

The 612 Fingers of a Strange, Wicked Man

By William Pauley III

He is a suspicious-looking man.
Eyes black with no whites.
He wears sunglasses, a black hat, and slicker on a dry, hot summer night.
He's carrying a ratty, oversized suitcase and shakes in an uncontrolled fit.
He steps out of the shadows and onto the street.

He is arrested only minutes later.

The cops seize his suitcase, but with much difficulty.
For such a rat of a man, he sure puts up a fight.
The cops beat him half to death before they're able to pry the case from his crooked little hands.
Inside the case is a pile of fingers, 612 to be exact, all rooted from their owner's palms.
It took an hour to count them all.

"What the hell are you doing with these?"

"Where did they come from?"

"Where are the bodies from whom you plucked them from?"

The cops bark their questions at the wicked man's face.
Spittle collects and slides down his cheeks.
Never an answer.
Never a flinch.
Instead, he smiles.
Just one strange, wicked smile.

Finally the man opens his mouth, but not to speak.
With his hands, he urges the officers to look inside.
Curiosity gets the best of them.
They move in and take a closer look.
He is cuffed after all, they think. What's the harm?
What they see inside his hot, stinking mouth etches into their memories forever...
His tongue has been ripped from its root, leaving only the scars to prove it.

The wicked man attempts to laugh, but because of his condition, it comes out in the form of a desperate cackle instead.
The cops back away in horror.

They will never know the answers to their questions.

And neither will you.

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