

I Was A Janitor For The Freemasons



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In the summer of 1988 I was desperate to find a job. I had tried the previous year to move out of my parents' house at the age of 17 but ended up back home due to a lack of real motivation. This time I was determined to make it work. Other than fast food, there weren't a whole lot of options for an 18-year-old with no real-world experience.

I had a friend named Fred who also wanted me to find work so we could split the rent on an apartment. Once, after another day of fruitless searching, I decided to drop by Fred's workplace and inquire as to any possible work. It was an old building in midtown Atlanta that was being renovated. And even though I had very little construction experience, I thought maybe I could pick up some day-labor work. I was told they couldn't use me, but one of Fred's coworkers said he might know of something.

A laborer named Jessie took me over to a large, imposing building next door to the construction site. It was a nondescript, mainly windowless building that resembled an outsized mausoleum. On the way over Jessie explained that the people in that building occasionally hired him to help with cleaning but wanted someone full-time. And even though they paid better than the construction company, they wouldn't hire Jessie because he was black. "Nice-lookin' white boy like you should get hired, no problem," he said. Sure enough, I got a full-time job as a janitor at the largest Masonic Temple in the Southeast.

When the man who hired me asked if I knew who the Freemasons were, I had to admit that I didn't. And I didn't care, either. It was a good-paying job for a young man and allowed me to move out of my parents' house for good. Monday through Friday I would roam the entire building, sweeping up, emptying ashtrays, vacuuming, and cleaning toilets. I had keys to every room and my own janitor's uniform so I looked all nice and official.

Esoteric symbols, allegorical tracing boards, and ceremonial regalia gave the temple's interior a heavy air of mystery but held no real interest for me. The Scottish Rite lodge, with its blue carpet and white neoclassical archways and columns, seemed as stuffy as the old men that met there. The York Rite lodge was pretty, though, with heavy wooden furniture, stone floors, and stained glass that made me feel as if I was in medieval times. The most impressive area was the huge amphitheater with a checkered floor where plays and ceremonial rites were performed. Period costumes were stored in the backstage area — I regret not trying them on. And even though I was allowed full access to the temple's library (a no-no for the uninitiated), I remained unimpressed. I saw no significance in what these old men were doing. It just seemed like an excuse to get away from the wife for the evening.

Tensions between my boss, Dick, and his brethren were heightened during the annual 33rd degree meeting. Technically, only Masons were allowed in the temple, but Dick argued that it didn't matter if I was there because a candidate for initiation had

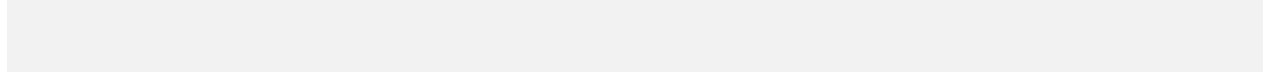
to be 21 years old. At first they gave me suspicious looks whenever I walked by with my broom and dustpan, but after a while they loosened up and maybe forgot I was there. I didn't think too much of this until I witnessed some initiates emerging from a lodge room after some sort of ritual. I sensed an electricity in the air I'd never felt before. Then I learned that the little closets adjacent to the amphitheater were chambers where death rituals were performed. I also noticed the library contained some medallions that had occult symbols I recognized from reading about Aleister Crowley. Entering the dining room where a reception was being held for the new initiates, I overheard a group of Master Masons talking about sacrificing a pig on an altar. That freaked me out a little bit.

But after a while I grew bored with the job. I was alone all day and usually finished my work by lunch. So I would take naps or climb up on the roof to smoke weed. Sometimes they would try to interest me in joining because membership in Freemasonry was declining at the time. That did not appeal to me one bit. I ended up quitting after only ten months.

Later, I became interested in this strange secret society, studying the legends and accusations of treacherous and nefarious deeds done by the Masons. A few years after leaving my job at the Masonic temple, I collaborated with some friends to form a rock band called King-Kill/33°. The name of the band was taken from James Shelby Downard's numerology-based conspiracy theory

that the Freemasons were behind the assassination of John F. Kennedy. The few Masons that saw our T-shirts, fliers and stickers — which freely appropriated Masonic imagery — were not amused.

Now that I'm older, I appreciate the Freemasons as a charitable organization that promotes brotherhood. Plus I don't want to piss them off anymore than I already have. If that Kennedy theory is correct, *I* might be on their hit list.



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