absorbed in my body to some degree. I wondered if its’ chemicals could impact on the only thing I had that could *swim*? Could it affect the health of an unborn? Would my kids grow up and be totally insect resistant, never wanting or needing things like insect repellent? As you know, I never had kids so these and other questions remain

unanswered. I do know it didn't help me in becoming any more resistant to insects. Lesson Learned - Read and follow the instructions on Raid and on all chemicals you may have use for because violating Federal Law has its price.

Part (X) The Crab

Are Crabs even a problem anymore? I never hear about outbreaks or heard of anyone getting them, but you heard about "Them" back then. Is it possible, even with social medial, you could be afflicted with these tiny critters and no one else know. Probably not something you advertise. Yet, on YouTube they have a slew of videos on farting, are Crabs that much different? Maybe a slew of Crab farming videos are in order? I don't know, but someone must be itching somewhere right now. Maybe the Crab numbers are dwindling and will soon be added to the Endangered Species list. Maybe it's because a majority of the population now tends shave most everything on their bodies... if so, Shave Away World!

I just wonder what happened to "Them".

Part (XI) I've Said Enough