

The Seattle Times

THE CATTLEMAN SENTENCED

- Tamie Mariah Zuckerberg

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The streets of Seattle are finally free from the tyranny of The Cattleman. Seth Frost, 46, has been convicted of murder, sexual assault, and kidnapping. The judge passed down a life sentence in the Federal Detention Center, Seatac.

Frost's reign of terror began in January of last year. His first victim, Ashley Klinkenhammer, was found dead in *Pigment of Truth*, a tattoo parlor on North Queen Anne Avenue. Three more victims—Cynthia Eriksen, Sara Banks, and Felicia Orman—were found throughout the year in various tattoo parlors around Seattle. The police have yet to explain Frost's moniker or how the victims were connected.

Frost was finally apprehended almost a year ago after his final victim escaped and ran to the home of one Jimmie Kwan. The police acted quickly without sirens and within an hour, Frost was arrested at his home on August 17th, 1997. Kwan has yet to comment on the case.

It has taken almost a year for the trial of Frost to take place. The court had to hold it at Gonzaga Law School in Spokane. This location served two purposes; first, it provided a secret location for the trial until the sentence was passed down. Such secrecy was necessary after a security breach at King County Courtroom's jail. The second purpose of the location was to find the jury. "Every citizen in Seattle proved to be ineligible to serve because they were too biased against Frost", says Police Chief Michael Tennant. Based on our research, over ninety percent of the State of Washington called Frost guilty long before the trial even began. He has truly proven that he is a menace to society.

The state's opinion of Frost is so strong, in fact, that many believe a life sentence in prison was too light. Charles and Laura Klinkenhammer—the parents of Frost's first victim—told the times, "He never should've been born, but since he's already here, the death penalty is the only option. Hopefully, the other monsters in that prison will do the court's job."

When the final victim testified in court, the general public had to leave the courtroom; only the judge, court reporter, attorneys, and jury were present. When we attempted to contact anyone who saw her, all refused to comment or reveal her identity.

In fact, when the anonymous victim went missing, the police did not release that information to the public. Chief Tennant told the Times, "The withholding of the information was to help the victim; Frost only killed his victims after the police made public statements regarding them. We thought that by not releasing a statement, we could buy ourselves and the victim more time. We were correct, thank God." Several people have contacted the Times, claiming to know the final victim. None of these claims coincide and none have been confirmed.

Whether Frost's sentence is enough to heal the people he's harmed, only time will tell.

Jaz Dilan

“I’m home!” Jaz Dilan’s voice echoed around the compact, two-bedroom apartment. As the sun set over the Newark neighborhood, it broke through the dark winter clouds. The blood-orange light illuminated the dining room and eat-in kitchen. The living room, on the other hand, was lit by hand-me-down lamps and the flat-screen TV, which was blasting some women’s pro-wrestling program. The hardwood floors didn’t look nearly as beat up in the natural light as it did under the fluorescent bulbs. *Just like me* Jaz would always say; she always hated how pale she looked in fluorescent light. She’d lost count of how many times people had compared her to a china doll under artificial lighting. It was only January--almost February--and she couldn’t wait until winter’s end; then there would be warmer natural light to bring out the manhattan tan in her skin.

“Hey, Aunt Jaz!” Jaz knew her niece was home before the teenager called to her; the suffocating musk of her Xea body spray completely overwhelmed the calming essential oils Jaz had put in the diffuser that morning.

Jaz waved her hand, trying to get her niece’s perfume away from her nose. “Whew. Got a date tonight?” The body spray wasn’t the only indication of this; the teenager was wearing her favorite black, tattered dress, and she’d actually bothered to comb the tangles out of her half-curly hair.

Rosamie jumped off the couch. “Yeah, Annie and I are going to the movies after our support group.” *Liar*. “But enough about me. How was your day?”

Jaz folded her arms over her graphic-t-shirt-covered chest. “It was okay. Now, what do you want?”

“What?” Rosamie asked.

“You want something. What is it?”

Jaz’s niece put her hand to her heart as her brown eyes mimicked that of a puppy’s; wide and innocent. “Can’t your favorite niece just ask how your day was because she loves and cares for you?”

“*Only* niece,” Jaz corrected before saying, “and that bullshit may have worked on your mom, but not with me. Now talk.”

Rosamie sighed and ran her hand through her curly, black undercut. “Okay, so I’ve *finally* settled on my first tattoo and—”

Jaz dropped her bag on the ground by the door and slipped off her coat. “No way in hell.”

Rosamie followed Jaz into the kitchen, whining, “Come on, Aunt Jaz!”

Opening the fridge, Jaz stated, “I am not going to design or give you your first tattoo.”

“Why not?”

As Jaz cracked open a diet soda, she explained, “You’re too young.”

“I’m sixteen! You were sixteen when you got your first tattoo!”

After taking a sip of her soda, Jaz lectured, “Apples and oranges. I had a good reason. You just want to rebel, and I don’t have time for your mother to put a hit on me.”

Waving Jaz’s point off, Rosamie said, “Oh, she’s never gonna find out.”

“How do you know?”

“Because I’m never seeing or speaking to her again, so how would she find out unless someone snitches? And you would never do that.” The look Jaz gave Rosamie made her doubt the statement. “Would you?”

“We’ll never know,” Jaz said ominously before she became serious again. “You say you’ll never speak to her again now, but you never know; it may take a year or ten but you two might patch things up.”

Rosamie huffed, “Fat fucking chance,” under her breath as she slumped back into the living room and flung herself back onto the couch.

Jaz slumped next to her niece and put an arm around her. As she petted the buzzed side of Rosamie's head, she remembered when Rosamie got the haircut. It had actually taken Jaz by surprise. Rosamie’s idolization of her aunt made Jaz think she would do anything to look just like her--down to growing her hair out, straightening it, and getting the carmine highlights put in. So when Rosamie came out with a natural, seal brown undercut, Jaz was surprised. And a bit relieved.

Putting herself back in the moment at hand, Jaz said, “I know things are rough. You’re angry and think if you stay angry, your mom will come crawling for forgiveness. I went through the same thing with your lola.”

“Are you seriously shrinking me right now?”

Ignoring Rosamie, Jaz continued, “She’s just having a hard time coming to terms with the fact that you’re growing up.”

“And that I’m not the next Stephen Hawking and going to Harvard to become an engineer?”

Jaz shook her head. “You go to Harvard to become a lawyer. You go to MIT to become an engineer. And Stephen Hawking was a physicist, which you go to Stanford for. And she wants you to live your dreams like she never could.”

Rosamie argued, “’Cept I don’t *want* to become an engineer or a lawyer or a physicist.”

In an attempt to calm her niece, Jaz clarified, “She just doesn’t want you to go through all her hardships.”

“You mean like being a teen mom with a missing, deadbeat baby-daddy, and three part-time jobs at thirty-five?” There was that blunt tone of Rosamie’s.

“Exactly.”

Rosamie scoffed. “If that happens, it’ll be the next immaculate conception.”

“You *do* know what ‘immaculate’ means, right?”

“Impossible.”

“No, it means ‘pure’,” Jaz corrected.

“Oh. So what do you call it when an experienced lesbian winds up pregnant?”

“Suspicious.” Jaz cackled when her niece pushed her shoulder playfully. When the laughing fit was over, Jaz put an arm back around Rosamie’s shoulder. “One day, you’re going to want your mom in your life.”

“Maybe. But right now, I want a tattoo.”

With a roll of her eyes, Jaz stood up and started walking towards her room to change. “Then you will be getting it from someone else.”

“Come on! You’re the best tattoo artist in the city—”

Jaz cut her niece off by correcting, “No, I’m not.”

“And you’re my aunt!”

“So?”

“So you’d give me a discount!” There was that look again; the one that made uncertainty break Rosamie’s face. “Right?”

“With the risk you’d be putting me through? I’d charge you double.”

“It’s not a crime!”

“Tell that to your mother.”

Rosamie pouted. “You would seriously gouge me on the price? You’d do that to your favorite niece?”

“*Only* niece, and absolutely.”

“Now that *is* a crime.”

“Sue me.” Jaz’s apartment bell buzzed, signaling that the ladies had a visitor. Pressing the call button, Jaz asked into her intercom, “Yeah?”

Through the crackling interference of the intercom, Jaz heard, “Hey, Jaz! It’s Annie!”

Rosamie glimpsed at her phone. “Early as usual.”

“Come on up!” Pressing another button, Jaz unlocked the building’s front door. “Don’t forget, you have work tomorrow.”

“Ugh. You sound like mom,” was all Rosamie said as she slipped her leather jacket on over her intentionally-tattered dress. It hadn’t escaped Jaz that Rosamie’s leather jacket was very similar to the one that Jaz wore everyday. In fact, ever since Rosamie was in middle school, she would try to emulate Jaz in looks, language, and mannerisms. This made Jaz feel somewhat guilty for the friction between Rosamie and her mom; the disrespect that Rosamie had shown Jaz’s little sister sounded a little bit like how Jaz sounded in all her stories about dealing with crazy, self-centered New Yorkers. Apparently, Rosamie didn’t realize that such attitudes and languages should only be used on rude strangers and not her mother.

When there was a knock, Rosamie opened the door, revealing her girlfriend--a short, round and adorable girl with wispy black hair that had been pulled into a fashionably messy bun. Her

chocolate eyes were huge behind her rectangle glasses, and they shined with an excitement that was just as obvious in her perfect smile.

Rosamie gave Annie a peck on her lips, bringing a pink blush to the girl's arabesque skin. "Hey, bae."

As Annie used her pastel-colored shirt to de-fog her pure red glasses, she greeted, "Hey, hon. Hi, Jaz!"

"Good to see you, Annie. Love the shirt."

"Thanks! It's from the Empire Hearts collection!" Jaz nodded like she knew what that was. *Knowing Annie, it's either an anime or a video game.* "You doing anything tonight?"

"Yeah, I'm grabbing dinner with a friend."

Rosamie interjected, "Good. So you won't be waiting up. Come on, Annie." She grabbed Annie's hand and started dragging her down the hall.

Jaz called after them, "Not too late!" Rosamie gave a dismissive wave while Annie gave a respectful "Yes ma'am" as she was being tugged along.

Garrett slumped in the booth, complaining, "Seriously? These guys aren't even that good."

"Then why do you keep watching?", Jaz asked in mock annoyance.

Garrett held up his hands, putting his tattoo sleeves on full display. "Hey, I don't set the channels."

"Yeah, but you keep coming back here on the same night of the week, and drag me with you."

"Pfft." The scoff made Garrett's caramel beard and mustache ripple. "'Dragging' my ass. You love the food here."

“True.” Jaz had taken the subway to meet her best friend, Garrett Weber, for their monthly meet up at *The Gym Bar and Grille*. Located downtown, the well-kept place wasn’t busy like it would be on the weekend, so it was simple for them to get their favorite table; a metal booth with black leather cushions. Bolted-down in the middle was a hundred-pound weight plate that acted as a spinning table tray. It also had the perfect view of the one TV—out of twenty— that was always playing the edgy-arsty cable channel. That night of the week was when new episodes of *Ink Professors* broadcasted. It was Garrett’s guilty pleasure; he always complained about it yet watched it religiously. He would even jump into fist fights with the sports crowd if they got rowdy enough to block his view. *Whatever floats his boat, I guess.*

Thank god there’s not an important game tonight; watching Jaz’s skinny friend start fights with men two or three times his size was embarrassing. It didn’t matter how many Viking tattoos he had; Mjolnir wasn’t going to stop the meatheads from laughing when Garrett would cuss them out. In fact, the blond undercut and thick beard made his outbursts all the more hilarious. Several people had pointed out that he looked like a prepubescent teen who was trying so hard to grow facial hair so he could look older and tougher.

As a commercial break interrupted *Ink Professors*, Garrett bit into his cheeseburger. “How’s work?”

Jaz sighed as she spread more green chili on her own burger. “I’m having to turn *good* customers away. I mean, I appreciate the business, but I’m just one person and there are only twenty-four hours in a day.”

With a mouthful of onions and swiss cheese, Garrett asked, “No luck finding an apprentice?”

Jaz sighed “No. I mean, there’s no lack of applicants, but no one gets it.”

“I didn’t know there was something to ‘get’ in tattooing.”

“You know what I mean.” As a preview of the next week’s *Ink Professors* episode played, Jaz pointed to the TV. “They’re like those assholes. They think they can get rich or that they can just do whatever they want. The person paying for the tattoo is just a piece of paper with arms and legs.”

Garrett nodded in understanding. “I’ll ask my apprentice if she knows anyone looking for a job that she would recommend. She’s the best apprentice I’ve ever had, so hopefully she has friends with similar work ethics.”

“Keep me posted.”

“Will do.” They continued to watch *Ink Professors* until the commercial break that started on a predictable cliff hanger. Garrett asked between bites, “Any new crazy customer stories?”

Jaz chuckled. “Well, punching bag balls has officially been dethroned.”

Garrett’s face fell. “Aw man, I loved that dude. So who’s the new ruler of the insane asylum?”

Jaz cleared her throat dramatically. As she spoke, she spread her hand out in front of her face, as if she was picturing a billboard or marquis that quoted her. “I call him, ‘Call of Duty: Butt Ops’.”

Garrett coughed as soda burned its way up his nose. “What?!”

“A guy literally asked if I could tattoo a crosshair over his asshole.”

Garrett scoffed, “Let me guess; something for his boyfriend?”

“Nope. Girlfriend.” More soda went up Garrett’s nose as he suffocated from laughter. When he could breathe again, Jaz asked, “What about you?”

Garrett chuckled. “Best I got is I tattooed a pen on the side of this guy’s head. Like, it looks like it’s tucked behind his ear forever.”

“That’s it?”

“I’ve been pawning all my crazy jobs onto my lucky.”

Jaz shook her head. “Wow. You’re a dick.”

“Hey, she has to learn that some clients are coo-coo for cocoa puffs. The only way she’s gonna learn is through experience.”

“So you just *happen* to benefit from teaching your apprentice how to handle the drunks, crazies, and insensitive assholes the hard way?”

Garrett shrugged. “Happy accident.” Jaz kicked him under the table, sending the friends into another fit of laughter.

Their laughter was interrupted by one of the waitresses setting a martini down in front of Jaz. “Compliments of a gentleman at the bar.” Jaz and Garrett furrowed their brows at each other before peering around the waitress into the bar area. The drink came from a guy who looked like he was celebrating getting cast on *Jersey Coast*; a fake tan covered his arm tattoos. *He had to be drunk when he got all of those*. He wore his sunglasses on the back of his head, tucked beneath his spiked, frosted tips. His teeth were as shiny as the thick chain around his neck, and the knock-off Rolex on his right wrist. He raised his canned beer to Jaz as he popped his overly-groomed eyebrows.

Jaz handed the martini back to the waitress. “Tell him that if I accepted this, I’d be ruining a twelve-year streak, and he’s not worth that.”

The waitress was confused until she saw the alcoholics anonymous pin on Jaz’s jacket. “Got it.” She walked back into the bar. While they couldn’t hear or read lips, Jaz and Garrett watched

the waitress speak to the party boy. After a moment, the guy gave Jaz a horrified look and ducked out of sight, cheeks glowing beneath his artificial pigment.

Garrett applauded. “Well done. Excellent control.”

“It gets easier every year. Besides, I knew you would knock it out of my hand just because of the guy who bought it for me.”

“That is pretty ballsy; hitting on a woman who’s out eating with another guy.”

Jaz scoffed as she drank from her diet soda. “Guys like that don’t care. All women are fair game to them.”

“Gross. We may have to find you a real boyfriend if this keeps up.”

Jaz scoffed again. “You know I’ve committed myself to spinsterhood.”

“Right. Right.”

“Have *you* met anyone?” The lively atmosphere stifled. Garrett shrugged with his mouth and stared down at his food. He chugged down his soda, clearly wishing it had been a beer. Even that martini Jaz was given would do the trick. “Sorry. I just worry—”

“Well, don’t. I’ll get over Jess in my own time and in my own way.”

“Right. Sorry.”

Silence fell over the table until Garrett chuckled. “Boy, we’re pathetic, aren’t we?”

“Speak for yourself, and while you do, I gotta piss like a racehorse.”

As Jaz slid out of the booth, Garrett chuckled, “Demure as ever.”

“You know it.” Jaz walked towards the back of the building, passing the *Jersey Coast* wannabe on the way. He was timid as she passed.

The single stall bathroom was the one place that made the pristine, gym-inspired bar look less than pristine; it was covered in writing and carvings. There were initials of couples—the

ones with one set of initials scratched out were everlasting reminders of drunk, one-night stands that never went anywhere. There were also numbers; some were helpful like New York's Suicide Prevention Hotline. However, most were numbers advertised for "personal trainers" who would help you "work out and have fun doing it". Beneath those numbers were responses like, "7 secs of cardio won't make me a VS model." Jaz was sure the only reason why there wasn't a glory hole was that the single stall didn't facilitate anonymity.

Once the door was locked, Jaz pulled out her cell and began typing on the pot.

Recipient: Rosamie

Jaz: How's it going?

Rosamie: gre!at! yobu?

She's drunk as hell.

Jaz: Good. When are you gonna be home?

Rosamie: Idk. e12?

She must've realized how drunk she sounded and switched to the abbreviations to avoid getting caught.

Jaz: Okay. Be careful.

Rosamie: y, mmo. :P

“Yes, mom.”

Jaz: You gotta come up with a better insult. LOL

Rosamie: :P

By the time the text conversation was over, Jaz was done in the bathroom. When she got back to the booth, it was empty. There was a napkin on her side with writing on it.

Sorry. Got called into work. Emergency. Pay you back tomorrow

- Garrett

“Got called in?” He’s the boss; he called himself in.

The waitress came and set the check on the table. However, she was holding a glass of wine in her other hand. “Should I tell this guy the same thing?” She was referring to the out-of-place trust-fund-baby in a polo shirt who was sipping bourbon out of a tumbler. *It’s not nearly as classy without the fireplace and smoking jacket.*

“Asshole.” Jaz wasn’t talking about the trust-fund-baby.

Death

Jaz was jostled awake, not by her cell phone alarm, but by her cell phone *ringing*. Peeking at the screen, Jaz rolled her eyes. It was Mr. Hong; Rosamie's boss. Jaz was never going to forgive her niece for listing her aunt's personal number on her work application. Jaz didn't even say hello when she answered the phone. "Rosamie! You're late again! Get here now or you're fired! Don't think I won't do it!" Mr. Hong must've had a wall-installed landline; cell phones didn't crack like that when people hung up, even in anger. This was not how Jaz wanted to start her morning.

Jaz threw the covers back and ripped herself out of bed. She yelled, "Rosamie. Get your ass up. You're late again, and Mr. Hong is pissed," as she walked into the eat-in kitchen and turned on the coffee maker. After Jaz popped a few pieces of bread into the toaster, she yelled again, "Rosamie!" as she marched up to her niece's bedroom door and threw it open.

It was impossible to tell if Rosamie had come home the night before; the room was in such disarray that it looked abandoned and lived in at the same time. All Jaz did know was that Rosamie wasn't there, and she obviously wasn't at work.

Jaz scanned her phone. *No new or missed messages*. She went to her contacts, clicked on Rosamie's page, and hit "call". "Hey, weirdo who's calling me in the age of text! It's Rosamie! I don't use my phone to talk to people, so get with it and DM me!" The voicemail had played instantly; Rosamie's phone was off. Jaz scowled as she hung up without leaving a voicemail. *She hasn't done this since her first night in New York. What the fuck?* She jumped back to contacts and scrolled up to Annie's page.

The phone rang four or five times, and Jaz was ready to hear Annie's voicemail when a groggy voice answered, "Hello?"

"Annie?" Jaz asked, uncertain if she had the right number.

"Yeah?"

"It's Jaz."

"Oh, hi Jaz." Annie sounded like she was in serious pain.

"Are you okay?" *Stupid question.*

"Oh, yeah. I just have a really bad headache." *Big surprise.* "What's up?"

"Rosamie's boss just called to yell at her for being late," Jaz did her best to keep the annoyance out of her voice. "She's not in her room, and I don't know if she came home last night. Is she there with you?"

"Yeah. Sorry. We were both so tired after the ba—movie, and we were closer to my apartment, so we came to get some rest. Sorry, I should've called,"

At least she apologizes for not contacting me. "It's okay. Can you just wake her up and tell her to get to work?"

"Sure."

"Oh, and Annie?"

"Yeah?"

"The best cure for *that* kinda 'headache' is a shot of pickle juice. You know, just in case Rosamie also has a 'headache'."

There was a long moment of silence before Annie said, "Thanks. We'll give that a try."

"No problem. Tell Rosamie to text me when she gets to work," It was hard to keep the amusement out of Jaz's voice. *They thought they were so sneaky.*

“I will. Talk to you later, Jaz.”

“Later, Annie.” Jaz hung up and got back to her coffee.

Right when she was starting to get comfortable, Jaz’s cell rang again. Expecting to see Mr. Hong’s number again, she furrowed her brows when she saw Annie’s name on the caller ID. She answered, asking, “Annie?”

“Jaz?!”

“What’s wrong?”

“It’s Rosamie! I don’t know what happened! I don’t know what to do!” Each sentence was broken up by a raspy, high pitched inhale; Annie was panicking so much that she was beginning to hyperventilate.

“Calm down, Annie. Tell me what’s wrong.”

“SHE’S DEAD!” Every ounce of heat in Jaz’s body abandoned her limbs and settled into her chest where it felt like it was cooking her heart. Was that why she stopped breathing? Because the burning in her chest was stalling her lungs?

Recognizing this burn that left her breathless, Jaz pulled her left forearm in front of her eyes. She examined the Mandela pattern that had been tattooed into place twenty years ago. Her eyes darted to the open spaces of clear skin between the black outlines as she imagined what colors she would put in each spot. When she was younger, she had physically colored those spots in with her collection of sharpies. After so many years of coping this way, Jaz could just do it in her mind’s eye.

Eventually, Jaz’s body cooled to a normal temperature, despite the sweat that drenched her brow. She could hear something other than her own heartbeat. It was Annie, yelling “JAZ!” from

the other end of the phone. The moment Jaz heard that, she bolted out of her door only stopping to grab her keys and tennis shoes that she put on during the cab ride to Annie's apartment.