

JOHN STICKNEY

The Liberation of Cleveland, Ohio

I was walking back to the office when Fidel pulled next to me in his silver Camaro. Since he wouldn't turn his head, I directed my remarks at his ever-present cigar. "I can't, they'll notice if I'm gone too long. It's work. Besides, I promised I'd go right home to help out. We have guests tonight. Maybe another time."

He pulled out his cigar, picked one or two pieces off his tongue and said, "Get in."

I did.

Tires screaming, we entered traffic.

He handed me a cigar, laughed as I bit off the end. Next came the bottle, and as I swallowed, a hit on the back. It tasted like 'Victory Gin'. The radio suddenly filled the car and the street around us with the Stones singing about "Puerto Rican girls who'll drive you crazy."

"We find some, si?"

I nodded, he laughed and handing the bottle back and forth, we headed deeper into the city, ready to harvest the fine sugarcane day.