

Infinite Book 4 - Recovered Dreams - By D.C.L.

Hindsight is 20/20 + You and me against the world, right? =  
Tru5tN01

## Revisionist

I tried to make it so. I really did. You know, with the happy ending and all that. Tried to look at everything through rose-colored glasses for far too long. But that was a lie. What follows is something closer to the truth...

## COMMAND LI(N)E

At City of Angels Medical Center, Los Angeles, CA for the third time in less than two months, I met a tall brunette. She was pretty and sad, and I was horny. My episodic thoughts told me I was entitled to the sex I'd been denied in saner days, so, I got frisky. Almost before I even knew her name, I touched her butt. Here's how.

Sitting on one of the couches in the common room, I waited for the next smoke break to be announced. That was when us smokers could walk outside to socialize and feed our addiction. Isabella came over to sit in the free spot next to me on the couch. When she turned to sit, I placed my hand on the couch beneath her. Sitting down on my open hand, she didn't startle. Instead, she stayed there a few seconds before asking, "Are you done?" With a sheepish smile, I removed my hand. She smiled back.

After that, we spent as much time together as possible within the confines of our immediate environment, which was the South Ward of a locked psychiatric facility in L.A. County. We played "War" a lot with a deck of cards. It was a mindless game that allowed us to talk about some of our issues, but mostly just about how we hated our lives. She seemed nice, too, on top of being a looker, so I'm sure I tried to kiss her at some point. But that was stupid, what with all the psych staff on the lookout for that kind of stuff. Isabella even warned me to keep things on the down-low, which I would have done if it wasn't for one of the other men there. He had his eye on Isabella. When he got too

much in her face (and mine), I yelled at him, which got me moved from South Ward to North Ward. So much for my time with Isabella. Then, probably on the afternoon of March 4, 2009, while out playing basketball, I saw her. She came across the court and said she was leaving. She gave me a farewell hug and handed me a pen. She wanted me to write my phone number on her hand. "Lie and say you love me," she said. "I love you," I said back. That was our goodbye. That was our foundation.

MARCH 7, 2009

When I got released, I moved to a board-and-care. It sucked. Even though I presented well socially, met new people and maybe started a friendship or two, I was unhappy. Accommodations were horrible, and the food even worse. I spent my time either watching TV in the main building, or talking with my roommate in the cramped bungalow we called home. Still obsessing over Jess (see Infinite Book 3: My Truest Fiction), I'd pretty much forgotten about Isabella and needed to distract myself, which I tried to do with a cute little bit of crazy I called Giggles. She lived in a nearby bungalow. Friendly enough, she would laugh at random intervals. This put me on edge, and I liked it. One night, at dusk, I chatted her up outside and soon enough was invited in for sex. But when she pulled down her pants, her rear had a pimply red rash, and I lost interest. So much for that. Then, one Saturday night, I got a call.

"Hello?" I answered.

"Dave?"

"Yeah. Who is this?"

"Isabella. How are you?! I lost your number and was afraid I'd never find it again."

"You lost my number?"

"Yeah. Had to guess based on what I could remember. I called number after number, and finally I got you!"

I wondered if she was for real. Plus I thought it kinda creepy she'd go through all that trouble. Still, getting laid was all I could think about, and maybe she was available. So, we talked... not once, but lots of times... sometimes for hours. She didn't tell me too much about herself, though. Mostly, we talked about how I was a writer and what books we liked to read. Stuff like that. She said she wanted to read my book, so she asked me to send her a copy. I signed it and sent it through the mail. The book was the now out-of-print *22 Stories: Falling Upward through the Tarot*. She said she lived in Santa Barbara, which was kinda far away. Still, we talked. I remember how our minds clicked. They felt sharp together, and that was maybe even better than sex.

#### MY FIRST TATOO (March 13, 2009)

On this inauspicious Friday, I squeezed from my bank account enough money for a tattoo. Not just any tattoo, but a metaphysical land-mine of esoteric symbolism. It was something I'd conceived of and had designed for me by a freelance artist years before. It consisted of three artfully arranged Hebrew letters that could be roughly transliterated into my pen-name-at-the-time: DOT. It was also a misspelling of the Hebrew word for knowledge - a blind for the uninitiated, if you will. In terms of the Tarot, the letters read like so: Daleth (D) = III The Empress; Ayin (O) = XV The Devil; and Tav (T) = XXI The World. For now, let's just say the tattoo marked me in ways I'm still trying to figure out.

#### MARCH, 2009

My board-and-care insisted I get back on SSI (Supplemental Security Income) so they could take from the government on my behalf another \$70 more each month. This meant I had to reapply. So, I took a bus down the freeway to a particular hospital near my hometown to get the necessary paperwork.

Then, instead of boarding another bus, I called Jess. Dropping everything, she drove out to see me. It was an awkward reunion, but she was on a mission. She offered to give me a ride back to my place. I got in her car. As she drove, she asked questions. I gave answers. Then, without any warning at all, she pulled into a cemetery just off the freeway. I asked what we were doing. She didn't answer. Out of the car now, we walked and talked among the headstones. She was assessing me for something, but I didn't know what. Then, when our conversation allowed it, I hinted she was a witch. She almost startled. "You're saying I'm a witch?" "Of course," was my reply.

We stood now in an empty field away from the headstones. I showed her my new tattoo. She gave me a blowjob. It felt strange. Not the blow job per se, but the why of it. She swallowed my come, and in so doing "read" my semen. Additionally, this act of fellatio was in many ways a consecration. Performed under the light of the setting sun on cemetery ground, it was a sacramental act of magick. What consequences were summoned, I had no idea.

## ANOTHER BHU

Isabella called me a few days later. I made no mention of my time with Jess. Instead, I listened to what she had to say, which was bad. She was in another BHU, this one to the north of my board-and-care. She said she'd tried to call me one night but kept getting the numbers wrong. She kept hitting the emergency button on her cell phone, which alerted the authorities, and that's how she'd ended up back in psychiatric lockdown. Although her story didn't make much sense, I consoled her over the phone as best I could and hung up when there was nothing more to say. Then, later, she called again and said she was being released on Friday (March 20). I made a promise. I said I'd drive up and give her a ride home, since my parents had recently returned to me

my Chevy S-10. I asked if she needed anything. She said Pepsi and cigarettes.

When I got there, the BHU holding Isabella captive was like some twisted hospital straight out of a '50s horror movie. Its concrete walls and dark iron fence sat atop a hill. The only way in was through a corridor, at the end of which was an attendant who informed me through thick plastic glass that the doctors had decided Isabella was not to be released that day. Had Isabella lied about her release date just to get the Pepsi and cigarettes delivered in time for the weekend? Whatever. Having spent gas money on a fool's errand, I passed through the last bit of security and was then escorted into a claustrophobic courtyard. There, Isabella and I smoked cigarettes and talked quietly. A couple of male inmates sitting nearby clearly resented my presence. The sexual tension in the yard was palpable. So, when it got too uncomfortable, we ditched the courtyard and climbed the stairs to a caged balcony. Setting herself down on the concrete floor there, Isabella asked about the Pepsi. I told her the hospital staff had it. Then, turning my attention to the evening sky out past the border of the balcony, I silently assessed the women on my horizon. Jess was unattainable. Giggles was ridiculous. And Isabella... well... I was low on gas. I told her I wouldn't visit her again. Not for a couple of weeks at least. Which meant she'd have to find her own way home. She blinked and did the math. Then she let me steal a goodbye kiss and handed me a bunch of letters in an envelope. I drove back to my board-and-care.

## LETTERS UNSEEN

I don't know why, but for some reason I did no more than glance at the letters Isabella had handed me. I never read them. Not for more than a decade. Anyway, here they are, minimally edited. Some of what she wrote makes no sense, and very little of it sounds like her at all, as if someone other than Isabella did the actual writing. Read on, and you will see what I mean.

March 15th, 2009 [Sunday] Dear Dave,  
I just got off some of the most hilarious conversation with you.  
My sides still hurt.

As it stands, I'll be out of here Friday. I'm hoping you'll be able to pick me up Friday afternoon. On our way through. I figure if nothing else, it will be a hilarious trip.

I am looking forward to your visit tomorrow. I kinda wish that you could camp out until Friday. But its cold and would probably be difficult for you. Maybe sometime we can go camping together. My experience in camping has, up until this point, very limited. In fact, it might not be the best idea since (and this is the only time I will admit this) I AM A WIMP. Camping to me is 3-star hotel!

I can't believe I'm stuck here until Friday. WTF! I have very little patience left for these people, they're rules and they're general bullshit. I have no fucking clue what I am going to do this week, especially to make time go by faster.

I seriously can't wait to get a big fucking hug from you.

Oh dude, a man just walked in here with piss down his front and he smells. SMELLS I say. My kitty litter box is cleaner smelling.

Ugh. Okay, happy thoughts.

1. I get to leave Friday.
2. I get to see you tomorrow
3. Pepsi, dude.
4. I love you. (Please note you rank under Pepsi :-)
5. There is always City of Angels and the lovefull madness we had there.

I'm going to try and get a call into you right now. I could use a laugh or two. Friday is long way a way.

Yours, [Bella]

March 16, 09 Dearest One,

Tomorrow is St. Patrick's day and I own nothing green. Unless of course I cheat and just claim my eyes. Tomorrow is also Tuesday. One day closer. To you, to us... to you and I.

I want time to go faster, but at the same time, savour every ache as the make me want your more, and make me miss you more. I know that this ache will be sated and that these aches, finally requited, will be all that more precious

Your small touches, stolin those weeks ago, already give me a small reminder of how you make me feel. As if every inch of my body was being stroked by your fingertips, stopping in some places to make me shudder, stopping in others to make me thrust about & moan in ecstasy. You rise to the occasion - always willing and always waiting - but never for too long. I am here, yours for the taking.

I am ever so impatient to feel you inside of me. The closest that two people can be. That is where I want to feel you - inside me, through me, becoming one with me.

I'm drifting of to sleep for the night and once again wearing the shirt you gave me. I imagine that it is you wrapped around me as I drift off to sleep. My hand eventually having to pleasure myself for some sort of release. Catch & release over & over again.

I remain yours, [Bella]

March 17, 09

I have awoken to find myself alone, grasping to return to that state where you are next to me, holding me, enveloping me in your arms.

I only open my eyes a peek for fear of allowing too much reality rush in and lose the feeling forever. Friday just seems to be taking forever.

I only wish I had forever to be with you. I feel like so much time has been wasted in a world that can neither understand or appreciate what we have. So much time wasted and I grasp for more moments, the more I grasp, the more slips through my fingers and quicker. I try to clutch onto what we have and chase after what escapes, the faster it goes.

I want so badly to stop time, if only for a few brief. A few hours to just play and explore. A few hours to memorize your face and permanently engrain it in my brain. Never to forget, always to remember.

I love you! Bella

03-17-09

Dear Baby,

Watching the boobtube w/ the rest of the loonies that are still awake watching the ever-stimulating Bus of Love w/ Bret Micheals. Gag.

One day closer to getting out of here and I am working hard at not watching the clock, which is really difficult. The only solace I am going to bed w/ wet undies (I'll just have to wash them in the morning.) Thank goddess!!

It is however going to be hard going to bed alone again. But I thought of something else that made me sad: after this weekend I will be alone in bed again. I don't know how I am going to deal with that (unless of course you kick like a mule during the night.) How am I going to cope?

Bad dreams - tattoo locations, trying to find you in NYC, going on stage w/ a guitar (and I don't play.) in a cab with a drag queen and street performer.

3-18-09

I am not having a good morning. Quite bad actually. I didn't sleep well and rather wish that I was still asleep.

I dropped you a call, but I forgot that you had your group this morning. Sorry! I'm still waiting for a call from [Jess], which has me on pins & needles.

Drs. are in session. Maybe when they call me in, I'll have some good news. ♥ [Bella]

[I was still in limited contact with Jess, who, being possessive of me, had taken an interest in Isabella.]

3-18-2009

My dearest,

The closer Friday gets, the slower the time goes by. It's driving me insane with all the waiting. All I can think about is getting ahold of you Friday and all the joy and pleasure we can bring each other. I am becoming more irritated with my ex as the days go by. I just want him to leave me alone for a couple days so that

I can get thoughts together, but as I am sure you know how it goes.

Which of course reminds me of the [Jess] situation which also has me irritated: why do we (you or me) want to be friends with someone who would speak so poorly of you/us and why do I feel like a show pony being paraded around for your benefit? I don't mean this to sound as harsh as it probably does, but I am just being honest. And above all, I want honesty with you.

This is turning out far more negative than I want it to. Maybe its just because everything is coming to a head. Day after tomorrow and I am supposed to be able to walk out of this place, yet I still have this horrid feeling I'm not going to see you. That would make me incredibly sad.

I should probably sign off before I say something I don't really mean. I'm just tense and can't wait to unwind a bit. Much love,  
[Bella]

3-19-2009

Dear Dave,

I just found out I won't be able to see you until late in the afternoon.

I am so sad. First, there is all the driving that I am going to help you with and apart from you. Then all the driving you will have to do. Not to mention it really puts a kink in our "plans." Our beautiful, wondrous, sexual plans that I was really looking forward to.

8 hours until me meds that make me sleepy and bring tomorrow all that much quicker. Then I will have to start counting the hours until I only get to see you. For a few brief moments. I won't actually get you in my clutches until we leave Lompoc and start back up to LA.

It is so terribly wrong! I should just get to see you! I should just get to wrap my arms around you, give you a big kiss and go from there. None of this other complicated crap. None of it.

I just want to love you! And I still have to stand by my words - if its worth it its worth fighting for.

"For a tree's branches to reach to heaven, it's roots must reach to hell."

— —

Our conversation has been strained with other complications you don't want to be with me. I guess I can't argue since I have nothing to offer you right now but my love. And for whatever reason - you don't think you deserve it or maybe you just don't love me - you want to end that part of our relationship. So I only have this left to say.

You are beautiful - all of you. You will always be.  
You to me are the only one. I will love you. Forever.

[Bella]

[This last bit is really confusing. We never got into an argument. Either Isabella was imagining things, or something even stranger was going on. But that will take time to get into, so keep reading.]

MARCH 23, 2009

Having visited Isabella on a Friday, I didn't hear from her again until the following Monday. She sent a text. A picture of a bottle of Jack, probably 750ml worth. Not knowing what to make of this, I gave her a call. When she picked up, she said she was

back home and that the person responsible for that bottle was a person in her life she'd failed to mention before now: her husband. It was her husband who'd apparently given her a ride home from the BHU. It was her husband who'd bought the bottle of Jack. Because now the story was she wasn't stressed out the night she got carted off to the BHU so much as she'd been drinking. I didn't know what all was involved, but I knew it had to do with three things: alcohol, mental illness, and an abusive marriage. This was a "damsel in distress" trifecta. Who was I to say no to that? I even talked about it later with Jess. She urged me to keep a safe distance, to have "fun" with Isabella if and when the opportunity presented itself, but otherwise to leave Isabella to her own devices. Of course, Jess' advice fell on the deafest of ears, just like she knew it would. It was how I'd been conditioned, after all. Come hell or high water, I would rescue Isabella from whatever she needed rescuing from; be it her unloving husband, her addictions, or The Devil Himself. But first I had to take care of an unexpected problem of my own...

## INFECTED

My fresh tattoo came with a problem. At first I thought I just had an itchy zit on my upper left arm. But it never erupted, and squeezing it only made it worse. It eventually got bad enough I showed it to the onsite nurse at my board-and-care. After cautious examination, she shipped me off to an ER - no if's, and's or but's. She said it was serious.

At the ER, I was told it was Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA - pronounced "mersuh" - for short). At the time, MRSA was all the rage. Said to be a staph infection immune to most antibiotics, it had to be treated with even stronger antibiotics, and sometimes needed surgery. Nowadays, they treat it differently, but back then, well...

After the ER, I was shipped off to a surgical care center. It was in another city even further away from Isabella than my board-and-care. There, surgery was performed to remove the infected material from my shoulder. Then, antibiotics needed to be administered, to clear my system of any sign of infection. Each day, the nurses drained puss from the gaping hole next to the tattoo on my shoulder and packed it with sterile gauze. They also administered strong antibiotics through an IV. My arm didn't like that. It refused the IV, which meant the IV had to be manually reinserted at least once a day, which was, let's just say, "unpleasant." When I wasn't being poked with needles or stuffed with gauze, I was texting Isabella or smoking cigarettes outside. I also entertained myself from time to time by silently streaming porn over cellular data; this became a problem. It didn't matter how discreet I was with the porn, though, because the hospital staff was monitoring my signal. I figured this out based on the timing of overheard laughter and the way certain nurses looked at me. So, I decided to try something. Opening my porn feed, I heard a rush of rude laughter down the hall. Someone called out for others to come have a look with semi-hushed urgency. Now certain I was being spied on, I played around with my feed. Deliberately jumping through searches that might get a reaction - things like "hot nurse anal" and "hospital butt sex" - I caused the laughter to spike. Then I input the following. "I know you are watching me watch porn. Don't you have anything better to do?" The laughter stopped, followed by loud, worried whispers. However hollow my victory, it still felt good. From then on, my caretakers spoke to me less and kept their distance. So what if they hated me? I hated them right back. There was another reason I wasn't in a good mood. My doctors told me a few days before my little porn stunt that they needed to keep me hospitalized an entire month. This seemed unnecessary, but I agreed, and they ordered a PICC line installed. PICC (pronounced like "pick") stands for "peripherally inserted central catheter," which is "doc-talk" for a flexible tube inserted through a vein - usually in the upper arm - to a position near the heart

that introduces intravenous medications like antibiotics closer to the center of the blood stream. The PICC, then, was their way of addressing the fact that my body kept refusing the IVs. They called in a specialist for a one-time bedside insertion. He read the tattoo on my left shoulder. "Knowledge?" he said. "Yes," I said back, surprised he read Hebrew. Then he performed the insertion and left. Resigned now to another few weeks of medical misery, I texted Isabella and complained. "AMA," was her answer.

APRIL 9, 2009

AMA. Against Medical Advice. It was beautiful, simple and bold. It told my doctors their opinion was just that: their opinion. So, under AMA, I simply removed myself from their authority. I signed the necessary paperwork. The PICC was removed, and afterward I got dressed and walked out. Then, at a local coffee shop, I called a cab, which took me back to my board-and-care.

APRIL 10, 2009

Having already received my disability money on the 3rd of the month, and with Isabella promising to be free and sexually available, I got in my Chevy S-10 and drove a few hours up the coast, beelining it for a cheap motel. Once there, I rented a room and dialed my lover. She told me to come pick her up. Then, I drove over to her house and parked on the street. She sauntered out the front door and slid into my car. She'd put on weight, but still looked good. "Sorry I'm not young and thin," she said, which seemed like an odd thing to say. We kissed. Then, back at the motel, we wasted no time. Sex was the aperitif, the main course, and dessert. She even stayed the night, feeling no need to hide anything from her husband, whose name was Benjamin, and whom she despised.

He called her cell a number of times. We ignored it for an hour or two. When it rang again, Isabella handed me the phone and motioned for me to answer. What ensued was a brief tennis match of words.

Benjamin tried to bait me, like he expected me to do something stupid like rush over to the house and physically attack him. Then he said, "So you're the one fucking my wife."

"Yes," I said.

"Good luck. You have no idea what you're in for."

My hackles raised, I yelled and elbow-slapped the air.

He chuckled, apparently satisfied with my reaction.

Isabella then grabbed the phone and spat a few words of her own before hanging up.

After all of that, we ordered pizza and settled in for the night.

When we fell asleep, we were touching.

APRIL 11, 2009

Early the next morning, Isabella had to go home. I drove her to the local Starbucks. She asked me to stay there and wait for her call. Then she walked home. When her call came, she sounded distressed. Apparently, Benjamin was getting violent. I didn't know what to do. That's when a cop car pulled up outside. With my cup of coffee in my hand, I approached the officers. I told them about the situation. They listened with concern and signaled dispatch. Yes!

A little later, Isabella called and said to come by the house... but to keep my distance and not cause trouble. When I got there, I saw two children on the sidewalk, a seven-year-old girl (let's call her X) and a six-year-old boy (let's call him Y). They were being ushered into a van, to be driven away by Child Protective Services. Benjamin got arrested. Isabella spoke with the cops about a restraining order, and one of the officers called me over. I answered a few questions. Then the cops left, leaving me and Isabella to pick up the pieces in a house we didn't own.

## HOVEL HOME (April to May, 2009)

The house was a disgrace. The only semi-clean room was Isabella's bedroom, with its canopy bed pushed up against the boxes spilling out from the walk-in closet and a cluttered computer desk crammed in a corner opposite the door. The second bedroom, where the husband used to sleep, was filthy. The third bedroom held two cots meant for the kids surrounded by piles of unwashed clothes. At the end of the hallway connecting these three rooms, there was a living room covered in books, and an adjacent den filled with computer parts. The kitchen was a disorganized and dirty mess, but nowhere near as bad as the bathroom, whose toilet was more stain than porcelain. Deciding we needed to clean, Isabella gathered supplies. She asked me to handle the toilet while she started in on the sink. Looking at the sink with scrub brush in hand, she broke into tears. She set the brush down and excused herself to the bedroom. I called through the door to check on her. She said she was okay. Trusting her self-assessment, I got to work on the toilet. After making it presentable, I started in on the tub. When Isabella returned, she quietly cleared and scrubbed the sink. She said nothing for quite a little while. I stayed quiet, too... until I needed to get a sponge from the hallway and had to squeeze by. "Excuse me," I said.

"Not a problem," said Isabella in a southern drawl.

"Are you okay?" I asked.

"Why, of course, darlin'. You must be David. My name's Alice. I've heard nothin' but good things 'bout you, David. Happy to meet your acquaintance. I'm sorry. It must be terribly disorientin' for you to hear me speakin' outta Bella's mouth. How do I look?" That's how I met Alice. Even though Isabella was 5'10" and brunette, Alice told me that when she looked in the mirror, she saw a 5'7" redhead. A caretaker personality, Alice helped fill me in on some of Isabella's story, mostly to confirm how insufferable

Benjamin had been as a husband. She even said he'd recently raped her at that very sink. Not knowing what to say, I kept working on the bathtub. Alice finished the sink. Once that was done, she said she had to go, but that she'd be back. Then, pressing her hand to the bathroom wall for support, she did a kind of double-take with her eyes. Suddenly, Isabella was back... and shaken. She darted back into the bedroom.

Following cautiously, I spoke with her at length about what had happened. Together, we tried to sort through her divergent realities, mapping things out as best we could. Over time and through a little online research, we would come to learn that Isabella suffered from DID - Dissociative Identity Disorder (what used to be called Multiple Personality Disorder). We didn't know it at the time, but this meant that sometimes, when she felt triggered by trauma, alternate personalities (or "alters" for short), stepped in and took over. Unfortunately, when this happened, Isabella's "core" (or central personality) rarely remembered anything, resulting in blackouts of "lost time." These memory holes lasted anywhere from fifteen minutes to several hours; or even, on rare occasions, for days at a stretch, depending on the alter (or alters) in control. Here's a list of all the personalities I would eventually meet, ordered according to when I first learned their names.

1. Alice
2. Courtney
3. Vivienne
4. Susana
5. Heather
6. Chelsea
7. Brad
8. Bella
9. Catherine

Alice I've already described. Courtney was a runaway teenager. Vivienne was a flapper from San Francisco (roaring '20s and all

that). Susana was a German witch from Isabella's matriarchal lineage seven generations back. As for Heather, she was a man-hating drunk who liked to fight. A timid girl, Chelsea feared familial abuse. Brad was a young black man who promised to keep Chelsea safe. The "good" version of Isabella was Bella, the person she dreamed to be, while Catherine was the "evil" one. More on her later. Way later.

## A MESSAGE FROM ALICE

One day, Isabella got sick and locked herself in the bathroom for a good hour. From time to time, she cried out in pain. I asked if she needed anything. She shouted at me through the door to leave her alone. Finally, after I'd waited patiently for her upset to subside, it was Alice who walked out the bathroom door. She said Isabella had miscarried in the toilet. She said there were two fetuses. In a worried voice, she asked me what to do. When I said I didn't know, she went back in and flushed them down. They were likely the result of Benjamin having forced himself on her in that very same bathroom a couple of months prior. Hoping to be helpful, Alice asked me a day or two later to video her on my cellphone. She wanted to leave an encouraging message for Isabella.

"Hello, [Isabella], this is Alice. Um, I'm here to tell you today that David loves you, and be good to him, take good care of him, and if you lost the babies, I'm really sorry. 'Cause that's just not something that, that any woman should have to go through. But you have those two other babies, and they need you and they love you. [X] and [Y] love you, and they need you. So you need to pick yourself up by your boot laces and just do what you need to do to get them back. Cause I know you want them back, and they're much better off with you than with that man. So, in summation: be good to yourself, be good to David, be good to [X] and [Y], and good things will come to you. You just have to

take the bull by the balls, and, hope I'm not here for very much longer, but if I am, I'll try and do what I can to help. Bah-bye."

When I played this for Isabella later, she had trouble watching it. Her attention seemed distant, and when it finished she said nothing. An alter (maybe Catherine) had stepped in to prevent her from seeing it, but I didn't think of that at the time. Instead, I correctly assumed it was triggering and let it drop. Over time, I would learn that the alters and lost souls inside of Isabella often stepped on each others toes, sometimes more intentionally than others. In this case, the support Alice offered had been prevented by another. Nevertheless, Alice would help out in other ways. Because, unlike Catherine, Alice was an ally.

## COURTNEY

The second alter was different. Isabella and I were walking back to my truck from the supermarket with some groceries, when she abruptly stopped and turned on me. "What - who are you?"

"What do you mean, who am I? I'm David. Who are you?"

"Did you, did you drug me?"

"No. Who are you?"

"I'm Courtney. Where're you planning on taking me in your car?"

"Home. I mean..."

"What have you been giving me?" She stepped back a few feet. She almost stumbled. "What's wrong with my ankle?"

"I dunno. Isabella said she broke it when she was a kid. She has to be careful walking on it."

"Well, I'm going home. My home. What city are we in?"

"Lompoc."

"Well, I'm gonna find a bus stop." Then she bolted. Not a full run, but fast enough.

I put the small bag of groceries I was carrying in the back of my pickup truck and opened the door to sit in the driver's seat. Not turning the ignition, I waited.

After about fifteen minutes, Isabella came back, looking puzzled and sad. "What happened?"

"You changed and took off."

"I'm sorry."

I got up and gave her a hug.

"Oh God, David. I love you." Returning my hug tenfold, she explained to me how disorienting it was to come to on the street. The last thing she remembered was shopping at the grocery store and following me to the car. Then - in a flash - she was on the sidewalk looking at the traffic whizzing through the intersection some distance away from where we had parked. Confused, she walked back to find me waiting for her return. I'd encounter Courtney later, but first I'd have to deal with...

## VIVIENNE

Putting the groceries away in the still dirty kitchen, Isabella and I felt for a moment like a real couple. We touched and kissed, and somehow the food got put away. But then her energy spun around. She barged into my space and kissed me more aggressively than before. Her hands slid down the front of my torso and fumbled with my belt. "Hold me," she demanded.

With my hands on her shoulders, I drew back. "Who are you?"

"Never mind that." The lust in her eyes sparkled with something not unlike anger. "Come to the bedroom and fuck me."

If I'd thought she was in her right mind, I would have complied.

But I knew better. "No," I said. "Who are you?"

"I'm Vivienne. And I want you."

Less interested in having sex, and more concerned about the consequences, I thought, "What if, in the middle of having sex, Vivienne leaves and Isabella returns?" Alice had already told me how Benjamin had forced himself on her in the bathroom, and Courtney was clearly fearful of worse. So, with my refusal to rape in the forefront of my mind, I held my ground. Vivienne backed

away in a huff. Later, I would learn she was a flapper from the '20s. But that wouldn't be revealed until after I'd met...

## SUSANA

Susana liked to show up in the garage, a backyard unit separate from the house. Full of miscellaneous household items, some piled in boxes or simply stacked at random, the garage was a puzzle Isabella and I never solved. In fact, it took us the better part of a day just to clear a spot in the back big enough for the two of us to sit in comfort, me on a fold-out, and Isabella (or Susana) in an old wooden rocking chair. It's where we smoked cigarettes and decompressed. I spoke with Alice there a few times, but it was Susana's space more than anyone else's. Susana liked our chairs to be facing, and at a distance. The matriarch of Isabella's family line going back seven generations, Susana hailed from western Germany and was more than a little critical of the situation, what with the house a mess, the children absent, and me with so little to bring to the table. She said she'd be watching, and that my behavior would determine Isabella's future. Then she told me more about Isabella's condition. According to Susana, the best way to describe Isabella's state of being - both literally and figuratively - was to speak of a dimly lit clearing in the middle of a darkened forest. This clearing was a portal. It granted limited access to Isabella's body, so that certain entities interested in seeing through her eyes and feeling through her skin might do so. These entities came in two types: alters and lost souls. While alters were fractured offshoots of Isabella's psyche, lost souls were more independent. Susana told me it was possible to lift these spirits (or lay them to rest) through the understanding and honoring of them and their attachments to Isabella's energy. Then she focused on Vivienne. She said Vivienne had been a dancer at a San Francisco brothel in the 1920s, and that through Vivienne and the others, I was to carry Isabella over a threshold of some kind. How that would transpire

was up to me. I would do what I would do, Isabella would do what she would do, and Susana would observe.

## SPLIT-APARTS

Days passed. Isabella seemed to be injuring herself with the cleaning. There were bruises on her arms and legs. But when she noticed me notice them, she told me they came from nowhere, that they weren't physical. She said they had to do with witchcraft, and when I asked her to be specific, she said they had to do with our relationship, hers and mine. Then she told me we were "split-aparts." According to Isabella, she and I were two halves of one divided soul. This meant we always reincarnated in each other's lives until we got it right. She said we'd tried many lifetimes already, but that, every time, we betrayed each other. Would we get it right this time? She said she didn't know. As for the bruises, they were emblematic of our betrayals, and therefore worth paying attention to. She never explained to me how she read them, though, and I didn't spend a lot of time trying to figure things out, either. Her bruises were just another drop in the bucket of overwhelm I carried each day. It was a heavy bucket. When Isabella started spending extra time in the garage communing with Susana in my absence, I grew distrustful, fearful even. When she did spend time with me, she talked about my writing. Not what I'd already written, but what I would write in the future - with her help, of course. She would be my muse, and together we would write young adult fiction and sell a lot of books. It was a beautiful dream that gave me hope. But I lacked both the time and the energy to write much of anything back then, due to my burgeoning insecurities. I was living in the house of a married woman with a restraining order out against a man who was her husband and the father of their two children, X and Y. Fixing that situation wasn't going to be easy. We needed a plan. But who was to make that plan? Me and who else? Isabella and a handful of her alters, or maybe just the spirit of the witch

named Susana? Who was on whose side, anyway? "Lie and say you love me," she'd said. Did that mean her love for me was a lie too? I didn't want to think about that, but I knew the answer. I was being used.

## LAYING COURTNEY TO REST

Collecting beer cans in bags, we were cleaning up the pavement between the house and the garage when Courtney awoke again in Isabella's body. Startled to find herself no longer at the intersection outside the grocery store looking for a bus to take her home, and convinced I was a rapist keeping her in drugged captivity, she dropped the bag she carried with a clatter. I turned to her. She drew back and threatened to scream. Still approaching, I quickly yet gently held her close and covered her mouth. She made to bite my hand but then sensed I meant no harm and stopped. Her muscles relaxed. I asked her not to scream and uncovered her mouth. She remained quiet.

The rest of that afternoon was spent getting Courtney acclimated to her new environment. A lost soul, she'd probably been drugged and raped and later killed within the confines of some unknown city (maybe Lompoc), at the hands of some unknown stranger, and for reasons just as unknown. I gave her the time and space she needed to adjust. Then, when she was ready to talk, I asked her how she'd get home if she didn't know where she was. She thought about that a moment and left, never to return. In her passing, Isabella's body shivered briefly. When she came to, Isabella started to cry. Then she saw me next to her and gave me a hug. We got back to cleaning. After that, Isabella spent even more time with Susana than before, and I began to lose my nerve.

## COWARDICE

Jess had told me to keep things simple with Isabella; but Isabella was the opposite of simple. She had essentially tricked me into an adulterous affair with two kids, a vengeful ex, and a soon-to-be-sold house. Forced to admit I was in over my head, I snapped. Here's how. One night after midnight in a fit of cowardice, I snuck out of the house while Isabella was asleep. With only my basic belongings under my arm, I got in my truck and drove the three or four hours to my parents' house in Ontario and knocked on their door at dawn. I tried to explain, but my story was too short and too scrambled to make much sense to anyone, especially them. They said their hands were tied. They said they couldn't take me in, which meant I had two choices. Either I admitted myself to a hospital for further psychiatric evaluation, or I drove back and apologized to Isabella. Knowing it would do me no good, I wasn't about to go to a hospital. So, I got back in my car and drove all the way back to Lompoc. After parking on the street in front of the house, I gathered my things and walked across the lawn. Isabella met me at the door. Understandably shook, she said she'd been awake since just after I'd left. She'd called my cellphone only to discover I'd turned it off. I apologized. She gave me an angry hug. But the damage had been done. I was no more deserving of her trust than she was of mine. Would that ever change? Would we become what we needed to become, if not for each other, then at least for ourselves? Only time would tell.

When April rolled around, Child Protective Services handed control of the children over to Benjamin, who approached Isabella's mother Darla for custody of the house. But Benjamin was unemployed, and Darla wasn't interested in continuing to make payments on the house. Instead, she decided to sell the house to the highest bidder. The kids could stay with Benjamin at Benjamin's father's house in Lompoc, and Isabella could find someplace else to go. Darla didn't care. As for Isabella, she was beside herself. She'd just lost a house and two children. Still, because she'd wanted to break away from Benjamin so badly for so long, she was grateful for my help in making that possible. In

fact, Isabella soon promoted me from home-wrecker to home-maker. Which meant I had a lot to learn and arrange in a very short amount of time. She did begin to spend less time with Susana, though, which probably meant that Susana felt she was getting her way. And Susana did say my way of handling things would carry Isabella over a some kind of threshold...

May 3, 2009

Since there was nowhere for me to run, I decided, with Isabella's encouragement, to go all in. Down on one knee in the back of the garage, I asked Isabella to marry me. Even though there was no ring, she said yes. Not out of starstruck love, though. What she wanted was a legal edge over her husband for the custody of her children. Over time, I'd learn how important it was for her to care for her children, and how much it hurt her to lose them. As for me, I was nowhere near ready to be a father, but there was the even bigger problem looming on the horizon of Darla selling the house and leaving us with nowhere to go. It's why Isabella had encouraged me to ask her to marry me. If marriage was on my horizon, then my parents were more likely to chip in. The practicality of it all was so unpleasant for me to think about that I stepped right into denial. High on hope, I announced our engagement to friends and family over email the very same day:

From: David Lawrence

Sent: Sunday, May 3, 2009 5:59 PM Subject: Wedding Bells

Hello All,

On May 3rd, 2009, I asked [Isabella], the love of my life, to marry me. And she accepted! No dates have been set as of yet, but I just wanted to let you all know that I am soon to be a married man.

David Lawrence

PS - Will keep you updated re: dates and venues when they become known.

An amorphous circle of friends I shall call WSHT replied to my email with condescending incredulity. Still, it (WSHT) pretended to be my friend at a distance well into 2016, when it was afforded the opportunity to more personally kick me to the curb. But that's for later. In 2009, our email conversation re: WEDDING BELLS went like this:

From: WSHT

Sent: Sunday, May 3, 2009 10:53 PM Subject: Re: Wedding Bells

What the fuck?

\* \* \*

From: David Lawrence

Sent: Sunday, May 3, 2009 11:29 PM Subject: Re: Wedding Bells

Huh. Thrown by this one, eh? Well, it's true. We have issues that we are working through, but we are both pretty damn sure that we were together in a previous life. Too much to explain here right now. But just know that I'm serious.

Dave

\* \* \*

From: WSHT

Sent: Monday, May 4, 2009 12:45 PM Subject: Re: Wedding Bells

I am happy that you have found someone with whom you can experience love, reciprocated. It is a glorious thing, indeed. You

[sic] decisions seem to be moving too fast for me, but I am not you, and I am trusting that it is the correct path for you and [Isabella]. I only offer the advice not to give up your power too quickly or too easily. . . to stay grounded in yourself and the present moment and nourish your power, while helping to nourish her power. Together, I know you can help to heal each other, or rather, heal yourselves in each others [sic] presence.

May you find the peace and happiness you are looking towards.  
May you stay balanced. May you be in love.

All the best,

~ WSHT

I don't know about you, dear reader, but after that, I need a drink...

## WHISKEY AND KARAOKE

Before my parents had agreed to anything, Isabella knew exactly how she wanted to celebrate: by getting seriously drunk and showing me off to her friends. These friends didn't come terribly well-recommended - even by Isabella herself - but she invited them all anyway. One friend in particular made me nervous. He was a big, bearded man. "Big Beard" threatened to kill me if I didn't do right by my bride-to-be. At the time, I thought it was maybe just his rough way of expressing love and protection. Turns out he was actually jealous of me, and psychotic to boot. But I wouldn't learn that for a number of years, and even then it'd be more through hear-say than anything evidential. Isabella knew people, and I didn't, so anything and everything I knew about anyone else was through her. It stayed that way throughout our relationship, too, which probably should have raised my suspicions more than it did. But that night I worried about

nothing more than keeping Isabella drunk and happy. I did this with whiskey and karaoke. While the whiskey wasn't cheap, the karaoke cost more. Sonic tarot cards of sinister proportions, I picked and performed two of them. Isabella picked and performed the third. Now, more than ten years later, I read them like so:

Jethro Tull's "Aqualung" - I chose this one not even thinking about the lyrics. "Sitting on a park bench / Eyeing little girls with bad intent / Snots running down his nose / Greasy fingers wearing shabby clothes, hey, Aqualung..." So. Yeah. A song about a homeless pedophile. Not too appropriate for a marriage proposal celebration. Unless we string a few things together. Jess (of Infinite Book 3: My Truest Fiction) had told me early on she was a Megan's Law sex offender, having been tried and convicted for giving an underaged boy a blowjob. And here's another Jess reveal: she and James had two daughters, whom Jess made extra sure to warn me never to approach back in 2006, even though I never expressed any interest in doing so. When I chose to sing "Aqualung" in 2009, pedophilia wasn't on my mind, it was under it. Because that was how I was being programmed by my controllers. More on that later, both in this book and the one to follow.

Jefferson Airplane's "White Rabbit" - Careless in my song selection yet again, I failed to remember it was about a girl named Alice, Alice being the name of Isabella's primary caretaker of an alter. The song was also about drug use, which would prove to be more of a problem for Isabella than I realized at the time. Still, I sang it so well it was like channeling Grace Slick herself. It stamped the evening as symbolic of the rabbit hole down which Isabella and I were already falling. She was leading, of course.

Pat Benatar's "Hit Me With Your Best Shot" - When Isabella belted this one out, I knew it spoke on all sorts of levels. It was a

direct challenge to me, to her friends, to the town in which we lived, and to the world at large. With each whiskey shot she downed that night, she shouted her challenge, "Is this all you've got? 'Cause I'm still standing!" But who was standing, really? Was it Isabella, or one of her alters? I didn't know her name at the time, but the alter in control that night was one I had yet to meet: Heather. Heather liked to show up in bars and apparently had a reputation for getting into fights. But I wouldn't learn any of that stuff for another year or two at least. So, that night, I simply assumed Isabella was the one doing the singing and the drinking. Either way, she drank a lot.

Pounding shot after shot of whiskey - straight Jack, the same drink her husband had given her after her suicide attempt - she cut loose and got out of hand. I noticed this first when Isabella's friends showed signs of discomfort. One of them cautioned me to help her reel it in. So, when the opportunity presented itself, I excused the two of us from the festivities. Not wanting to leave a bad impression, Isabella said her goodbyes with a flourish. Then she took hold of my arm, both as a sign of possession and to keep her footing. Together, we walked out the door - two foolish lovers determined to wed despite Isabella being married to Benjamin. Having publicly declared our engagement, we had just upped the ante on our relationship. While this filled Isabella with bravado, it made me cautious.

In the parking lot, I stopped my bride-to-be a few feet away from my truck. "Isabella, I love you. I'm just not comfortable with the drinking." She had switched personalities a couple times over the course of the night. The transitions had been difficult to recognize, but when I did recognize them, I connected them to the alcohol. Plus, I was worried about our finances. "The money I saved is gone, and now I'm broke. You can't keep drinking like you've been." I was referring not just to her drinking that night, but to her insistence on keeping alcohol in the house as well. Was her drinking at the house encouraging her transitions there too? Babbling sweetness in a desperate attempt to distract me,

she rushed in for a kiss. I restated my case. She swore under her breath. Our first argument had begun. After a good ten to fifteen minutes of heated bickering, I asked point blank, "What do you want? Do you want me? Or do you want the alcohol?"

"The alcohol," was the answer that came from her mouth. Then, seeing the hurt on my face, she apologized and got in my truck. Although angry with me, she knew I was her ticket to the future... as she was mine. When we got home, we had sex, followed by a restless night.

Over the next few days, I watched for signs of chemical dependency. It wasn't the drinking so much as it was the Ambien. She took that for anxiety, insomnia, and seizures. Unfortunately, the sedating effects of these little pills summoned her alters like nothing else. When we talked about it, she said she wasn't addicted (to alcohol, or Ambien, or anything else), and - oddly enough - I believed her. Her underlying yearning wasn't for any particular substance, it was for escape. She wanted to escape being Isabella, because being Isabella was a losing proposition. It was the stuff of nightmares, really, and she had every right to seek release. I understood this. Not perfectly, but well enough. Because I, too, wanted to escape being me, just in different ways. Could we escape together? Maybe. Maybe not.

## Together Now

Isabella and I having declared our love, we made plans as best we could. Nothing was guaranteed.

## LOOKING UP

As I've said already, before moving in with Isabella, I'd applied for SSI. With me now in Lompoc, and the application still pending, Isabella took me to the local Social Security office. Lompoc being much smaller than L.A., the worker there found me in the system and said it'd be a snap to get me back on SSI. All she had to do was select something on her computer and... voilá! I was back on SSI. Personal touch goes a long way, I guess. Still, getting back on SSI was a waste of time. Because once my parents started helping out with living expenses on account of my marriage proposal to Isabella, I no longer qualified for SSI. But having my parents on my side was way more important than an extra \$70 a month, so I didn't mind. As for my parents, they were simply excited. They wanted to meet my fiancé. So Isabella and I made the trip down south. The drive was a long one. We talked excitedly the entire way, discussing how best to approach my parents, how to get Isabella's kids back, and how to handle married life. But first we had to secure the support of my parents. When we stepped on their property, it felt strange to me. It was the house I'd called home for way too many years of my inconsequential life. It was also the house where I'd acted out in some very disturbing and frightening ways. The backyard bathhouse was where I'd stabbed my eye. The upstairs bedroom was where I'd burned the palms of my hands. The dining room was where I'd held my terrified parents captive for about half an hour. Etc., etc. But I wasn't going to act out this time. I wasn't afraid of what I might do. Instead, I was afraid of what Isabella might do if she transitioned, and how I'd have to explain that to my parents. It was a big risk keeping a lid on her condition, but

sharing that information with my parents just then wasn't a good idea.

My mother had a dropped foot. She used a walker and a cane. My father looked thin and exhausted. Still, they welcomed their troubled son in with love, and saw Isabella only with the most hopeful of eyes. While she did transition a few times over the course of our visit, it wasn't enough for my parents to notice. Her most extreme transition was when we were alone together in my old upstairs bedroom. She got frisky and said she wanted to fuck me right then and there, no doubt sensing the loneliness and rage that lingered there. I shut down the urge, however, and we walked back downstairs to say goodbye to my parents.

Years later, when I mentioned this trip to Isabella, she didn't remember any of it. Her alters took the trip for her, probably in order to shield her from her fear of having to impress my parents. Despite being brilliant, Isabella's mind was fragile in a lot of ways. Still, the trip was a success. Now we had money from my parents for an apartment.

## APARTMENT ONE

Apartment searches suck, and so did ours... until we found a place we liked. A beautiful yet affordable second floor one bedroom in a nice complex. There was even a pool, and a Jacuzzi. My handful of possessions (books and clothes, mostly) fit easily, with lots of space left over. Isabella's possessions, however, were another matter entirely. She had a house-full. So we rented a storage unit for what we couldn't cram in the apartment, and arranged what we did keep to create a neat, clean and downright homey living space, perfect for the two of us. As for the move itself, Isabella did the directing, I did the lifting. Too much lifting, as a matter of fact, since I managed to damage my back to the point of needing physical therapy for a number of weeks after. The pain got so intense, it was all I could do to sit behind the wheel of my Chevy S-10 and drive to my

initial therapy appointments. This helped me relate somewhat to Isabella's own injuries. Her back and her ankle were the worst offenders, having been initially torn apart via separate accidents - one involving a car crash and the other an ice-skating mishap. Neither her back nor her ankle ever recovered. Instead, they were consistently re-injured throughout her life. These physical complaints only added to her sufferings, the courts decided Benjamin and his father were the best option for the kids, he had all the ammunition he needed to undermine Isabella's recovery. The first time he allowed the kids to come over and see their mother was a ploy for control, and maybe something more. Some might say what I am about to relate was completely normal, and I am only weighting it with meaning both incorrectly and after the fact. I disagree. Here's how I first made the acquaintance of X and Y, the children I had only ever seen before this moment waiting outside the Child Protective Services vehicle to be carted off into the system, before Benjamin and his father took subsequent custody. There was a knocking at the door. Isabella answered and stayed with Benjamin near the door, through which the kids (X, age 8, and Y, age 7) excitedly stormed. They ran about the living room a bit. I was sitting on the couch facing the TV, and the first thing I saw was Y catching up to his older sister X and, right in front of me, grabbing between her legs. Not at all used to this sort of thing, I looked on with disapproving surprise. Pulling away from her brother, but not upset, X ran up to me and turned around. My legs wide open, she backed herself up against my sitting crotch and wiggled there a bit. Then she pushed herself off of me and resumed being chased by her younger brother.

While this can all be analyzed easily enough as typical youthful behavior, I believe it was also programmed; how so will be a topic examined later in this book. But for now, back to the moment. Still keeping Benjamin at bay outside the front door of our apartment, Isabella told me to go into the bedroom and help X wash her hands. I stood up. This wasn't something I was used to doing, but I figured it couldn't be too difficult, so I escorted X

into the bedroom and over to the sink nook between the bathroom and the closet. She approached the sink and held her hands over it. I had to get close behind and reach over to assist. After soaping and washing her hands, which proved to be extraordinarily soft and delicate, I found myself becoming sexually aroused. This was not something I was comfortable with at all. So, after her hands were rinsed, I handed her a fresh towel and returned to the couch, leaving X to finish the job and find her own way back to the living room.

Isabella asked me how it went. I said, "Fine." Then she went downstairs to speak at length with Benjamin, telling me to keep the kids entertained as she closed the door. The kids and I played a board game or two to get to know each other. They had fun, and, once the sexual charge of our initial meeting had finally abated, I had fun, too. But the seed had been planted. It was a seed that would develop over a number of years in subtle ways difficult to understand - not because I was an inherent perv, but because I myself was being groomed. However crazy that may sound, all of it should make sense as my story unfolds.

Meanwhile, downstairs and outside, Benjamin asked Isabella to get back together with him. Dangling the children and the house that had yet to be sold as bait, he said he'd changed. But since Isabella wasn't falling for it, he cut the visit short and abruptly snatched the kids back to his father's house.

Once there, he no doubt did what he could to undermine X and Y's assessment their mom's new apartment and her fiancé.

Having lost his bid to regain control, the next thing Benjamin did was tighten the rules on visitation. According to him, visits would no longer take place in our apartment. Instead, I had to drive Isabella around town to different parks on different occasions to wait in my car while the kids entertained themselves under a tree or on a swing while their parents argued.

Benjamin wasn't about doing right by his kids. He was about doing wrong by Isabella. As for Isabella, she was worried sick over the absence of her children, and when she did get to see

them, instead of enjoying their company, she had to deal with their unhappiness and Benjamin's wheedling at the same time.

## THE CATS

Allow me to go back a bit in time. At the house Isabella and I had recently abandoned, there were two indoor/outdoor cats. The white boy cat (who was deaf) was named Mika. Mika means "Who is like God?" or maybe "Beautiful fragrance," depending on who you ask. More likely than not, the name meant "Beautiful fragrance," on account of that meaning's origin being both Russian and Japanese. Not sure why, but Isabella's real nickname, which was Suki, means something different in these two languages. In Russian, it means "bitch," while in Japanese it means "like/love." I mention this because Russia and Japan will both play unusual (and no doubt magickal) roles in my story as it unfolds.

I mention magick here, because the other cat was Isabella's familiar, Minerva. Minerva was a girl calico. Because we needed to limit the number of cats in our new apartment to one, Minerva came with, and Mika stayed. One final bit of "literary" analysis regarding Mika is the following. Mika is pronounced "MEE-kah," which echoes my last name at birth, "Meeks." Were we perhaps leaving behind a former version of myself, a version incapable of hearing what needed to be heard? Would my ears begin to open? Only time would tell...

## HOUSEHOLD FINANCES

Here are some things from my old files.

### Monthly Expenses

Comcast \$100.00

Gas \$25.00  
Electricity \$80.00  
AT&T \$150.00  
Storage \$73.00  
Verizon \$70.00  
Credit Card \$60.00

Total \$558.00

Monthly Income \$783.76

Savings           \$225.76

Priority Buys

Crock Pot  
Trivet  
Beach Towels  
Ironing Board  
Dust Pan  
Curtains  
Bedroom  
Trash Can  
Kitchen Towels  
Kitchen Rugs  
Welcome Mat  
Lint Roller  
Hangers  
Mop/Broom Rack  
Two King Pillow Cases (Ivory Color)  
Mats for Computer  
Chairs and Bar Stools  
Floor Lamp  
Chilton's Guide for S-10  
Picture Frames (Tree of Life and Erika's Art)  
Bookcase for Office

David's Drivers License  
Passports  
iBank  
Roku Digital Video Player

### Priority To-Do List

1. Finish Divorce Paperwork
2. Collect Other Divorce Paperwork as needed
3. Attend Class
4. 2004, 2005 and Misc. Income Taxes
5. Put Items for Sale on eBay
6. Get Sewin' Suki up on Etsy
7. Stop Cable
8. Things I Have To Say (.com)
9. infinitedot 3.0
10. TWBB
11. Clean Canvas Cabinet
12. Clean Closet

We had big dreams. We really did. We'd start making money and eventually have enough to travel. Isabella wanted to see Greece. To these end, I maintained a couple of Blogger blogs, and Isabella did some gorgeous design work for my website. She even started a website. Still, our dreams were tenuous at best. We lived in a town known for meth. While this particular drug may or may not have been a problem for Isabella, she still turned to drugs (both legal and illegal) to ease her anguish over her missing kids. But we wouldn't be able to convince the state to grant us custody unless we were gainfully employed, and I had no luck finding a job. My horrible resume was a death knell in a town that wasn't hiring anyway. So, instead of finding employment, we struggled to stabilize ourselves in the face of Isabella's dual diagnosis, which consisted of fluctuating personalities and drug abuse. My learning curve in terms of anchoring Isabella to her

core personality was enormous. Really, it was too much. What I did learn first, however, was most important to me: how to tell when Isabella was lying, and when she wasn't.

She never said so, but it was obvious Isabella valued drugs and alcohol over me. They gave her a quick fix, and I didn't. Realizing this, I felt more isolated than I already was. Because the woman I lived with - my everything - was more absent in her presence than not.

06/04/09

On this day in June, Isabella did some research and came up with her own diagnosis: Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID). This gave us both something of a handle on her situation, particularly in terms of her being eligible for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). She needed the money and the medical services SSDI would provide, so I coached her with her application. I wasn't as hands-on with her as Jess was with me, but it still got the job done. Still, applying for Federal Disability is usually a long, slow process, so we didn't expect anything to happen anytime soon.

06/28/09

Timestamped at 11:25 PM this day, an email arrived in Isabella's inbox from Benjamin:

i have no problem trying to work out schedule so you can see the kids, it must be a plan, not something just thrown out there. im not wanting to keep them away from you, but i want definite times and dates. right now im looking for work, so the wekends might be best.

i have no idea wut your schedule is, but sat from 11-5 ill make it happen or sun 2-5 so you can see them for at least one hour.

also they are out of school this week at 230 so from 230 till 5pm would work. lets not make this a big deal. its about them. so get back to me let me knwo wut you want to do. if this sint good enough, we can try to wokr it out from there.

the keyboard i have sucks sorry about the typos,,aint gonna bother fixing them

they are your kids too,,,,,,i really want you to be able to spend time with them..... even tho ihave to supervise it for now,,,its better they see you. if you want to talk to me about it you can call, but im not playing games when it comes to them. this is agood as it gets as far as you seeing them. there are lots of hours available for you too see them i gave ya so pick 2 days and times and then email me back. or bring you new evidence to court there are 100's of pages i have also. but like i said its about them and they love you, so just pick a time and lets get you together with them. i cant wait till we can move past supervised visits but thats how its gonna be for now.

Isabella's reply went like so:

[Benjamin],

It does not "have to be that way for now." YOU are making it that way. It is not court mandated that visits are supervised. You have done your own share of damage with your verbal abuse and multiple spankings of [Y]. Even when I was on the phone with you a few weeks back, I could hear your father cursing and yelling at them. If you think that is doing less irreparable damage than what I have done, you are sorely mistaken.

My intentions are only be to (partially) spend time with them in a setting that I am comfortable in and one that they could get to know - MY home - where they WILL eventually be spending a considerable amount of time.

My wishes for the near future would simply be this: to pick them up from school three days a week (maybe eventually every day) and spend time with them until you could pick them up in the evening. This way I could potentially help you out, I could take an active interest in their education (which is very important to me) and I would get to spend the much needed time with them that I want.

At the very, VERY least, I am requesting that we come to a -reasonable- terms on custody including intention with regards to when supervision wouldn't be "required," when overnight stays could begin, a time line of when custody time would increase to be 50/50 physical, and a holiday schedule.

If we cannot come to some terms within the week, I suppose court it is. Get back to me with your thoughts, after you have had some time to think on the matter. I don't want some knee-jerk reaction from you - you are a constant offender in that department, and I know we both want to work this out like calm, mature adults for [X] and [Y]'s sake.

[Isabella]

After this exchange, Benjamin insisted on court. This unwillingness to give Isabella time with her kids inspired in her the decision to lash out at him financially. She did this through an Injured Spouse claim, having downloaded the necessary PDF paperwork from the IRS on the first Monday of July. Because she'd been the primary breadwinner in their relationship, Isabella was able to collect a substantial portion of the taxes previously paid to the IRS by her on his behalf. I don't know all the ins and outs of the situation, but I do know that before she stopped working (for whatever reasons mostly unknown to me), Isabella commanded respectable paychecks. But that was the past. Now, she had to scrape to survive.

## SAY WHAT?

Here's another email, this one from someone who sent it to my website email. Later, I looked up the phrases in the email to discover that they had been lifted from English literature. One might not think this was too terribly odd, except for the fact that, way back in my freshman year at Pomona College (1988), I drew a doodle of a dragon outlined with a poem of my own entitled, "I Hate William Blake." Was this a message from the Void... or Pomona College? Anyway, we'll get to Pomona College after a while. At the time the connection was meaningless to me. Now, I'm not so sure... infant noise? Huh.

June 28, 2009

From: Estella Burger () To: dot@infinitedot.com

Subject: careless vagabond of the sea, [Bret Harte, To a Sea-Bird, ln. 2]

infant noise idling at stoplights [?]

hurl'd the new born wonder thro' the starry night. [William Blake, A Song of Liberty, v. 10]

## OUR CONNECTION

Isabella and I clicked mentally more than sexually, mostly because we made each other laugh. I imagine this had a lot to do with the trauma we'd been through, which meant we appreciated one another as survivors of a sort. Also, we both loved books and movies, so it was a no-brainer that we spent lots of time watching movies together in the living room. Unfortunately, our conversations were seldom relaxed, on account of the very different roles we played in our relationship. Because I supplied the money and the housing through the help of my parents, I was

more of a limited cash cow than an actual breadwinner. Also, through my interest in mental health recovery, I became the therapist in our relationship. Of a kind. Which meant I provided a sounding board for her whenever she wanted or needed to talk. Before Benjamin, she'd made good money. She'd even had a girlfriend, and in this relationship, Isabella had been the alpha. This led to resentments not only with Benjamin, but with me as well. She didn't want Benjamin or me to be the alpha, because that threatened her sense of control. Neither did she want me to be the beta, because that reminded her too much of the wastrel that was Benjamin. What she did like was the idea I might make a living for us both through my writing. In fact, some of our first discussions weren't about food, housing or the kids; they were about what to write first. She said she wanted to be in my memoir. She even told me she wanted to be called Isabella in it. She also came up with a number of stellar ideas for our mutual pen name KOIDUST (which is an anagram for her real nickname SUKI and my original pen name of DOT). Under that name, we planned to write at least one young adult novel that Isabella was excited to do the research for. Really, despite everything, she did a lot of work for the both of us.

Unfortunately, I lacked the stamina to crank out much of anything in the face of our living situation. While it appeared ideal on the surface, it wasn't. Yes, there was plenty of down-time. Yes, I had a computer. Yes, I had books and the internet to do my research. Still, what most of that downtime got filled up with was either meeting the needs of Isabella or one of her alters, or worrying about looking for work or what Benjamin was gonna do next, or distracting myself from my worries. Isabella had wooed me early on with a text about how she would be my support companion while I became a successful author. But that wasn't in the cards. Yes, Isabella gave my life meaning. Through her, I finally felt needed. It's just that, through her, I also felt threatened. Even though I never understood the task before me as I will state it now, I had to come to understand her alters and her addictions

to get to the prize inside, so to speak: the tender core of Isabella I knew I'd loved from the start.

It's why we clicked. It's also why, even through our difficulties, we spent so much time together in our new apartment just getting to know each other. Everything about us felt poetic, really. There was poetry in our conversations and in our arguments. There was poetry in our meals. There was also poetry in our lovemaking, as well. There was even poetry in our... poetry.

JULY 11, 2009

Isabella sent this one over email, from her computer in the bedroom, to mine in the dining nook. Modern love.

Subject: Poem I wrote today

From: Isabella Lawrence

Diva

Cobwebs sparkling,  
mirror ball mimicking-  
she was shining  
rubbish  
never looked so chic  
wild mane of hair  
teetering heels  
wrapped up tight  
in the ruse  
was the bruised  
beauty  
who saw herself  
as nothing.

Now, it didn't take being a student of English or psychology for me to see in this poem a lamentation of self-loss. It did, however,

take being with Isabella to pick up on some of the finer points. Like how the line "teetering heels" was about her injured ankle. Or how the word "bruised" was more literal than metaphorical. Why? Because Isabella sometimes woke up with bruises on her body. The most obvious explanation for this was that they happened when an alter took over and got careless.

Another explanation might be that she was being abused. But I wasn't abusing her, so if someone else was, it was being done in my infrequent absence and very carefully. A third explanation, one Isabella said was actually the case, had to do with past lives. According to Isabella, she and I were split-aparts, and in our previous lives together had betrayed one another quite a bit. Under this scenario, the bruises were magickal reminders of past trauma, past trauma we now had the chance to heal. Was this true? Whether it was true or not, I knew it might be just another lie meant to suck me in; and if lies were all she had to offer, then she was no better than Jess.

Speaking of Jess, she and I were still in loose contact. Stockholm syndrome? Pretty much. We rarely talked, and even then only over email. At one point, Jess asked to speak with Isabella. So, I asked Isabella if she was willing to have a conversation with Jess, and she said she was. She said she wanted to to get a read on Jess. So, I gave Jess Isabella's number, and she called. They held their conversation in private. Afterward, the only thing Isabella had to say was that Jess was dangerous and shouldn't call me or her ever again. I didn't know what to think. What if Jess and Isabella were really and already on the same team? If they were, then I'd just been handed over from one abuser to the next; and that was more than a little scary.

Still, there was something different about Isabella. Underneath her lies, there was something sincere. I think she really was a witch. I think we really were (and still all) split-aparts. But I would never now any of this for certain - at least not until much later. For now, all I could do was trust in the mystery of her and hope for the best.

Anyway, here's a list of the meds she was on, as of July 12, 2009:

#### Morning

Paroxetine 20 MG Quantity 2 tablets  
Lithium Carbonate 300 MG Quantity 1 capsules  
Inderal 120 MG Quantity 1 Capsule  
Synthroid 50 MCG Quantity 1 Capsule

#### Evening

Lithium Carbonate 300 MG Quantity 2 capsules  
Prazosin 5MG Quantity 4 capsules  
Trazadone 150 MG Quantity 2 Tablets  
Geodon 40 MG Quantity 4 Capsules  
Ambien 10 MG Quantity 1 Tablet

#### PRN

Vicodin 5/500 MG Quantity 2-3 Tablets

### TILTING AT WINDMILLS

I don't remember his name, but Isabella and I shared the same psychiatrist at first. He prescribed me with my Abilify (30 mg at the time), and Isabella with her multiple psyche meds. As Isabella and I did what we could to map out her DID - which our psychiatrist didn't believe was her diagnosis - we came to realize that the Ambien she took to help with her insomnia was highly effective at triggering her transitions. Also, Isabella told me (incorrectly) that Ambien was a benzo, which it isn't. It is a hypnotic sedative. She may have misled me intentionally, or she may have simply been confused. I don't know. What I do know is that I told our psychiatrist in one of my sessions the effect the "benzos" were having on Isabella in regard to her alters and asked him to stop prescribing it for her. However, after her next visit with the psychiatrist, she came back with another

prescription for Ambien. While one part of Isabella and I were in agreement about the Ambien, other parts of her were not.

JULY 17, 2009

### Corset Fingers

Carved of whale bone and perfectly jointed,  
anointed to pull the blood to my surface,  
those fingers wrap around my ribs  
and tighten like silk ribbons pulling  
together and tighter  
like gangs of bandits  
thieving the last shreds of daylight  
from abandoned alleyways.

Steal my breath away.

Make it as cliché as you wish,

But be sure to make it hurt a bit.

I want to feel the sting on my lungs  
of the cage being wired around each inhale.

I can taste the sea filling my mouth,  
staining my teeth.

Crimson rain on your beautiful face,

hands lifted to the sky

holding me greedily,

eyes the color of the whales that sing

of dying just to press a breath

from my lungs to your lips.

Isabella had a fascination for pain. At the time, I had no idea just how deeply, or into which parts of her (alters or otherwise), it ran. My first clue was something that happened the night we had sex for the first time in that motel room three months ago. During foreplay, she sucked and then bit one of my nipples. The pain was as sharp as it was sudden. She almost drew blood. After I

tensed and pulled back, she glared. Then she kissed me gently. We got back to the sex. But I never forgot that bite. In its voracious simplicity, it stung, like a glimpse into the demonic, a glimpse into the broken worlds of God's creation called the Qliphoth in Qabalah. How did Benjamin's threat go? "Good luck. You have no idea what you're in for." Yup.

AUGUST 17, 2009

Subject: Just a little reminder

From: Bella Lawrence

I love you, darling. And thank you for taking care of me like no one else has. Yours always,  
Isabella

AUGUST 26, 2009

[Untitled Poem Two]

Darkly, I have waited behind the sun.  
I have needed everything and nothing,  
living as a leech stuck  
to some salty summer ankle.  
Suckling on a life line,  
breathing in your enzymes  
and feeling myself swell with you.  
No riverbed could hold me  
and you can become my escape  
wading through as a passerby  
from one world to another.  
Oh, my nomadic dream catcher,  
I have attached my unusual lips  
to your skin and swallowed your light.  
And when the time comes,

belly full of you and heart breaking  
into simple segments,  
I can fall and return to my dark place  
needing nothing until my cells  
grow thin again.

[Untitled Poem One]

She was an origami flower  
delicate  
intricate  
beautiful  
skin of thin paper  
and petals soft  
but holding dew  
in their fine creases-  
pure venom.

These two poems were complementary. They dimly reflected Isabella's fascination with vampires. She liked vampires, claimed to be one herself, and in many ways was. She fed off me financially, spiritually, and sexually - particularly sexually. Because that first untitled poem was probably a pregnancy poem if it was anything, like the next one she wrote the following day. At the time, I thought these were reflections on her past, not magickal blueprints for her future with me.

AUGUST 27, 2009

[Untitled]

Fingers in my belly,  
growing like wild flames.  
Burn with a grin  
I feel you wink inside

my eyelids.  
Bones wrapped  
in black ribbon  
unspooled with deliberate  
touching and Oh my God  
I think I forgot myself  
again  
in the mirror of your smile.  
Wild men like animals  
come with wild disregard  
but your sophisticated ways  
never waver even in wanting.  
Teach me your lessons.  
I am a songbird without a voice  
and a mouth void of sound  
is good for one thing,  
to use until the lips go limp  
and cracking for a drop of blood.  
You are the last  
of the forbidden religions  
and I fall to my knees  
because it's the only instruction  
the greedy god gave me.

Isabella probably was a breeder. When I say this, I mean she had children as assigned. Initially, I simply suspected Isabella of manipulating me for her own selfish reasons. Years later, though, I'd begin to suspect she maybe had ties to underground interests involved in human trafficking. Keep reading. That stuff is gonna take some time to unfold. Still, we were (and still are) split-aparts. I believe that now. Never mind Isabella's alters and possible ties to the underground; she loved me, and I loved her. Very, very much. Still, our love was as compromised as it was complicated. Of that I have no doubt.

09/07/09

One of the things I loved the most about Isabella was her creativity. She had some terrific ideas, which she shared with me. However, she certainly didn't share everything. She took part in a number of online forums, about which she told me very little, and there were still a ton of details about her past she never filled me in on. But I respected her need for privacy; I didn't want to upset the apple cart.

As a way to reveal to me what she was ready to reveal, and also as a way for her to introduce me to some of her online friends, she decided to revive a blog she used to run. She called it "Things I Have To Say," or "TIHTS" for short. Since I was already managing my own website, I created for her a TIHTS subdomain. I even wrote the following (with her oversight) on the TIHTS "About" page. NB: The names in the following are Isabella's real names, btw. I see no point in inventing new ones, or in hiding the old ones.

This is the site of Suzzanna Daniella Alexandria Elaina Christina Mera Olga Braier Robbins Moreno Arrambide Scott Newby, a.k.a. Suki, Kitten, and plain old bitch. She has a lot to say. And she likes to do things like: sewing, cross-stitch, collection [sic] ex-husbands, programming, watching movies, and making my life interesting. She started this website in order to share her pregnancies and the humor of raising children, as well as other interesting tidbits of her life. She is currently living with me (in sin) in Lompoc, CA. As for me, I certainly had no idea what I was getting into when I first laid eyes on her, but now I am happily engaged and looking forward to whatever comes next. [We] both hope that you enjoy reading about her life here. So, don't be a stranger!

- contributed by David Lawrence

We were gearing up. For what, I had no idea.

## WSHT PAYS A VISIT

Even as Isabella made efforts to reconnect with some of her old friends, I wanted her to meet some of mine, too. Since the few friends I had were mostly all in Southern California, and we were quite a drive north of them, only two members of WSHT were willing and able to make the trip up. I remember, before their arrival, Isabella putt on more makeup than usual. I didn't know it at the time, but that was because another alter had stepped in to keep her safe. The visit was short and relatively uneventful. They saw our apartment and wished us well. Then, they left.

SEPTEMBER 30, 2009

### Poem

I wish I could give you the core of me,  
that little part of me that, despite the weather,  
remains constant and pure.  
That girl underneath all the shit  
that life deposits on my skin  
is worth knowing.  
She's soft and innocent,  
meek and submissive  
but endlessly passionate.  
She'll cry rivers to follow to the ocean.  
She'll hold onto love until her knuckles fall apart.  
She sings in languages she doesn't understand  
She broods and embraces lonely nights  
but she's strong in knowing  
nothing ever lasts forever.

Bella was Isabella's core. She was her promised (and elusive) prize. It was the dream of her. But to get to Bella, I had to navigate past Isabella's alters, like Alice and Heather... and all the others I didn't know about just yet... as well as Isabella herself. For it was Isabella who guarded and protected Bella the most.

## STICKY NOTE

I adore you! I know your memoir will be awesome - so keep up the good work. Love, Mrs. Lawrence

## WARNING SIGNS

Early on, my fiancé took a few stabs at making money. She sold some things online, like craft items, but that quickly dried up, so she asked if I'd be okay with her doing sex work over the phone. It was through a company based out of Las Vegas, NV. Not minding, I freely gave my permission. Besides, it sounded interesting. She insisted I not listen in while she worked, and I agreed to that. Still, she told me a trade secret or two, like how if a guy (or a girl) was into hearing her take a poop, she could simulate the sound by dropping coins into the toilet. I'm not sure how she made sure the coin didn't clink at the bottom of the toilet bowl, but that was her business, not mine. In fact, whatever she did was so much her business that whatever money she made went to her, and her alone. But I that was okay with me, for the most part. She also asked me to proof the introductions to three of her personas, which went as follows.

Alice: Hey y'all! This is Alice callin' from New Orleans, out for some fun and all around good time. Brunnette today, might be another hair color tomorrow, green eyes and awesomely large tits. For a little taste of the South, connect.

Serenity: Hi Boys! This is smart, sassy and sexy Serenity, looking to have some fun. 5'10", long black hair, green eyes, and a horny disposition. If you'd like to learn more, connect with me.

Vivian: This is Mistress Vivian calling. Blonde hair, blue eyes, 5'5". I have no tolerance for one-stroke wonders. With me, you are in it for the long haul. If you're a bad little boy and need a good spanking, connect with me.

Isabella's alter Alice wasn't happy about any of this, by the way. She stepped in once or twice to tell me what Isabella was doing on the phone disgusted her. Something of a Southern Belle, Alice didn't think that type of work was proper in an apartment shared by Isabella's husband-to-be. She said she was particularly taken aback at my disregard for how the callers were all strange men with unknown intentions. While it wasn't an ideal situation, it seemed safe enough to me, and Isabella needed the money. Then Alice took it a step further. She asked me politely if I would make love to her. She said she was lonely, knowing Isabella got to have sex with me, but not her. It made sense, but I wanted to check in with Isabella first, before I agreed to Alice's request. So, Alice left, and I asked Isabella about it. We had a heart-to-heart about the nature of her alters and how I didn't like sleeping with anyone other than Isabella. Of course, I probably already had - with some of her lurker alters who could easily trick me into thinking they were Isabella, especially in "the heat of the moment." After we talked, Isabella and I both agreed that I should honor Alice's request.

When I did, it was straight-forward and missionary. It was a nice experience though, both for me and for Alice. Afterward, Alice left me with a goodbye kiss that said she approved of me as a lover. Not personally so much, but for Isabella - or even Bella - the core of Isabella's personalities. When I encountered Alice later, she said she wanted to help Bella and me get married and live a beautiful life together.

Despite Alice's approval and my intentions, Isabella's intentions were still mixed. Although she was learning to love me, our relationship to her was more practical than romantic. She needed a place to live. She needed money. She needed companionship. She also needed a place for her two children recently lost to Benjamin. I think she needed me for other reasons as well - the same reasons she and I first met in that behavioral health unit in L.A., when I'd been admitted in Riverside and she'd been admitted in Lompoc. Our roles in each other's lives were suspicious from the start; but I ignored my fears, seeing no way to effectively address them.

One problem did concern me, though: her substance use. When the alcohol got curtailed, she really started digging into the painkillers (Norco, Percocet, Vicodin, etc.) and the Ambien. The painkillers made her feel good (and gave her insomnia), while the Ambien helped her sleep (and summoned her alters). Isabella didn't really care how she lost consciousness. Whether through sex, drugs, or even just watching a ton of TV, what she wanted was escape. So, escape she did.

I tried to help her overcome her need to escape; I failed at that. Probably because, deep down, I wanted to escape just as much as she did. Neither of us believed in our relationship or in each other. We knew what worked and what didn't. We also knew we were fated to fail.

"Lie and say you love me," she said. "I love you," I replied. That was our goodbye. That was our foundation.

Isabella didn't need to pretend to be in pain to get her pain meds. Her back was a genuine source of some intense pain, as was her ankle. If that wasn't enough, she also suffered from migraines that ranged from "maybe bearable" to "downright unendurable." Still, because our local ERs had already labeled her a drug seeker, it was a role of the dice whether she'd actually receive the meds she needed (and abused). In fact, a number of times I had to drive her several cities over in an attempt to land a

doctor willing to prescribe her what she was in need of. None of it was cheap. Not the gas. Not the time. Certainly not the pills. Her lack of health insurance meant we paid out-of-pocket for just about everything. She was looking into getting Social Security Disability Insurance, but she didn't have it yet, and her migraines refused to wait. Pretty soon we simply ignored the medical bills. We didn't have the money.

We even got a small portable safe to hold some of her medications in so she wouldn't abuse them as easily on her own - or as one of her alters. But that was also why it failed. If an alter got upset enough about her medications being in the safe, that alter would do her best to make me miserable. While this did not immediately succeed, over time it did. The alters wore me down. Was this due to weakness on my behalf? You could argue that. You might even be right about it. Still, I gave up when I realized not even Isabella's core wanted to abstain.

Through aiding and abetting her drug seeking, which I did reluctantly, I learned a thing or two. Most importantly, I got pretty good at knowing when she was lying. Although sometimes her alters made it difficult. They shifted her demeanor or even her knowledge base in ways I couldn't read. Plus, in some cases, there was no need for her to lie. With the migraines, she did her best never to ask for medication until it got too bad. When this happened, sometimes her eyes were visibly bloodshot, so I knew she was suffering even if she didn't want to admit it. She hated that. She hated me seeing what she wanted to hide; it meant she had to trust me, and trust was something she refused everyone, except maybe her stepfather, whom she idolized.

According to Isabella, her stepfather used to work for NASA, I think maybe as a computer programmer. He also used to box. After finding out about it, he stopped Isabella's stepbrother from molesting her. Additionally, he taught her how to box and work on cars. He even introduced her to computers at a very young age, back when ARPANET was a thing. Isabella told me a story about how when she was just a kid she got on her stepdad's computer and hacked a NASA server through ARPANET. I don't

know what she did beyond that, but whatever she did got her arrested. Thanks to her stepdad, though, she didn't have to do any time. Still, after that, she was monitored and sometimes carted off into the California desert for training or education or something. Probably Deep State mind control. She could have been pulling my leg with these stories, but I doubt it.

Listening to all of this with open ears, I almost felt like she was trusted me. But I was never sure, just as I was never sure I trusted her. When listening to my stories, she seemed less interested in hearing about my life and more interested in hearing about what I wanted to write. This left me feeling a little shortchanged, but I didn't push. When she asked me to give her another copy of *22 Stories: Falling Upward through the Tarot* (2004) to mail to her parents, I did. Her father, now aging and ill, never saw the book. Plus, since he cared about Isabella and her mother did not, Isabella doubted she even told him about it. As for her response, she read only enough of it to say she was unimpressed.

Undeterred, Isabella continued to root for my success.

## SEX MAGICK

With blackout curtains, our bedroom was dark. It contained a chest of Isabella's belongings, her computer desk, and our bed. For lovemaking one night, she appointed the space with candlelight. Black candles, arranged above the head of the bed in a metal candle-holder in the shape of a pentacle. She put other candles in other places around the room. It was very romantic, in a candle magick sort of way.

Before sex that night, Isabella called her familiar onto the bed. Tightly holding her calico cat Minerva, she kept her calm. Then, suddenly, she snapped her neck. Before I could react, and seeing Minerva was still alive, I wondered. Was this for show, or for real? Hard to say. Maybe it was nothing more than a chiropractic stunt. Or maybe Isabella had just sacrificed one of Minerva's nine lives

for the sake of the ritual we were about to perform. It was sex magick, and it was measured. I don't know how else to describe it. It was neither fast nor slow. It felt paced, like everything I did was automated; probably because I had been glamoured. As Isabella would later confide, she had some time before already cast on me a love spell. Which raises the question, "Why?" Remember I said Isabella was a breeder? Well, let's look at a few things through that particular lens and see what we come up with. First of all, Isabella was not in service to Isabella alone. A lot of what she did was in service to someone or something else. There was Isabel, of course, the matriarch of Isabella's line of witches, who no doubt played a role in this. There was also what I will call the Deep State, which seems to have had its hooks in Isabella and me since well before either of us were even born. I've already shared some of the ways Isabella was prepared. How I was prepared goes back just as far, and is something this book will attempt to tackle in the next section "Stairway to Hell." While the bulk of my preparation took place in a relatively short amount of time, from 2005 to 2009, the groundwork was laid at least as early as 1970. Whatever the details of my story (soon to be revealed), I had been prepared for this moment to be with Isabella in order to conceive a child. That's what happened that night. Under a pentacle of candlelight, a child was conceived. At the time, I didn't know it was happening. After all, Isabella assured me her tubes were tied. Never mind the miscarriage Alice said she'd flushed down the toilet a few months back. Plus, there was no reason for her to get pregnant. Having recently lost X and Y, and hoping to win them back, bringing another child into the world didn't make any sense, did it? Well, I wasn't thinking like Isabella. Nor was I thinking like her handlers. They wanted what they wanted, and that's what they got. Anyway, it took a while for the consequences of that night to reveal themselves. So, let's pretend I never mentioned it. Let's pretend it was nothing more than what I thought it was at the time: a trippy night of sex with a witch.

## FALSE STARTS

Daydreaming of finishing my memoir within the year, I was deluding myself. For one, I didn't have the time or the energy to actually writing the damn thing. My time was spent on other concerns in our tiny home. When I did have some time to myself, I indulged in my own form of escapism, which consisted mostly of movies, a few of them pornographic. Plus, when Isabella set time aside for me to write, I couldn't. She'd sequester herself in her room, and I'd be out in the dining nook at my computer facing the fact that the book I wanted to write was about a life we'd yet to live. I wanted it to have a happy ending. But how could if we never gained custody of her kids? Or find jobs? Or make new friends? What if we never had anything to celebrate at all?

So, I didn't write. Not really. I simply cogitated on my situation and distracted myself. One time, after watching some porn on my computer in the dining nook (which wasn't something I did a lot of at the time), Isabella came out of the bedroom and asked me how the writing was going. Then she said something off-topic, maybe about dinner or something, but suddenly I heard her - inside my mind - ask me a question. "Were you watching porn again?"

Still inside my head, I silently answered, "So what if I was?" Then, while making eye contact with me and speaking in an audible voice, she said, "So what?! Because you should be writing, that's why." Inside my head, her presence was palpable. I glared.

With a forced smile, she went back into the bedroom.

Left alone to stew over my mind being read (which is something persons diagnosed with DID are said in some of the literature to be capable of), I felt afraid. No longer shielded by my denial, I had to face yet again unsettling notion that Jess and Isabella both were part of the same twisted network that had targeted me

for at least the last 20 years or so of my life. Sitting at my computer and not knowing what to do, I sensed my own demise.

## CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

Isabella wasn't happy about a lot of things. The absence of her children. Limits on her consumption of drugs and alcohol (licit or illicit, it made little difference). Lack of money. Physical pain. Parental abandonment. And me. Even though I was sincere in my desire to build a home with her, I wasn't up to the task. The reality of me did not live up to the dream of me. "You and me against the world, huh?" She said one day. It was a challenge more cynical than determined. No matter how creative we were, or industrious, or committed... ours was a losing battle in a losing war in the name of... escape? I guess. I knew it. She knew it.

So, when she starting giving up, I had no right to be surprised. She started doing pot with a couple that lived downstairs from us. She continued to drink. She abused the Ambien and the painkillers. Then, one day, when Isabella couldn't deny her dissatisfaction any longer, one of her alters - I don't know which one - put it all to the test. It all started on a day like any other, with both of us sitting in our apartment and spinning our wheels. Then, suddenly agitated and angry, like a rat on a sinking ship, she went into a tirade on the topic of Benjamin. She wanted his reign of spousal abuse to end, and she wanted something passionate from me. She even brought up the idea of getting a gun. I tried to reel her in, but she'd have none of it. Cursing Benjamin, she stormed out of our apartment and stood at the top of the stairs. Unsure of what to do, I stood just outside the door. In voiceless desperation, she pleaded for me to come close. I stayed put.

Taller than me, and heavier by quite a few pounds, she could easily have grabbed me and sent me for a tumble down the

stairs. When the alter in control saw me on the defensive, she switched gears.

Throwing out her arms in a Christ-like pose, she threatened to fall backward down the stairs... unless I... unless I what?... grabbed her?... without any way to stop her fall?... or mine? Hell, no. That's when I watched in horror as she followed through on her threat. Like something out of a movie, she fell straight back and rolled - actually rolled - heels over head down the stairs in a backflip of suicidal proportions. After this stunt, she lay on the sidewalk at the bottom of the stairs. In shock, I rushed down to check on her. Her eyes were closed; she was still breathing. I called 911. I didn't know what else to do except wait for the ambulance to arrive and follow it to the hospital.

## HOPELESS

There's a hidden joke in the subtitle of this book. "Recovered Dreams" is about dreams "Recovered" and "Re-Covered." Both are true. Together, they point to the paradoxical nature of my (and Isabella's) lived experience. "Recovered" speaks of resurrection, while "Re-Covered" throws a burial shroud over everything we thought was alive. That was our story. We clutched our hopes and our dreams, only to have them snatched from us in a thousand different ways. It was like God and The Devil working together to do us in. Which meant nothing was off limits. Mental illness? Sure. Spell casting and spirit possession? Absolutely. Technological mind control? Why the Hell not? When Isabella fell down those stairs, I saw the puppet strings. She fell back and rolled straight down. She didn't roll to the side. She didn't touch the wall or the railing. Instead, she dropped like an acrobat to land on her back at the bottom of the stairs with preternatural aplomb. She almost looked comfortable, reclined there on the concrete, her head raised and resting on the bottom step. There was no blood. No bones were broken. What really amazed me was how her neck survived it all with flying colors. In fact, she

didn't even stay at the hospital more than maybe four hours. They checked her out and said she was good to go. I took her home. None of it made any sense to me at the time.

Relieved she'd survived the fall, I soon realized our relationship had not. I needed to plan my exit.

Although I hoped things would turn around in the ensuing days and weeks, I couldn't force it. As for Isabella, she started communicating less and using substances more; which meant I dealt less with her and more with her alters. So, I ran. Again. Cowardly. Dishonest. Cruel. That was me. Plus, unable to think straight on account of the stress, I came up with a truly cockamamie scheme. My parents apparently couldn't think straight either, because they went along with it. Here's what we did. With the help of my parents, I rented a second apartment on the other side of the same complex Isabella and I already lived in. Then, one night, just like the time before, I gathered my essentials and vamoosed. My parents and I asked the apartment managers to see to Isabella's eviction. But Isabella's name was on the lease, which meant the eviction did not go as planned. She stayed put.

That's how we lived for about a week: in separate apartments in the same complex. I foolishly thought she had no idea where I was, even though of course she knew exactly where I was. She was rarely dumb. I was the dumb one.

When Isabella eventually knocked on my door, I was in so much denial about it all that I was actually surprised to see her. She said she was sorry. She said she wanted to renegotiate our relationship. I told her my needs. She listened. Then we came to an agreement. A couple once again, now we had a new apartment to fill with all the stuff from the old one. So much for my escape plan. Still, it felt like we were closer now. Our relationship, still dysfunctional, had a fresh veneer called hope.

CIGARETTES AND STAIRS

Unlike me, Isabella didn't get Social Security Disability Income (SSDI), so it was up to my parents to keep us afloat. I looked around for employment, but turned up nothing. This left us with plenty of time on our hands, most of which was spent in each other's company. We did everything together. Shopping? Together. Errands? Together. Cooking, eating, relaxing? Together. We were joined at the hip. Such non-stop closeness began to wear on our relationship. But my wife-to-be needed me around. In the absence of her two kids, I was her lifeline. And she was mine. All my life and in every relationship except this one, I'd felt like the odd man out. But with Isabella, I felt needed. Plus, we had a lot to figure out. Sitting out on the stairs, smoking cigarettes and talking, we gave each other free therapy sessions. Isabella shared a lot about the traumas she'd been forced to endure. Failed marriages. Abusive family members. Other stuff. I shared some of my past, too, just not as much. Not because I didn't want to share, but because Isabella wanted to talk more than I did. The highs and lows of her life made my heart ache. I didn't ask a lot of questions, though, on account of how careful she was with her words, and how carefully she monitored my reactions. At first I thought she was afraid I'd run away again, until I realized she was afraid of something deeper: trust. She trusted no one. Not me, not my family, not even herself. Still, she told me things. A lot of things, really. And all those things pointed, one way or another, to Hollywood, human trafficking, and mind control. But that's me jumping the gun, so let's back up a little closer to the beginning of her story...

Isabella never knew her biological father, on account of her mom being, as Isabella liked to put it, "a slut." She said she only knew her father had been a traveling man of sorts, maybe because he was in the military. He had bit of Native American blood in him, too, specifically Cherokee. Whoever he was, he left Darla with a precocious, mind-reading daughter named Isabelle. This daughter was raised on ice skating (age three), ballet (age five), and modeling (ages seven and eight). For a time she went to

Catholic school. Before her adolescence, and maybe as early as eight or nine, she was repeatedly molested by one of her older stepbrothers. Her mother Darla looked the other way. As a consequence, this stepbrother molested Isabella for a number of years, until Darla married a man who put a stop to it. This man - let's call him Ruben - was the NASA step-father who taught Isabella boxing, computers, and cars. Still, those years of abuse left scars... scars in the form of Isabella's Dissociative Identity Disorder and maybe even her subsequent ability to read minds. Which came first, the mind-reading or the dissociation, was a question difficult to answer. According to Isabella, she was born with the ability to read minds because she was born a witch. Her mother's line was full of witches. Except for Darla. Which might explain why Darla put her daughter through so much abuse at such an early age. Darla, lacking the gift of witchcraft herself, refused to train her daughter in the ways of her family. This left Isabella untrained, except for the tutelage received from her grandmother over certain summers. But when Isabella wasn't with her grandmother, Darla selfishly pressured her into ice skating, ballerina training, and youth modeling. She never told me how her modeling career began. Neither did she tell me about her life as a model. This lack of disclosure raised my suspicions. Still, she did tell me how it all ended. Having flown with her parents to New York for a modeling assignment, one of the nights there she got invited to a modeling party in a high-rise overlooking Central Park. Even though (or because) she was underaged, Isabella got to attend sans chaperone. There she witnessed other models shooting heroin up their toes, to hide the track marks. Did Isabella join in? Not according to her. According to Isabella, she fled the scene and wound up alone in Central Park in the middle of the night. There, she was accosted. A man attacked her, but Isabella, having been trained to box by her step-father, punched him dead. She was a tall, lanky girl with big hands, so this could have happened... and if it did, it resulted in her being arrested and spending time at the local police station. Eventually, the cops called her parents. Step-

father Ruben came down to the station and got her released and the charges dropped. Isabella's modeling career was finished now, and Darla was finished with Isabella. What happened next was stranger yet.

During her teen years, Isabella got involved in Hollywood and lived with an extremely famous musician. I know his name, but won't say it here. Toward the end of her teenage years, someone got her pregnant with a son. This son later became a child actor with no legal ties to her as birthmother. After that, she had a wild experience in Nevada with some Mormon man she had to flee from after he raped her in a church. Back in California, she gave birth to a daughter, whom she raised on her own, all while going to college and living out of her car. The college she attended, by the way, was one of the more expensive colleges in the state. Where was the money coming from? The musician she used to live with? The man in Nevada? However she got by, I'd say her story paints a picture - however opaque - of human trafficking, which is sadly a central theme of this story. As for Isabella's truthfulness, I will say again that I did get pretty good at telling when she was lying and when she wasn't. So I'm pretty confident that most, if not all, of her story is true.

At some point, probably after someone tried to rape her in the car she was living in with her infant daughter, said daughter was taken to be raised by her mother Darla and Ruben, her NASA-connected step-father. Despite these hardships, Isabella earned her degree and quickly acquired a more-than-decent job. It involved IT management and curriculum development for a private school. After that folded, she got involved in IT management for a bank. Having carved this second job out of thin air based on the bank's own unique IT needs, Isabella made really good money. Also, around this time, she hooked up with a woman we'll call Kaley. Sadly, both relationships (the one with her money and the one with Kaley) ended all too soon. According to Isabella, the job at the bank fell apart when her boss started seeing her as a rival. To "protect" herself, the boss placed unnecessary demands on Isabella. This led to burnout, which, in

turn, led to one or two trips to a psychiatrist for medication to help with the stress. But the boss was unrelenting, and eventually Isabella lost her job and her relationship. The relationship wasn't simple, either. Was of its complications was heroin. Who did the heroin, Isabella, Kaley, or both, I don't know. Plus, there were others involved. One of them got Isabella pregnant. This was Benjamin, who at the time was involved with a friend of Isabella's from North Hollywood. Anyway, out of work and pregnant, Isabella got married and gave birth to X. Darla made payments on a house in Benjamin's hometown of Lompoc. About a year later, Y was born. So, Isabella was probably a breeder for the Hollywood underground... or whatever it calls itself.

Brilliantly creative and sharper than most tacks, Isabella no doubt had a lot to offer in terms of genetics. Plus, her ability to read (and manipulate) minds, along with her witch heritage, made her prime breeding material. It also explains the trauma she endured, as it made her easier to control. Raising her daughter (X) and her son (Y), Isabella found meaning in motherhood. I don't know all the ins and outs of Isabella's and Benjamin's relationship. I only know Isabella said he was abusive and into computers, and that he smoked a lot of pot. As for me, having been programmed extensively from 2005 to 2009, as outlined in Infinite Book 3, I was now ready to be added to the equation. When Isabella and I first met in that Behavioral Health Unit in L.A. so many miles away from either of our hometowns, she was suicidal, and I was crazy. Our meeting had been arranged by someone in power, someone determined to see to it that our lives went according to plan. Their plan, not ours.

Before I tell you more about Isabella, though, I need to catch you up on my script. It's thirty-nine years of backstory, so let's not dawdle.

## Stairway to Hell

"Going down? Well, that's up, to you."

### MY EARLY CHILDHOOD

Here's something my mother wrote. "David was an easy-going baby. The nurse in the hospital said he had a 'mellow' temperament. Even when he fell down, he didn't cry. I guess you could call him stoic."

My stoicism shielded me. Often in ways I failed to understand, and not always to my benefit. Circumstances usually had to be pretty bad before I'd (timidly) make my displeasure known. But when I did take affront, I did so with manifold (or multivalent) will. In other words, I lashed out in subtle ways that were sometimes as difficult to predict as they were to detect. This was especially the case because I hid my passive aggression not only from others, but from myself as well.

I grew up in a relatively stable household and was raised according to Christian values taken from a Biblically literalist position. This meant my moral truth was either spelled out in the Bible, or it wasn't my moral truth. Being an accepting child who also valued consistency, I latched onto the notion that the Bible was the divinely inspired Word of God and therein lay my foundation. I mean, if I was lucky enough to have been born into a family blessed by the one true God, who was I to question Him? I regularly attended Church on Sundays. I went to my age appropriate Sunday school class in the early morning, followed by the morning Church service for the entire congregation in the main chapel. I attended evening services, as well. In my free time, I read the Bible. The first time I read it cover-to-cover over the course of a year with my mother's help. The second time I read it straight through was probably around 4th or 5th grade. I'm not really sure. In junior high and high school, I participated in weeknight youth groups, sometimes going out on camping trips.

I told myself these outings were fun. They weren't. Not really. Not when I hit puberty and wanted a girlfriend.

Not when the one girl I had a crush on seemed to think I was a waste of space. Besides, pre-martial sex was a no-no, right?

Eventually, I came to realize that staying a virgin until marriage was something of a church prank. The smart ones got laid, and the dumb ones didn't. I was one of the dumb ones, apparently. Being dumb was my assignment, and I was good at it.

Due to my inability to realize a lot of people are liars - especially church people - I took their BS at face value. This meant I willingly became an introverted smartypants of epic proportions. When I got straight A's in high school, I thought I was better than everyone else. It was a lie, of course, a lie that reinforced my middle class belief that school was a waiting game for college. That's when the real world would begin. Plus, thanks to my father, I was horrified of being "stupid." If my dad said you were stupid, you were beyond saving. You could go no lower.

So, I tried to be smart. The only way I knew how to do that was through school. So I followed all the rules and did what I was "supposed" to do to get good grades. I believed in "life after high school" like I believed in "life after death." My hard work was to be rewarded, right? Something of a teacher's pet, with a nose not overly brown, I asked the right questions and (usually) did what was asked of me.

Academically, at least. But when it came to the social side of school, I was seriously ill-equipped. Kids talking about other kids made me uncomfortable. My generally gentle heart didn't want to learn about people and their cruelty. This meant I never learned to play the games necessary to win a girlfriend in high school. Book-smart, nice, and kinda conceited, I was nothing to write home about.

And, sexually speaking, my nascent sexuality got nipped in the bud well before puberty...

THE GIRLS AND ME

As early as preschool, I already wanted to get married. My family had me convinced I was going to marry Lacey, my childhood playmate. A helicopter (pronounced he-hopper by me, age five or so) would take us to our post-wedding celebration at the local miniature golf course. In style. After that, the ceremony would be performed, and our life as a happily married couple would commence. I never asked her to marry me, of course, but still, our unspoken betrothal began and ended with nothing more than a kiss over a pink plastic tea set in Lacey's backyard playhouse. After that - and I never knew why - I was never allowed to play with Lacey ever again. This falling out seemed more tied to parental censure than anything else. Whatever the reason, my first crush came and went like a shooting star.

When school hit, I had one sort-of girlfriend in first grade. Let's call her Janet. Our dating relationship consisted of little more than a string of kisses meant to signify our status as boyfriend/girlfriend... at least until the end of morning recess. While my love for Lacey had blossomed in relative isolation, this romantic affair took place right out in the open, for the whole playground to see. Well, those who cared to look, that is. By lunch recess, the rumors were already flying. Someone said that I'd said that Janet'd said she wanted to go "all the way." Then Janet's best friend told me Janet wasn't my girlfriend anymore. It didn't even know what "all the way" was, but that didn't matter. Janet was no longer my girlfriend.

Then I got "The Talk" - not from my parents, but from a male friend of mine in second grade. He condensed the mysteries of sex into the following sentence: "Sex is when a man puts his dick in a woman's pussy." I was shocked. The act seemed extremely awkward - if not impossible - and kinda dumb as well. Still, I wanted to know more. Not thinking about what my fellow students of the female persuasion might actually feel about this sort of thing, I got selfishly curious. If I'd known about molestation and childhood sexual abuse, which was something no one ever explained to me, I never would've played the way I

did. But I did. In second grade I was rolling around on the playground with a girl I thought was cute. As we gently wrestled, I tried to unzip her pants. I wanted to see what was inside. I didn't want to hurt her. All I wanted was play. But because I wanted what she did not, my wanting became a problem. When I did manage to pull her zipper down, after she'd laughingly told me to stop a number of times, she rolled away and cover-clutched her crotch. This time, when she said, "Stop," she sounded angry. That's when I knew I'd gone too far. I apologized. We never played again after that, and I started to withdraw. But my withdrawal did nothing to stop the next grade, third grade, from kicking me in the shins. Literally.

See, in third grade, I had my first "real" girlfriend, maybe for a week or two. I'd learned enough about playgrounds not to tell anyone we were together. It was our little secret. This girlfriend of mine (let's call her Dorothy), lived on the same street that I did, which meant she came over to my house one day. I had a playhouse of my own by then: one my dad built for me under the tree in our backyard. It was more spartan than Lacey's, of course. Still, having a playhouse meant play... innocent or not. Was I a predator now? By age 10? I guess. I say this because I devised a game with a spinner on a cardboard clock. I told her the rules. We didn't need to spin the spinner. Instead, we deliberately positioned it on the clock. This would reveal our level of willingness. Willingness? Well, one of us would suggest an action, and then the other would position the spinner. The lower the number, the less willing. If the hand ever went to twelve, though, then the action had to be performed. Looking back, I see now how effective this was at getting into the head of my somewhat unwilling partner. I feared censure, so I devised a way of asking permission less directly. If she said no, I didn't have to take it personally. And if she said yes, then it was okay. Right? With no real sex drive at that age, I still thought sex was what I wanted. Prepubescent, I didn't even know what masturbation was. All I knew was that somehow I was supposed to put my dick in my girlfriend's pussy. That was all I knew.

Dorothy told me something. She said she'd already had a dick in her pussy. A number of dicks, actually. A different spinner had been used - a spinning bottle - at a party hosted by her older brother. She had not enjoyed the experience. She had been forced into nonconsensual sex with a number of older boys. When she told me about it, my third grade mind didn't know it was rape, even though it was. All I heard was that my girlfriend had already had sex, so maybe she would have it with me. In my playhouse we kissed and let each other see our private parts. When Dorothy realized through my spinning clock just how fixated I was on vaginal penetration - an act my preadolescent body wouldn't have been able to perform anyway - she told me our game was over and she left. We never spoke again, although there was one final interaction between the two of us. Having blabbed to a friend and sworn him to secrecy, I was foolishly surprised when, a few days later, Dorothy ran up to me at recess and kicked me in the shins. Rumor has seldom been kind to me, and after that one, my relationship with all the girls at school turned sour. I'd been labelled a jerk... and rightly so. I think Dorothy's family moved after that. I don't know, but I do know I never saw or heard from her again. At the time, I felt to blame for not keeping her secret. But if keeping secrets means covering up what was done to Dorothy by her brother and his friends, then I don't like secrets. Call me ignorant, but I value transparency over harm. It's complicated, of course. It could be argued that the social cost of Dorothy's secret being revealed was disproportionate to the crime committed by those boys. Still, I would disagree. She told me because she wanted to. She needed someone to hear it, because what was done to her was a violation. Likewise, I consider it a violation that her family felt the need to move out of the area. In my ideal world, what happened to Dorothy would have been exposed and what was done to her properly addressed. The brother and his friends would be disciplined, Dorothy would be protected, and the community would respectfully grant their family the opportunity to heal in

unmolested safety. I hate what happened. I hate even more when society reinforces abuse.

Anyway, enough about the girls. Let's talk about family.

## FAMILY LIFE

The third of three children, I was more than a decade younger than my two siblings. A "surprise" to my parents, I was both loved and resented. Even though I had one brother and one sister, I was effectively an only child. This familial paradox proved to be but one of many. After all, the church in which I was raised taught me to believe that, though I was in this world, I was not of this world. At the same time, my biblically literalist upbringing consistently hammered dualism into my interpretation of Christianity. Good and evil, right and wrong, pleasure and pain, black and white.

Even the mystery of the Holy Trinity was oversimplified. The notion that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were three parts of one and the same God basically boiled down to three male deities on the same team. There was no discussion about the feminine nature of the Holy Spirit. Nor was there any real thought given to how these three parts interacted and overlapped. In fact, what I grew up with was an insistence on how God the Father was the Old Testament God, who sacrificed His Son Jesus to bring about the new dispensation as promised in the New Testament. It was dualism yet again, only this time in the form of a sequel. As for everything else, all I needed to know was, "It's a mystery." As for my parents, I imagine my unplanned arrival took some adjusting. Was I a punishment from God, or a blessing? Perhaps in the interest of reconciling these conflicting views, my somewhat-famous uncle, Jerry Owen, and his wife, Roberta, insisted I was a blessing. In fact, I vaguely recall when I was very young sitting in the back seat of a moving vehicle. My aunt was in the front passenger seat. She turned around and said

with a serious voice that I was going to do, "Great things for God." Talk about responsibility! I couldn't have been more than six years old at the time, tops.

However meaningful my life was maybe meant to be, I at least provided my parents with a sense of novelty. "David [...] babbl[ed] in sentences," my mom wrote. "It was plain he was saying something very important to him. He talked very early." Both my mom and my dad encouraged me to talk.

When we went for drives in the family car, my parents had this odd habit of reading out loud the various street signs we passed by. Whether or not it was intentional, this habit of theirs trained me to think out loud. I thought with my mouth more than my mind. This made me something of an open book for others, especially my father. He liked to trick me at card games and otherwise test my mental limits. Sadly, what he did seldom felt about building me up. Instead, he seemed to delight in tearing me down. When he upset me, I either cried or got angry. If I cried, he questioned my masculinity; if I got angry, he saw it as insolence. Rather than teach me to channel my emotions, he trained me to lock them up. A trickster, he often belittled me with psychological sleight of hand. The only person in the family who ever called him on it was my sister. But she had problems of her own, and was never in the position to save me. At least she tried. My mother advocated for me as best she could, but her efforts and her awareness were constrained by my sometimes (?) overbearing father. Neither of them provided me with the space and safety I needed for healthy emotional development. To protect my self, I became complacent. Complacency felt safe. It also reinforced the charade that I was the happy product of a good Christian upbringing.

In reality, I was a sensitive made oblivious to my own psychic nature for most of my life. Encouraged to doubt my assessment of self and other, I ran from relationships, or put up with them. Denial is a skill, and difficult to keep in check.

Here's something else my mom said. It illustrates my sometimes-prescience. "When David was about 23 months [...] we put him

in daycare at a nearby church. I remember his crying and not wanting me to leave him. He developed a cold which turned into pneumonia. [...]" Was I just a simpering baby afraid to let go of mommy's hand, or was I aware on an intuitive level that I was going to get sick?

Either way, here's the rest of that story. "[David's d]ad was taking care of David while I was at work. David had not been feeling well (he had asthma). [His dad] called me at work because he saw that David was lethargic. We took him to the hospital where the doctor on call for our regular doctor, Dr. C[.], examined David and promptly hospitalized him. [\*] That started 22 days of worry and agonized prayer. To see our little son, listless, lying under an oxygen tent was traumatizing for us. I would come from work and sit by the bedside. The doctor ordered me to not 'hang around'. I obeyed because that is how I was trained - to obey doctor's orders. Dr. C[.] took over when he returned. [\*] They were using antibiotics to fight the infection. One of the worst experiences was when they needed to draw blood. The only place left was David's heel. I was told to leave while this was happening, but I could hear David screaming. That was awful. [\*] His fever just wouldn't come down. Finally, Dr. C[.] said sometimes antibiotics feed a fever, so he ordered the antibiotic stopped. Wonderfully, that worked. In two days David was released and we took him home. [.] He was so weak from three weeks in bed that when he tried to walk he fell. David almost had to learn to walk again. [\*] As a postscript: David was in emergency more than the other two children ever were. He was younger than two, when he stuffed a 'Cootie eye' (from a game) up his nose so far we couldn't remove it. Then, when he was three (or four), I was drying him off after a bath and he was sitting on the closed toilet when the lid shifted[,] suddenly pitching him onto the bathtub edge, [and] cutting a gash under his chin. It bled profusely. I held a towel on his chin until the ER took so long it stopped bleeding, leaving a white exposed gash. They restrained David while they sewed him up. The scar may still be visible under his chin."

## TWO MEMORIES OF MINE

Memory One. I was in the back of the motorhome. Me and my parents were visiting family, I think. Not sure who or where. All I remember was a group of other kids were outside the motorhome. I was in the bathroom. I think they were banging on the side of the vehicle, or maybe even on the little closed window letting in the daylight behind the blinds. I imagine I used the restroom and washed my hands. Then I raised the blinds to tell the kids, whoever they were, to stop. I think they were making fun of me, and maybe making faces. So, I made faces back. The game continued. Then, irritated by what I read as the hostility of their reactions, I stuck my fingers up my nose. Blowing clear mucus over my fingers, lips and chin, I licked it and flared my nostrils. Having done my best to disgust them, I smiled when they left. My smile was a little conflicted of course, on account of the sometimes uncomfortable intersection between self-respect and self-defense... and pushing boundaries.

Memory Two. I'm not sure how young I was, but I was pretty young when my parents took me to the eye doctor because I needed glasses. My father had to deal with heavy nearsightedness most of his life, too. I think back then he wore contacts. The story of his eyes was unusual. Not so much because of his nearsightedness, but on account of how he had it treated. He was one of the first recipients of an experimental procedure called Radial Keratotomy, about which Wikipedia had the following to say on June 22, 2022: "Radial keratotomy (RK) is a refractive surgical procedure to correct myopia (nearsightedness). It was developed in 1974 by Svyatoslav Fyodorov, a Russian ophthalmologist. It has been largely supplanted by newer operations, such as photorefractive keratectomy, LASIK, Epi- LASIK and the phakic intraocular lens. Approximately 10% of all practicing ophthalmologists in the United States have performed several hundred thousand RK

procedures. I make a note of this on account of some things to be revealed later in my own life related to both my eyesight and his. As for me being told I needed glasses, my world was shattered. I cried, thinking of all the jokes I'd seen about wearing glasses on TV; and my life was just beginning. \*shudder\*

## BOOKISH

Growing up Christian instilled in me more than dualistic thinking. It encouraged in me a tendency to perceive everything through story. After all, my faith was founded on the story of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, plus all the other stories in the Bible, and whatever other stories the pastor shared in his sermons. This fascination with story was further reinforced by my two main pastimes of books and TV. Raised early on to seek comfort in story, I eventually came to prefer books over people. With a book, I got to learn things. With a book, I found comfort. With a book, I found escape.

A disciplined reader, I read books straight through, from beginning to end. I read what I was expected to read, of course, and I read what I wanted to read, too. In sixth grade, for example, I freely devoured James Clavell's *Shōgun*, and even a translation of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. I also read a ton of fantasy and science fiction. Words washed over me in waves. Some of them stuck in my awareness, while the rest drained down into the seat of me, to mix and mutate in unexpected ways. I chose what books to read, what movies to watch, but still I was conditioned. Added to everything I read was all the television and movies and video games I could stomach, making me a media junkie.

I liked to soak in the ideas of others, then squeeze them out in my words. That was the why and how of it, my writing. I had three choices to make with respect to my words; which to keep, which to throw away, and which to change. Even so, the words I wrote confined me. If an idea presented itself that couldn't be

expressed with words, I told myself it didn't matter. As a consequence, I ignored too much, like body language, emotional energy, or anything else with a different kind of vocabulary. After all, if God's Word was true, and The Devil's words a lie, then the path to discerning truth was through words, right? Wrong. Eventually, I'd learn that words weren't everything, and obedience to God likewise had its limits. It didn't matter how obedient a Christian I was. I still had to experience suffering, the relief of which was never guaranteed. It all boiled down to faith, which was a convenient way for God to shift the responsibility for keeping His promises to His believers from His shoulders to theirs.

## TV AND RELIGION

Raised under the belief that the stories in the Bible were all true, while simultaneously seeking company and comfort through television, my mind "split in two" at a young age. This division was not a diagnosable mental illness. It was a common state of consciousness for many human beings on this planet. It was also a blessing and a curse. It was mind control; because all of us are mind controlled. Now, having said that, I will address the topic of mind control. Starting with the next few paragraphs, we will dip our toes in it; by the end of this book, we'll be swimming in it. First things first. The first division introduced into my mind was that of truth and lie. The second was that of fact and fiction. These two pairs of opposites were defined like so. The Bible was indisputable fact. God and His people spoke the truth. Those under the influence of The Devil did lie; and those who told lies in the name of honest entertainment wrote (or produced) fiction. Fictional stories on television or in books were okay, because they were lies in the name of entertainment. No one was expected to believe that C. S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* was real. As for the news on tv, which I didn't watch, it was mostly true. This quartering of my mind between fact and

fiction, truth and lie, was a necessary first stage in my mental programming. It provided the walls against which my awareness would be struck against like a blue rubber ball in the spinning racquetball court of my mind.

So, if the awareness of my mind-controlled mind was determined by how it was positioned between fact and fiction, truth and lie, then my life - my reality - was a blend of all four states of being. This meant that the stories I was told (either through myself or through someone else), influenced and were influenced by "reality" - whatever that is. To carry this just a little further for now, I want to talk about one of the most seminal movie experiences of my young life: Star Wars.

I saw this one at Pacific Theaters' Cinerama Dome on Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood California in 1977. It wasn't called Star Wars: A New Hope. It wasn't Episode IV. It was Star Wars, plain and simply, and I loved it. I think it was a treat from my father. I saw it with my mom and dad when I was seven years old. I don't remember if anyone else saw it with us. Anyway, if this movie programmed me, it programmed me as Luke Skywalker (or Fluke Starbucker, if you think Hardware Wars was the better movie). I came out of it with dreams of good versus evil in a world where the two were easily distinguished. I came out of it maybe even with the hopeful conviction that if I lived my life right, I'd take down a Death Star or two and win the girl. Of course, it wasn't until The Empire Strikes Back came on the scene that I was forced to realize "the girl" might not be the one after all. Still, when I saw The Empire Strikes Back, I liked it even better than Star Wars. Still do.

Anyway, I'll talk more about movies and magick and the "real world" more later. For now, suffice it to say that movies are a form of mind control; they influence our minds (and even life itself) in a myriad of ways. But not everything happens on the big screen. A lot of it happens through other forms of the media, like books and television. A lot of it also happens interpersonally, through conversation. All of it bears weight, from religion to politics to [you name it]. Whatever the forum, how we dance with

fact, fiction, truth, and lie, is key.

## MY MOTHER'S MEMORIES OF ME

1. "We went to NYC to visit [family] just after Christmas[,] 1972. David was still recovering from the effects of pneumonia." - The only memory I have of this was being rolled in a stroller at the base of the Empire State Building. I vaguely recall looking way up into the sky and pointing at the top of the building. But that part of the building was closed at the time, so I guess I just got pushed around in the gift shop for a while.

2. "Don't know the time exactly that [Jerry] and [Roberta] were staying with us (in their motor home). They watched David during the day. [Jerry] played "Red [L]ight, Green [L]ight" while David drove his tricycle around the kitchen/dining room/living room dividing wall." - The game Jerry played with me consisted of shouting, "Red Light," when he wanted me to stop, and, "Green Light," when he wanted me to go. He was a bit of a joker, like my Dad. He was also a quasi-famous televangelist. More on him later.

3. "During summers, David came with me to the library. One time he had a kitten which he brought along with us. (Its name was Squeezer)[.] He played with some of the equipment the students used to watch short films." - Although I watched a number of films, my favorites had to do with dinosaurs

and what the world was like back then. A lot of it was speculative science, which, together with my religious beliefs, primed my subconscious to question reality at an early age.

4. "David's elementary schoolteachers were very positive about his attitude and performance. They said they wished all their

students were like him." - This was a double-edged sword, for sure, being the ideal student.

5. "He played soccer for [two] years, [and] was asked to play in a summer league. Don't think he enjoyed that." - I was a lousy team player, and my inherent perfectionism made me unhappy, as most things were out of my control. By the time I was a teenager, I was bitter and standoffish. My kind nature displayed itself all too infrequently.

6. "We bought a motorhome in Nov.[,] 1977 and made a round trip from the beach[,], where we had a turkey for Thanksgiving[,], to Palomar[,], where it snowed in the night[,], then home by way of Corona[,], where we were rocked by Santana winds. We really broke the motorhome in. We took several trips to the beach and desert. The biggest trip was across the nation to visit old friends from Air Force days and relatives in many places. David fished for catfish in a pond in Georgia, [and] played with cousins in their cottage in NJ. We went to NYC [...]. He [and his father] rode the tallest (at the time) rollercoaster at Six Flags in Missouri." - I caught a catfish so big it almost snapped my tiny rod, one of my female cousins played doctor with me underwater off a lakeside pier, and the rollercoaster was terrifying. I don't remember much else from that vacation worth commenting on here. On another trip to visit family - probably cousins - I used the motorhome's toilet while three or four kids knocked on the bathroom window to get a reaction out of me. I didn't appreciate that at all, so after I took care of business and flushed, I opened the blinds on the window and made faces at them. They made faces back. Apparently it was a contest. So I used my fingers to widen my nostrils and blow snot out of them, over my lips and onto my chin. Outdone, they left, leaving me with my reactionary tendencies exposed. I think they were done wanting to play with me after that. I didn't want them to play with me either, but what I did to get them there wounded my sense of self- respect.

7. "In 1976, David was ring-bearer for [his sister's] wedding. [...] Then David was best man at [his brother's first] wedding in Mar[.,] 1986." - My sister married more to get out of the house than anything else, I think. Not that I was aware of her reasons for doing much of anything back then. In a lot of ways, I never knew my siblings. My brother and I played tabletop games involving WWII combat scenarios (Squad Leader was one of his favorites), but otherwise we shared very little.

8. "David took piano lesson[s] when he was younger. Then in Jr[.] Hi[gh] he played the clarinet in the school band [...]." - I idolized the oboe, it being a double-reeded wind instrument. But my musical skills were lacking, so I shelved those dreams early on.

9. "He was a paper carrier during Jr[.] Hi[gh]. Delivered to apartments nearby. The senior citizens apt. was fond of him. His asthma flared up now and then[,] and Dad delivered on those afternoons." - I remember a cat of mine (not Squeezer, but Kitty Power) that liked to sit on the unfolded papers.

10. "Since we attended Temple Baptist, many of our social activities centered around that. I remembered a time when David had a [Sunday School] teacher who was very literal. Apparently she told the kids that Santa Claus was myth and not to believe in him. David came home upset – he was only 5. We tried to explain it to him. I really thought she could lighten up. But David was always serious about the truth." - That would be true, my respect for the truth. It doesn't mean I don't know how to lie. But I do respect the truth. Very much.

## MY MEMORIES OF MY FATHER

In Elementary School, I ran home for lunch most days in 5th and 6th grade. My father always had a can of ravioli heated up and

ready for me. In just a few minutes, I'd wolf it down and hurry back to school. He maybe loved me, but his love for me was more than troubled, and we were never close. We didn't talk much when I ran home. He fed me and went back into his office, which was a room in the home he'd converted after my brother and sister moved out.

Religion was central to my father's concept of self. It and his role in the church (I think he was a deacon) anchored his narcissism. The only boy child with many sisters and a commanding mother, he was raised to be special. His mother insisted he practice the violin and had dreams of him becoming a renowned teacher and performer of the violin. This reinforced his tendency to be an overachiever driven by a deep if hidden lack of self-confidence. As for me, he despised me. After all, I was a smart young man who threatened his own limelight. Consequently, he did his best to squash my potential every way he could, just in ways he knew he could get away with. He never hit me. I think he might have spanked me once when I was very young. Apparently, I was so devastated by this form of male censure that I broke into a fit of tears so genuine it surprised him and forced him to stop. He never spanked me again after that. My sister told me once about something else he did when I was too young to remember. She said I ran up to him, eager to tell him something I was excited about, only to have him shout at me for no apparent reason. Frightened, I ran away angry. This blatant emotional abuse certainly upset my sister if not my mother too, so he refrained from such outbursts in the future. Forbidden to spank me or yell at me, my father had to find other ways to censor me. Breaking me was his mission. I didn't know it at the time, but fifty years later I would know it for certain. But we won't get to that coup de gras until the end of this book.

One more memory for now though. When I was 13, he encouraged me to get baptized. Taking his suggestion seriously, I checked in with my feelings, only to find them lacking. My father's religion and my experience of the world did not add up, so I refused to be baptized. I would not partake in such a public

ritual unless I knew it was representative of my truth and dedication.

Another thing about my father when I was young (although there's more) was his collection of "tittie matchbooks" he kept in the bathroom drawer in the master bathroom. Their covers were of women baring their breasts. When I found them, I was fascinated. In retrospect, my father likely planted them as a test of sorts. Sexually aroused, I had no hope of release except in the shower. This lasted a couple of weeks, I think, before probably my mother removed them.

## FASCINATED BY FIRE

I don't know how old I was exactly, but definitely still in elementary school, when I learned about the effect of sunlight through a magnifying glass. My first heartless experiments in this regard were on dead leaves and living ants. There was little difference between the two in my mind at the time, but I do think I took comfort for my bottled aggression in burning the ants. My anger was so repressed, in fact, that I would never feel its full strength until my experience of psychosis some twenty-five or thirty years in the future.

After the novelty of burning leaves and ants had left me, I turned to my collection of plastic army men by Bergen Toy & Novelty Co. I had a bunch of US Army green and German gray soldiers. The way they melted and burned was like candle magic with a military science twist. If you don't see it just yet, dear reader, I assure you this military theme will prove significant in some maybe unexpected ways throughout the rest of this story. So will fire.

## THE WALKING BIBLE

My aforementioned Uncle Jerry called himself "The Walking Bible". His gimmick - which I believe was real and not a gimmick - was an ability to quote scripture as needed. Some say he had a photographic memory. Some say he was inspired by God. I say it was the later, not because he's family, but because my experience of hearing voices makes it easy for me to believe he was under God's control. I imagine that when Jerry felt led by the Spirit it was similar to how I have felt in other states of possession - be they spiritual, chemical, or even technological in nature. This overlay of experience was brought screaming to my attention recently by a book, *The Assassination of Robert F. Kennedy: The Conspiracy and Coverup* (2006) by William Turner and Jonn Christian. This book spends a lot of time trying to figure out my uncle's supposed role in the senator's assassination in 1968. See, according to what Jerry told the LAPD, he met Sirhan Sirhan a few days prior to the event, having picked Sirhan up as an unknown hitchhiker who wanted to buy a horse. Since Jerry had horses to sell, Sirhan asked him to bring a horse to the Ambassador Hotel before midnight the night of the assassination. Turner and Christian question the hitchhiker bit, and in so doing suggest that Sirhan Sirhan was already an acquaintance of Jerry's through the horse trading business in Southern California. So, Jerry likely lied about how he met Sirhan Sirhan. After all, he was a Bible thumping televangelist with a background in Hollywood horses and boxing. He had to know people, and knowing people means you know criminals, and knowing criminals means it's easy to get involved in criminal things. Does this mean Jerry Owen was part of the plot to assassinate the senator? Probably not. But his involvement does beg two questions: the question of intention, and the question of control. Just as Sirhan Sirhan was more likely than not a Manchurian candidate programmed to assassinate Robert F. Kennedy against his own free will, so too was Jerry in over his head, regardless of what he did or did not know. And this, by extension, suggests that all of us - no matter who we are - do what we do because

we have been programmed to do it. Don't believe me? Read the rest of this book. Then we can talk.

## THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY

Added to this political soup was the fact that some members of the congregation of the church in which I was first raised were also members of The John Birch Society. As Wikipedia summed them up on June 14, 2022: "The John Birch Society (JBS) is an American right-wing political advocacy group. Founded in 1958, it is anti-communist, supports social conservatism, and is associated with ultraconservative, radical right, or far-right politics." When I realized this decades later, I found myself doubting my father's loyalties even more. How fair I was in my assessment of my father is admittedly up for debate, however.

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

After my religious indoctrination, came my academic indoctrination, which reinforced my bad luck with the girls. First was Lacey and her teacups, then Janet and our kiss, followed by my insistent unzipping of that nameless 2nd grader's pants, and then my inability to keep Dorothy's secret a secret in 3rd grade. The cherry on top of it all, I do believe, had something to do with another girl. She, like Dorothy, lived on my street. She, like Dorothy, probably moved away after her one and only interaction with me. It involved a prank I played on her. Here's the lowdown. In elementary school, for whatever reason, I was either out in public (school and church, mostly) or at home and secluded. Liking my alone time, I watched a lot of TV and played video games and read books and felt okay alone. This established a routine with me and the neighbor kids. They'd knock on my door, and I'd open it. But I'd leave the screen door shut, forcing them to speak to me through the screen. It was my shield. My friends

would suggest we do something. Go to the video arcade at the miniature golf course near the freeway, or get a ball and hit it across the street. Something. My response, more often than not, was I wasn't interested. But, trained to be polite, I wouldn't shut the door on them until they'd made their case, which meant they'd try to talk me into doing what they wanted. Sometimes I'd agree, and we'd spend time together. But their idea of fun was to make me uncomfortable, and that was confusing for me.

Now, back to the girl. She was new to the neighborhood and kind enough and brave enough to knock on my door and say hello. But I was already starting to think like the boys, and after Janet and her friend betrayed me, and I had betrayed Dorothy, I lost the ability to connect with the girls. And if the girls didn't like me, then why was this girl on the other side of my screen door wasting my time?

Now, in my defense, what I am about to reveal here was not something I had planned. Quite the opposite. It was impulsive and impersonal. I did what I did, probably due to some form of depersonalization and/or derealization, through which I tried to cope with my toxic family life and personal isolation. Anyway, here's what I did. I asked if she was thirsty. She politely said she was. I asked if she would like some lemonade. It was a joke, but I didn't make that clear. She said yes. Then, I got a plastic glass, took it to the bathroom, and peed in it. In my mind, it was a game. In my mind, she wouldn't drink it, because she'd a) realize lemonade was boy-code for pee and b) would notice it was both warm and smelled funny. It was a convoluted blinder raised to keep me distracted from the cruelty of my actions. I brought my offering to the door and handed it to her. She held it. She started to take a sip. Not wanting that to happen, I shouted, "Don't!" and grabbed the glass from her hands. It spilled. Realizing what I'd done, she left.

I tell this story for two reasons. The first is to say I'm not always in control. That's a dangerous statement to make. It renders me untrustworthy and potentially dangerous to both self and other. It can also be used to explain how I have acted when psychotic.

There's more to this than meets the eye, as well, like spirit possession and mind control. The second reason I tell this story is because it showed me I wasn't always smart or kind or anything of the sort. After I pulled this prank, I felt ashamed. I still do.

## THE BOYS AND ME

With the boys, it was about competition and teamwork. I didn't like competition. I didn't like teamwork. Competition cut people into winners or losers, and teamwork never seemed to last. That's why I shied away from friends. What I wanted was what I thought I had with Lacey in her playhouse. A friend at least, a future wife at best. She didn't have to be the prettiest or the smartest or anything really exceptional except she liked me like I liked her. We would be nice to each other and we would share our time together. But that just wasn't in the cards.

My five boyfriends (friends who were boys, that is) in Elementary school all lived on my street, across from the school. There was Dick, who was my age, and Manny, a year younger. They were my two closest friends. Down the other side of the street were two brothers, Ricky and Rory. They were more distant, and I really only got to know them through AYSO (American Youth Soccer Organization). The fifth wheel was Kick. He lived all the way down on the corner. He hated me for some reason I never figured out. It probably had to do with Dick and Manny, though. Probably.

Because Dick was a dick, and Manny always felt short-changed. So. Anyway. Highlights.

In 4th grade, Dick thought it would be funny to tell me that walking around with my hand dangling on a limp wrist meant I was cool. I didn't really believe him at the time, and I got bored with it quickly enough, anyway. Later, I learned he was trying to make me look like a "faggot." I think Dick's older brother set him up to that one. It didn't work like he'd hoped, but it instilled in me

early on the notion that being gay was not okay. Not that sex of any kind was on my mind at the time. Not anymore. Not after third grade, after I'd been "kicked out of Kansas" by Dorothy down the street.

Dick and Manny mostly used me on account of the pool in my parents' back yard; that and having someone to mess with. One time, Dick called me into the pool house, and when I opened the door I got to see him bent over, spreading his ass cheeks to show me his asshole. I suppose it was meant to be funny. For me, it was shocking, and proof that Dick and me were never meant to be friends. relatively speaking, but also put out.

Because Dick was more of an irritant to me than anything else, this was simply further proof of how he was not my friend.

As for Rick and Rory, I remember one time they invited all of us - me, Dick, and Manny - to come over to their house. When we got there, they pulled some porn magazines out from under their father's bed. I watched as everyone ogled the magazines. When they invited me to look, I wasn't particularly eager to do so. First, because I'd been told in church that porn was wrong. Second, what they shoved in my face didn't make sense to me. I didn't know what I was looking at. I think it was a closeup of hairy pussy lips spread open. To me, it seemed unnatural. I asked if it hurt. They laughed at that one.

On better days, when Manny and I were just hanging out and killing time at Dick's, we'd listen to KLOS out of LA, talk about sports, or maybe play Intellivision, which was a step up from my own video game console, the Atari 2600. Trouble was, I didn't like rock music and I didn't like sports. On account of Star Wars, my first record that movie's soundtrack. Also, since my brother was into classical music, I ended up listening to Holst, Beethoven, Mozart... stuff like that. I didn't mean to be pretentious, but that's what happened. So, it was no surprise when me and my friends broke up. One of the last times Dick and Manny and me hung out was when Dick stole some cigarettes from his dad and we smoked them on the side of his house. I took one inhale and coughed and coughed. I hated it.

After I got home, I told my parents about it, or they figured it out. Either way, Dick got in trouble. I didn't care, though. I was sick of them both. This was probably around 4th Grade, which meant I had no close friends for the last two years of my elementary school experience. Another reason we all split up was I started playing soccer. Dick and Manny both played, and when Dick realized I was almost as good at it as he was, he hated that. Since Manny had to choose between Dick or me, he chose Dick, leaving me to my own devices.

### MORE ON MANNY

Manny had more of a beta personality, so he and I got along pretty well. When Dick wasn't around, Manny and I sometimes wrestled, or threw glow in the dark toys at each other's pillow forts in the darkened hallway in my house. Our friendship took a hit, when I told a lie to my mom. There were two big movies in 1982: Poltergeist and E.T. Manny wanted to see Poltergeist, which was rated R. Because I was only twelve (and Manny maybe 11), I knew my mom would never give me permission. So, if I wanted to see Poltergeist with Manny, I'd have to lie to my mom, which I did. I told her we were going to see E.T., then went over to Manny's house and told Manny's mom my mom said it was okay. It worked. Manny's mom looked up the movie times and told us to get ready. While we did, Manny started cracking jokes about the movie we would see. "I bet everyone watching E.T. will wish they were watching Poltergeist," he said (or something along those lines), and I responded in kind. Next thing we knew, Manny's mom was on the phone with my mom and our cover blown. We ended up seeing E.T. after all. Oops.

### AYSO, ASTHMA, ANGER

AYSO stands for American Youth Soccer Organization. All the boys I knew on my street played AYSO soccer. In fact, the street we lived on dead ended at Colony Park in Ontario. That's where we played a lot of our games. My first team was The Blue Knights. I wore the number 8 and was a half-back, which meant I was something of a free agent with regard to the field. I liked that. It was my favorite position because it let me run after the ball no matter where it was. I ran pretty fast for a kid. Playing soccer was more than a game for me. It was my non-confrontational (i.e. passive aggressive) way of reclaiming personal agency from friends who disrespected me. My aggression got reinforced by asthma, too. Sometimes, I'd have an asthma attack on the field, which was upsetting. By age 10 or more, I was already at war with myself and the world around me. I just didn't know it yet, me being in denial regarding the anger my emotionally abusive father never allowed me to express. When it did crop up, others saw it more than I did. At least, that's what happened at one of my games. I remember this portly kid on the opposing team. As I dribbled by him, he took a long slow kick at the ball - so slow, it seemed intentional when he missed the ball. But still his heavy leg rose up in slow motion, forcing me to run into the weight of him. Having lost control of the ball, I shoved his leg out of the way. My anger surged. Another player in front of me looked at me with horror in his eyes. At the time, his reaction made no sense. I wasn't that scary, was I? Now, having experienced the demonic in different ways throughout my life, I think I know what he saw. He saw my deeper self, something I never saw in myself until 2008. That's when, looking in a mirror in a locked psychiatric facility in Redlands, I saw Him; I saw Rage. Now I get it. Now I understand why that kid's face turned so white on that soccer field all those years ago. Rage like that can terrify.

DOGS

Here are three quick stories about my general dislike of dogs.

One. When I was a toddler, my parents owned a dachshund. Her name was Gretchen. She had a box in the house where she liked to rest. It was her space. I disrespected her space when I crawled into Gretchen's box with intent to pet. Angry, she bit clean through my left cheek. Ouch. An ER visit followed.

Two. In grammar school, a boy moved into the house down the block. Shortly after we met, we got into an argument. Upset, he ran home. Hoping to make amends, I walked through his open garage and opened the closed door to the backyard. A border collie barked and leaped out. Turning to run, all I did was offer my left shoulder for the bite. Another visit to the ER followed.

Three. Still in grammar school, my brother got married to his first wife. She had a white poodle. Not liking dogs at the time, I decided it would be a good idea to antagonize the dog. I placed a couch cushion between the coffee table and the couch with nothing to support it. Then I placed the dog on the couch and called it to run over the cushion onto the coffee table. Of course, when the dog ran over it, the cushion fell down, and so did the dog. I did this two or three times before earning myself a bite on my hand. No ER was required, but I was scolded for not treating the dog with respect.

## VIDEO GAMES AND OTHER DISTRACTIONS

I was soooooo excited when I went to the store with my parents and they bought me an Atari 2600. It was all the rage (a different kind of rage than from the previous section) by 1980, when Activision entered the scene. Activision was the shit. The first game I obsessed over was by Atari, though: Adventure. I loved that game. An exploratory puzzle game, like a Choose Your Own Adventure book on a tv screen, Atari's Adventure let me figure things out against the clock. I liked figuring things out. It gave me a spike of dopamine, just like I got in school when I gave the right answers in class. It's called motivational salience, and how that

applied to me was perfectly exhibited by the 1981 Activision game Laser Blast. But first I have to talk about Activision patches.

To take advantage of most kids' desire to earn rewards and complete their collection - whatever they collected, from trading cards to Star Wars figures - Activision offered high score patches. These were fabric patches, like you would apply to the back of your denim jacket or whatever, as a sign of video game dominance. As for me, since there were patches for most if not all of the Activision games I came to own, I applied them to a white fabric banner hung on my wall. It was my trophy case, I suppose. Not that trophy's per se were really my thing. Too much raw pride in that. Anyway, now that you understand my "need" for high scores, let's talk about Laser Blast.

Laser Blast was a simple enough game. On the ground were tank turrets in batches of three that had to be destroyed by the flying saucer of a ship under the player's command. The turrets and the ship all fired lasers, which were instantaneous beams of absolute destruction. The game was uncompromising, and this I found challenging. Now, to earn that patch, I had to score 100,000 points. It wasn't easy, but I did managed that relatively quickly, once I figured out the rhythm at the highest level. Once the difficulty level maxed out, all you had to do was stay consistent with the same pattern from batch to batch. Now, there was apparently a supplemental patch you could win if you scored 1,000,000 points. If that patch was available when I was playing, I didn't know about it. Still, I did it anyway. It was a grueling few hours of intensely focused concentration. Now, why would I do that? Well, I wanted those patches because I liked to collect things. Just as I took satisfaction in reading a book from cover to cover, I loved completing things. Like putting that last piece of a puzzle in its place. Accomplishment. But why did I go for 1,000,000 points when the patch for that wasn't even on my radar? Because endurance is another form of completion. It's like the promise of Heaven. Eternal salvation. Eternal. It wasn't about pride. It was about getting to taste, if only for one fleeting

moment, at least the illusion of something perfect and everlasting.

It's an obsession, really, this search for the eternal, for everlasting knowledge. It requires paying attention to everything while still staying focused on the prize. Like that line from Star Wars, when Gold Five has to remind Gold Leader, "Stay on target," in the battle to destroy the Death Star. Focus and determination are key.

I was sometimes more of a collector than a learner, though. Like with Star Wars figures. Trained early on to live vicariously through story and to feel a sense of accomplishment when collecting things, like action figures or books or whatever, I took sustenance from distraction more than anything else. Later in life, I would collect books and movies, and, much later, movies of the pornographic variety. For good or ill, porn was central to my life, so it will also be central to this series of books.

## PIANO AND CLARINET

I played two instruments as a kid. Well, I practiced them, anyway. The level and quality of play was debatable. The piano I played around with because we had one in my home. The first thing I learned to play with both hands was a rendition of the opening theme to Star Wars. I played the clarinet because my father had been a violin prodigy as a child, so it was expected that I at least give music a try. I decided on the clarinet, but it wasn't my first choice. I wanted something different. I wanted to stand out. That's why I thought the oboe would be cool. But my school wasn't interested in teaching the oboe, which was a double reeded instrument and therefore difficult to play. So, the clarinet became my musical stand in. I don't think I was ever first chair, and when I realized I would never be exceptional at the clarinet, I gave up on it, much like I'd given up on the piano after realizing my hands were too small to command the keys.

## TUNING IN

My home was quieter than most. Unless friends were over, I was pretty much alone most of the time, either in my room reading or in the den watching tv. Even when my father worked at home, it was still like having the house all to myself, which I enjoyed. But I got used to it, which increased my tendency to be uncomfortably introverted in loud groups and busy environments.

As a sensitive (or slow-burn schizophrenic in the making - if you like that psychological clap-trap), I remember when I was very young two unusual awarenesses of mine. Bored at home, tired of reading and disinterested in my friends, I sometimes sat down and simply stared at my surroundings. You might call it "zoning out." One of my favorite things to stare at was the wooden door leading to the stairs to the second floor bedroom above the den. Softening my focus, I'd get to watch the lines in the wood shift, as if the door and I were breathing in sync. The experience was remarkable. I didn't do it a lot, but when I did, it always left an impression.

While the door breathing was a trick of the eyes, the voices in the vacuum cleaner were a trick of the ears. Chattering away in the white noise of the vacuum, they seemed distant. Their tone, however, was angry, demeaning, and immediate. Not hearing specific words or phrases, I felt threatened. It was like listening to a host of demons squabbling over how best to make my life a living Hell.

But that's just crazy-talk, right?

## MASTURBATORIAL SHOCK AND AWE

I think it was junior high when I first discovered my dick. It was not a friendly encounter. Rather, it was similar to that scene from 2001: A Space Odyssey. Minding my own business in my room upstairs, I was sitting on my bed when I noticed I had an erection

more insistent than any before. I pulled my pants down and stared. I tapped it with my fingers. I tapped it faster, and it exploded. This was a rush of chemicals, both fear- and pleasure-based. Why? Because I missed my sex-ed class in fifth grade, and because I talked to no-one about sex ever since that first explanation about the mechanics of it in early elementary. It kind of explains a lot re: me and sex, really. Which leads to the following observation about me. Due to my limited social experience throughout most of my life, particularly in my early years, I had a tendency to turn beet red in the face when embarrassed. This characteristic of mine was instilled in me well before puberty, although feelings of sexual inadequacy certainly turned things up a notch or two. Blushing was something my father used to make fun of me for, so when I blushed I only became more self-conscious and blushed all the more. There was an element of anger in my shame as well. Anger at being made to feel ashamed, and anger at my own inability to control my blush-response.

## OVERPROTECTED

At some point in my youth, I acquired an interest in skateboarding from the neighbor kids. I'd seen some of them do a few simple tricks with their skateboards and was impressed. I asked my parents for a skateboard, and some money so I could go to the skatepark that had recently opened in a neighboring city. "Open from 1977 to 1988, the Pipeline Skatepark in Upland, California, was one of the first and most legendary skateparks ever built." - Todd, at <https://skateboardinghalloffame.org/2020/04/pipeline-skatepark-2014/>. I was excited to go to the Pipeline, having no idea how embarrassing my time there would be.

My parents, being both fiscally conservative and overprotective of me, took me to Kmart to buy a skateboard and to the Pipeline to buy protective gear. What they got me at Kmart was a pathetic

plastic skateboard called "The Bullet." It was probably designed for kids half my age, but that's what I got, a board too small and narrow to even ride safely, let alone do any tricks on. But when we got to the Pipeline, as if to make up for the crumminess of "The Bullet," I was showered with the best of a helmet, kneepads and elbow pads. Then, after I was suited up, I went out into the skatepark, with its impressive collection of bowls, half-pipes, and I think one full-pipe. With "The Bullet" and my minimal skillset, I could do none of it. The best I managed was to unsuccessfully ride my pathetic skateboard down a slope only to realize my parents had wasted good money on a skating endeavor they had knowingly or unknowingly sabotaged.

I want to segue from here to another story. This one has to do with my religious upbringing. According to church doctrine and a few movies I'd seen, the time of the tribulation was drawing near. The start of the tribulation would be a time when only the elect of the church would be raptured away to heaven so they didn't have to endure the tribulation. And what was the tribulation? It was a time when the christian left-behinds would be tormented (i.e. harassed and tortured) by a world of unbelievers. Well, this story stuck with me. It scared me. I even asked my father, "If I've asked the Lord into my heart, then I am saved. But how do I know I am saved? How do I know I won't have to suffer the tribulation? It got so bad that one day, when my parents were inexplicably absent when I came home from school, I started to fantasize that they had been raptured, and that the tribulation was just getting started for me, one of the left-behinds. There I was, in my troubled mind, a poor excuse for a skater of a christian with nothing but "The Bullet" and a bunch of clunky safety gear to get me through the Pipeline.

## JUNIOR HIGH

By the end of elementary school, I was friendless. I'd come to understand my incompatibility with Dick, Manny, Rick and Rory.

What friends I had were part of my church group, and they didn't really count. We weren't friends outside of church. My older brother and sister had both attended the Chaffey School District for jr. high and high school. They re-drew the lines for the school districts the year I graduated elementary school, though, which meant our house now fell under the Montclair High School District. All of this added up to me having no friends in Jr. High. I was the brainy kid with glasses who always answered in class and had no friends. I went home and did my homework, or practiced the clarinet. I was a loser, even though I told myself I wasn't one. Rather, I told myself I was a good, smart kid who was just misunderstood. I also thought I was better than everyone else, because the only rating system I understood at the time was our report cards, and I was always getting good grades.

Eventually, I ended up with two male friends in jr. high, and one female friend. My first male friend was the son of parents who used to be hippies and owned a pastrami sandwich shop in downtown Ontario. We didn't spend a lot of time together, but I always thought he was a good soul. Years later, I would be told he died an unpleasant death. I think they said he died of AIDS. How he contracted that disease, I really don't know, but I was pretty sure he started using drugs a lot at a young age.

My other male friend was a kid who attended another church closer to my school. He lived just a couple of blocks south of me, so we walked home together a lot. I never learned his story, but he was an outsider of a kid that everyone looked down on for a number of years, even into high school. Then he hooked up with the girl I had a crush on at my own church group, and once he had a girlfriend he got a lot more respect. He would still be my friend, though, for quite a few years, so I will give him a name. Let's call him Teddy. Teddy was a practical person, and really much more self-involved than he might seem.

My female friend in jr. high was an unattractive girl. She was also an outcast. We spent time together, but not a lot. Mostly out of my own basic sense of social kindness. It was my basic imprint

as a kid, and throughout my life, really. I didn't like conflict and was unsure of myself so I was always cautiously kind to everyone I met. This was reinforced too by my state of denial regarding the sinister qualities of others. Because my father was so toxic, I came to believe that the best way to exist among others was to skate around their emotions at a distance. Be polite. Don't push. Do your work. Be good. That was how I approached life, and that's how I approached this girl - a girl I wasn't attracted to and with whom I spent very little time.

As for other girls, there were two who expressed some interest in me in jr. high, but in ways I never read well. Plus, because I was so withdrawn as a child (basically shy), I didn't know how to react to their advances. The first girl flirted with me a bit in class. She was going through a rough time at home, I think. She may have even dropped out. Another, also a dropout, was a tall for her age girl known for doing drugs... and other things. She approached me at my locker and measured my middle finger. "Not too bad," she said, even though my hands were small. I didn't even know what she was talking about until later I asked around and was told it had to do with my dick size. Sadly for me, I had no idea how to be romantic with a girl, especially after my time playing "doctor" with Dorothy in third grade.

The only other interpersonal interaction from jr. high worth mentioning here involved someone who seemed friendly only to become enraged with me. His anger may have been religiously motivated. I simply don't recall. What I do recall is his boast one day that he and his Rosicrucian mother had cursed me. It was the last day I ever saw him. He lived near where I delivered newspapers to make a few bucks. I don't know what his curse added up to exactly, but if it was to blame for the hardships of my coming life, it was definitely effective. I mention this mostly because Rosicrucianism ties in with some of the metaphysical organizations I would later tangentially encounter, from the Golden Dawn to the Rosicrucians. Considering my Biblically literal parents and Isabella's witch background, it only makes

sense that secret magick societies might have an interest in me. But figuring that out would prove no easy task at all.

## HIGH SCHOOL

By the time high school had rolled around, I'd given up on the clarinet and soccer. I did start taking karate at the local recreation center, however, so that was a little different. I never sparred, though, so my martial arts education was more about stretching and strength training than actual combat. Other than that, I spent most of my time doing school work, watching tv, playing video games, or reading. I also spent time with friends, which was something I didn't do much in jr. high at all. Not that I had a lot of friends. Rather, I spent my time with Teddy and my second best friend Harvey. Harvey was the oldest of three boys. He was good at drawing and had a creative mind. He was also much more socially balanced than either Teddy or me. He wouldn't have a girlfriend until after high school, though, and would eventually come to resent me for being the social loser I was destined to be. I had a smattering of other friends, but they were all met by me through Teddy or Harvey. I cared for them, up to a point. But still my two closest friends were all I needed, as far as I was concerned at the time.

Anyway, we three bonded over movies and comic books and D&D. Dungeons & Dragons was something I think Teddy brought to my attention. Plus, it was popular back then, with a nod even from Steven Spielberg's "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial." I loved the idea of playing out my own fantasies with friends. I wanted to be a writer, and this was a way to bring my stories to life. I became the Dungeon Master. I ran the game for my players. Even though the three of us were far from popular in school, I carried prestige for my straight As and was known for being polite but selective when it came to friends. This made me the alpha of our little pack, and as I developed a sense of superiority over everyone else, I became tiresome to be around. My friends chafed at my

caustic and isolationist outlook. I somehow believed I was better than anyone who didn't read books and appreciate story like I did.

I think a lot of this rubbed off on me through my father, who overvalued intelligence and called anyone or anything he did not like "stupid." Not that he appreciated my interest in story. To him, there was the truth of the Bible and there was being smart enough to make one's way in the world. What kept my father off my case in high school was my academics. He believed that getting me into a good college was all it would take to make a success out of me, so he supported my studied.

Teddy, Harvey and I all shared the same delusion that once I got out of the stupid that was high school, my world would open up. I'd meet really interesting people and get laid, no question. Less academically successful than me, Teddy and Harvey prepared themselves for a more uncertain future, whereas I simply focused on my school work and told myself life would only get better for someone as smart and studious as me.

## COLLEGE BOUND

Despite my straight As, the big leagues, like Harvard, felt out of reach. Plus, I was honestly quite intimidated by the notion of moving to another state (or even too many cities over). Thinking my local friends were going to stay local (and stay friends) the only school on my radar from early on was UCR (University of California, Riverside). They had a decent English program and weren't too far away. Then, somewhere along the line, I heard through the grapevine about Pomona College. It was prestigious and right next door, so I checked them out. Whoever tipped me off said I could sit in on a class and make my decision based on that. The class I sat in on was an English Literature class taught by Brian Stonehill. It was on the book *The Crying of Lot 49* by Thomas Pynchon. Snippets from the book were abstruse and a little racy, which was refreshing. Stonehill even shared a local

theory about the possible meaning behind the book's imaginary city, San Narciso. What follows is from <http://www.pynchon.pomona.edu/pomona.html>, 2022, asterisks added.

"In *The Crying of Lot 49*, Thomas Pynchon portrays Southern California as a digital circuit board, including in his assessed terrain San Narciso, or "the mirror city" in the valley to the east. \* Those of us who were locked in the San Narciso valley during the time of this page's creation appropriated his designation for the area for further authenticity, but wish to give credit to the parent organization behind this effort, Pomona College. \* Like the fictional San Narciso, Claremont California is a suburb to the east of Los Angeles inhabited largely by the residents of small colleges and retirement homes. Claremont is in fact the easternmost town in the County of Angels, and it faces, across the San Bernardino County line, the town of Montclair. Claremont facing Montclair? San Narciso... \* Pynchon's best friend and the dedicatee of *Gravity's Rainbow*, Richard Farina, married Mimi Baez in a memorable ceremony at which *Time Magazine* tried unsuccessfully to photograph our author. Mimi and Joan Baez's parents lived in Claremont at the time. \* For these and other reasons too (San Narciso has "its own freeway" -- cf. I-60, the Pomona Freeway), we figure that Pynchon knows our little town, and so we enjoy pretending that we are set inside *The Crying of Lot 49*. \* To see Pomona's award-winning website, visit <http://www.pomona.edu/>. -- The Management"

It fascinated me that I was a graduate from Montclair High, looking to attend college in Claremont. Even though I was already losing my Christian beliefs, I still had yet to let go of the notion of predestination, or fate, or whatever God's plan might be in the absence of God. Thing is, even though my life was self-involved and confined to academics, I still had enemies, which means I was already targeted by others, particularly an Asian kid named Jin. Was my Rosicrucian curse in play all along?

## ENEMIES UNKNOWN (1980 to 1987)

Around 1980, when Rubik's Cube was a thing, a new kid named Jin came to my elementary school of El Camino (in Ontario, CA). Jin sold a small photo-copied booklet on how to solve that particular puzzle, and I bought one. I was impressed at how quickly he solved it right there in front of me. Even though his instructions made no sense to me, I thought highly of his aptitude and his entrepreneurial spirit. Later, I learned how to solve it on my own with a published solution by someone else I bought at a local bookstore. It was fun to solve.

A few years later, this Asian kid and I attended Vernon Jr. High and then Montclair High (both in Montclair, CA). It was at this time that my church youth counselor encouraged me to study Christian apologetics. I guess he figured I was smart enough to do a good job defending my faith in secular school. Word got around about my interest in apologetics. This Asian kid, having never been a friend of mine, decided to challenge me to a debate between Christianity and Atheism. For him, it was a way to prove he was smarter than me, which apparently was very important to him. I saw it as a challenge, but didn't really feel bad one way or the other regarding which of us was smarter. As a consequence, I don't really remember how our debate played out. Probably I was incapable of arguing Jin into a corner, and then fell back on the faith argument (meaning what cannot be proven about God must be taken on faith). What I do remember is coming away from our debate with a strong sense of having lost, and I began to question not only apologetics, but my entire belief system. Still, I don't think Jin felt like he had been as victorious as he had hoped, which is why what happened toward the end of my high school junior year happened.

Another foreign student, who was friends with Jin, was from India. He was a Saint Thomas Christian, which is a sect of Christianity that believes Jesus spent much of his life in ancient India. This other kid - let's call him Gregory - was apparently

encouraged by Jin to debate my Christian beliefs in terms of Saint Thomas. By that time, my faith was already wavering, so this academic debate meant very little to me. I shut it down with a simple statement to the effect that Saint Thomas was not in the traditional Christian Bible, and therefore was wrong. I had not yet explored anything like the Gnostic books of the Bible. My mind was not just closed on my version of Christianity. It was closed on religion in general.

I tell this to give background for what was done to me that year. Jin and Gregory didn't just see me as competition. They looked down on me as an inferior being. I sensed this with the way they compared grades with me and with the debates they had with me regarding my religion. Their dislike of me became more obvious when they talked a lot about playing tennis for the school. They unhelpfully invited me to join in with them, even though when I asked about joining the team they turned me down. Then, talking like they wanted to make things up with me, they invited me to apply for a summer school class at Caltech (California Institute of Technology). They were both smart enough to go, so why shouldn't I? They even said they'd spend time with me after class checking out Pasadena, since we would be living in the dorms. That sounded like fun, and I thought it would be nice to become friends with these two. Little did I know the betrayal they had in store for me.

When I arrived at my dormitory at Caltech in the summer of '87, I discovered I was to share a room with Gregory. Even though we roomed together, and even though Jin was at the same school, we never spent much time together at all. I was enrolled in a Chemistry class. They were enrolled in other classes. Then, one afternoon I was studying at my desk underneath my bed loft when Gregory came in and drew my attention to something he had on his desk, on the other side of the room near the door. I looked at it but didn't know what to make of it. It was an explicit comic book, what would be called hentai in Japan. It was as confusing to me as the pornography I'd seen with Dick and Manny, Rick and Rory. Mostly puzzled, I went back to my desk

and to my studying. Then Gregory said he was going to be gone for a few hours. Well, that was a setup.

Thinking things were private, and curious after a while, I went over to look more closely at that comic. Even though I still was not fully processing what I was looking at, I suddenly felt an erection. So, I quickly brought it to my desk and masturbated to it in all of two minutes. Then I cleaned up, startled at what I had done, and put the comic back on Gregory's desk.

Maybe a day or two later, Gregory and Jin both came in and confessed to me that they had rigged an audio cassette recorder to turn on and record when I sat down at my desk. Worried, I asked what they had heard. They said nothing, that all they heard was me turning the pages of my book and talking to myself occasionally. Already well trained in denial, I accepted their explanation for a time. However, the very next day, Gregory announced that he was switching rooms and moving in with Jin. I felt abandoned, but didn't know what to do about it. I stayed on to finish my Chemistry course, which I passed with an A (or maybe A-). But that's all I got out of that summer: a school grade and social-sexual stigma. I'm positive there was talk about it my next year - my senior year - at Montclair High. In fact, I remember someone telling me that Jin hated me. I was simply trying to understand why he hated me. I never wished him ill. But that didn't seem to matter. He and Gregory had done to me what they had done to me, and I continued to hide socially.

## LUV

Desperate to be accepted into Pomona College and deciding I needed something extra-curricular in my studies besides karate, I signed up for Drama my senior year of high school. I did well the first half of the year, and then I did a play the second half. The play was "LUV" by Murray Schisgal, and strangely enough it seemed to foretell a thing or two about the life I had yet to live. I say this mostly because the director of our school play clearly

typecast me as Harry, and my other two friends as Milt and Ellen. Milt was played by Steven. Ellen was played by Laurie, the girlfriend of one of my best friends, Harvey.

The story of LUV involves Milt, who, unhappily married to Ellen, interrupts Harry while he is in the middle of preparing to jump off a bridge. After saving the dysfunctional Harry from suicide, Milt decides to foist Ellen off onto Harry, so Milt can get with his mistress (which character our teacher/director removed from the stage so we didn't have to find another girl to play her). The themes of suicide, dysfunction and extra-marital relations would all play their roles in my future, even though I never suspected such at the time.

My dysfunctional shyness made itself abundantly clear after our play had ended. Having been accepted to Pomona College by early admission, I knew I would soon be flying the coupe of Montclair High and headed for the supposedly greener pastures of Claremont. A female student I'd never met was brave enough and kind enough to stop me in the middle of the hallway as I went from one class to another. She said she liked my performance in the play and gave me a beautiful red rose. She was cute, too. I thanked her, and that's all I did. I did not ask her name. I did not invite her to get some coffee sometime, or even to have lunch together. Rather, I short-circuited. The notion that a girlfriend might just fall into my lap seemed alien to me. I mean, I hadn't had a girlfriend since third grade (nine years prior), and that didn't turn out well at all. Here I was now, a high school senior proving to be just as much the loser as my performance at Caltech, courtesy of Jin and Gregory, said I was.

## Welcome to Hell

My mom said something once about my time at Pomona College, years after I'd graduated. She said that when I got accepted to that college the thought crossed her mind that I was "going into Hell." I think she was right.

## FRESHMAN YEAR

Wigg was my freshman dorm at Pomona College. Having ended my high school years with an epic fail in the romance department, that's exactly how I started my college years. Right outside the side entrance to Wigg, a pretty girl introduced herself. Somehow it came up in conversation that I practiced karate. She made a joke about it, karate chopping the air and saying, "Hee-yah!" She was only being friendly, but I immediately felt inferior and insulted, which means the energy of our conversation died right then and there. So much for getting laid in college. Only, my lack of sexual game in college was really only just beginning. There were enemies even worse than Jin and Gregory who would spend the next four years (and many more) having fun at my expense.

I did have a few friends in college. Two of them even stayed in touch after graduation. Still, at Pomona College, most people came from money and with connections. I, on the other hand, did not. As a consequence, I had no friends in those circles, either. Keeping my social blinders on, I simply pretended that I was the essential loner I'd been throughout high school and that I was of no social consequence to anyone there. In retrospect, I'm pretty certain that was never true. So, allow me to tell the story of my first year at Pomona College in terms of my being perhaps an initiatory sacrifice of sorts. Don't worry. It will make more sense later on, although it does require some belief in things like secret societies and maybe even that pre-high school Rosicrucian curse cast upon me by that kid and his mom.

Having done a school play in high school, there was definitely a part of me that wanted to be an entertainer. I just wanted to do it more through my writing than through anything else. One of the first things I did was to tape paper and cards with creative scribbles on them on my shared dorm room door. My roommate didn't seem to mind, but he didn't get into it, either. He and I never were friendly to each other. Anyway, here are some examples of some of the scribbles I placed on that door. I drew a doodle of a dragon, around which I wrote the words to a prose poem entitled "I Hate William Blake." Remember that random email I received in 2009, the one that mentioned William Blake? Pretty coincidental for a bit of spam, if you ask me. I also wrote a tweaked version of the phrase written on the gates coming into the college. Instead of "Let only the eager, thoughtful and reverent enter here," I wrote on a 3x5 card outside my door, "Let only the lazy, thoughtless and irreverent enter here." I wrote other stuff, too, but the most alarming was the following, also on a 3x5 card. "Oh well. Whatever. Never mind." Never mind that that would become part of the lyrics to Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit" in 3+ years.

The crassest thing I did in terms of decoration, which upset my roommate but not enough for him to say or do anything about it, was to hang a Paulina Porizkova swimsuit model calendar on the wall next to my bed. I figured college life required prurience, and, since my real life wasn't prurient, then maybe I could at least fantasize a little. This drew more attention than I would have liked, I guess. Like when a student named Dillon stopped me one afternoon in the hall. He tried to get me to say something to the effect that I liked Paulina's ass enough to want to eat her shit. I really didn't understand his line of thinking at the time. I didn't understand about messing with my head, or about those sexual practices focused on anal. It would be years before I would explore that shit, and even then it wouldn't be until after I'd been involuntarily conditioned for it. But that gets into mind control, and that - in my story at least - is going to take some time to unfold.

Elements in the student body staged a gathering on date rape early in the year. They wanted everyone to understand that date rape was epidemic and not to be tolerated. I didn't go for two reasons. 1. I quickly realized I wasn't going to be going on any dates to begin with. 2. To take advantage of a woman like that felt antithetical to my very nature. Sadly, it never occurred to me that showing up would have been a smart social move. I just didn't think that way. Being uncomfortable in my own skin, I rarely wanted to look at myself from the perspective of others, and that was a problem. It rendered me incapable of managing my personal social appearance, which is something people do, people who have any kind of social ambition, that is.

When I told my friend Teddy from high school about the event, he thought it was hilarious. The idea that I might need to attend a class to learn how to behave myself really had him rolling.

Although it was a juvenile way of looking at it, I laughed, too. He took it too far though. A day or two later, he came onto campus and into my dorm looking for me, asking around for "Date Rape Dave." This offended a number of the students he spoke with, rendering me guilty by association. He even wrote a note addressed to Date Rape Dave and stuck it on the door of the dorm room I shared with one other freshman. This did not bode well for my social acceptance at the school.

Things got even worse after the first party I attended. The party, called "Death Row," was held on a neighboring college campus. Attending the party by myself, I got a punchcard with nine spots on it, each one for one vodka-based drink. I tried joining in on a few conversations, but no one was interested in chatting me up. So, I turned to the drinking. Managing to get all nine holes punched in less than thirty minutes, I was headed for a serious drunk, and it was the first time I'd ever been drunk, so I had no idea what I was about to experience. When my reality really started to slip, I staggered off the party grounds just as I had entered them, alone. On my way back to my shared dorm room, I did some sloppy cartwheels in a field of well-mown grass. I almost fell, but didn't, and either way I wouldn't have cared

because I was drunk and it was college and still none of it was what I thought it would be.

I don't remember entering my dormitory. I just remember being outside my dorm room door and feeling sick. Sliding with my back to the wall, I dropped to the floor. I shared a few bits of mumbled conversation with whoever might have passed on by. Then I scrambled to the toilets to piss and to vomit. After that, I blacked out.

I woke up the next morning in bed with my clothes on. My roommate was asleep in his own bed on the other side of the room. I didn't feel hung over, although I did sense that I was wrapped in an existential coil with no meaning. It was as if I myself now meant even less than the non-event that was the night before. After I got up, I asked a few people what happened. One person Pete told me I played air guitar in front of the mirror in the bathroom. Someone else said that wasn't true. But when I went to the dining hall for breakfast, I felt unusually self-conscious. I didn't spend time then thinking about how cruel people could be, nor did I fantasize about social predation. A few years later, however, I would have reason to suspect that something untoward had happened that night.

One of my college friends was named Clyde. I'll talk more about him later. Anyway, at some point during my four years at Pomona College, Clyde gave me some pictures he thought I might like. One of them was of Pete in a college bathroom with his shirt off and looking down like someone was giving him a blowjob. Thing is, after that first freshman year, Pete dropped out and went back home to Philadelphia. In retrospect, I'm starting to wonder who might have been down on the floor in front of Pete in that picture, or what all might have happened in the bathroom after Death Row.

Even so, I would have brushed this off as nothing but one solitary night of dumb if it weren't for the freshman t-shirt that got revealed a few weeks later. The image on the shirt was of a couple kissing in profile. The slogan underneath was "Some People Just Don't Get It."

Me being one of those people who "just didn't get it," my so-called friends made sure I knew the shirt was available for sale. I bought one any way, playing dumb both to others and for the sake of my own inward denial. I even wore it a few times. Then, it disappeared from my laundry. Probably because someone stole it to keep me from wearing it. So, looking back on this now, I can see that certain people were already having fun at my expense. I just didn't dwell on it. After all, I had classes to attend and papers to write.

My freshman dorm roommate Wally was another person who didn't really seem to belong at Pomona College. He kept to himself. People didn't like him. However, he did get a girlfriend in Sally who lived across the hall from us. The general consensus among those I spoke with seemed to be of the opinion that Wally and she spent time together cursing the rest of the school. That probably wasn't true, but then again... she did introduce our group of freshmen to the world of ouija and the tarot. One night first semester, a group of us gathered in Sally's room to hold a seance with a ouija board. The attitude in the room, particularly from the likes of Clyde, was more playful than serious, and nothing seemed to come of it. Later, I heard Sally did tarot readings, but at the time I shied away from that. It seemed too "occult" to me. Other than that, the only time the "dark arts" were mentioned in my presence at Pomona College was maybe the following year when Clyde pulled me aside and informed me that there was a secret society on campus. I listened. When no further information was forthcoming, I lost interest. Now, all I have is that memory. Because I don't think Clyde was joking when he told me that. It makes sense, too, considering how my life has unfolded, with the occult always somewhere in the background.

## SOPHOMORE YEAR

When my sophomore year rolled around, I had pretty much given up all hope of having any kind of social life at my college.

Instead, I went to class and the dining hall like clockwork and spent my after hours in my dorm room doing homework. I did get a job all four years (including my freshman year) that consisted of me hanging out in the college's central lobby waiting for persons (usually women) who wanted someone to walk with them from place to place on campus after dark. The job had a name that sounded way more sexy than it really was. It was the Pomona College Escort Service. Anyway, it gave me a place other than my dorm room to do homework a few nights a week and allowed me almost to pretend to be social. Not really, though.

Because my sophomore dorm room wasn't one I shared, I finally had a place to masturbate. My approach to masturbation was uniquely dysfunctional, mostly on account of never receiving or even looking for sexual advice from anyone or anything. This meant I left my soiled tissues in my trash can, which I threw out only when full - not full with soiled tissues alone, of course, but still. This led to my room taking on the smell of ejaculate. Not that I ever had friends over. I spent time with others outside, and very rarely in private. My social life took place in the dining halls for meals, and even then I usually ate alone.

I did sometimes party, and my group of friends stayed solid throughout most of my four years. They called me a "happy drunk," which was a compliment, because it meant I was nice to be around when drinking, rather than someone who starts fights or otherwise becomes a problem. I blame this on two things. 1. My basic good nature and 2. The fact that my life had yet to instill in me a level of anger I could not contain. Still, I never dated or even asked anyone out. For whatever reason, after that "Death Row" party freshman year, I never felt worthy of anyone at that school in terms of a romantic relationship, let alone just sex. I didn't even go looking for it. It was high school all over again. Besides my sophomore dorm room reeking of cum (which wasn't all the time, and I did do better after I understood the problem and took my tissues into the bathroom to flush them down the toilet most mornings), it was also the place where I spent the most time and wrote things, not just for school. I kept a

handwritten stream of consciousness journal that I used to spill the thoughts that had nowhere else to go. I also suspect that if there was indeed a group of people interested in messing with me at Pomona College before my senior year, then they may very well have looked at my journals to be used as ammo for social shots fired to take me down. Although my journals demonstrated self-awareness and a bitter sense of humor, they also demonstrated my lack of social graces, and that would have been amusing fodder for my detractors - assuming they went that far back then.

My sophomore year, I took a film class at a neighboring college (Pitzer). The movie I made for that semester was a silent short, a vampire tone poem filmed in color 35mm. While I did not ever look to hook up with anyone during my time at Pomona College, Clyde would sometimes pick my brain about the women I thought were attractive on campus. Because I had no filter, and no reason at the time to suspect Clyde to be a betrayer, I told him who I liked and that sort of thing. I wasn't one to partake in too much "guy talk," however. I didn't like to be offensive and was usually cautious in my use of words. Not that I didn't swear, but rude sexual comments were definitely not my thing. Still, Clyde managed to get from me my rudest comment. There was one girl in our class who had beautifully plump facial lips, and Clyde no doubt got me to say they were made for sucking dick, or something along those lines. Still, she was quite attractive and seemed nice enough. Then Clyde told me she was Christian and attended a Christian group on campus. How did he know this? At the time I didn't question Clyde's knowledge base. However, since he did rush the NAΦ his freshman year, he would have been privy to some otherwise hidden college lore. But enough about Clyde. I mention him now only because it was this Christian woman that I got up the courage to ask to be in my vampire movie. Because she was a social innocent like myself, she said yes with little reservation. She was nice. We didn't hit it off, but I was glad she agreed.

Now, this may come across as exceptionally pervy, but the only shot I took of the woman for my film was one of her licking her lips. It was a vampire movie, after all, so would naturally be both sexy and about feeding. The rest of the movie consisted of some grave images and other things I don't even remember. Now, back to the pervy. While the film was meant to convey a (dark and twisted) sexual tone, I never masturbated to images of this woman's lips. I never masturbated even to thoughts of this woman much, and when I did (if I did) it would not have been more than once or maybe twice. Early on, I felt uncomfortable masturbating to thoughts of women I knew. This was for two primary reasons. The first reason was because it only saddened me to know that I was not actually with them in real life, and therefore masturbating to them would only make me feel bad and inferior. The second reason was because at a very basic level it felt like an invasion on my part, and therefore wrong to do. In other words, unless I'm pretty sure a woman wants me to masturbate to thoughts or images of her, then I'd rather not. Hence my use of porn and/or erotica. And back then, I very, very rarely used actual porn. But I did like to keep something sexy to look at to masturbate to. Otherwise, I risked thinking about someone I did not feel it was appropriate to engage with, even in sexual fantasy.

Now, am I sharing all of this about a pretty Christian student who was in my Vampire film just to talk about my "masturbation baggage?" No. I'm sharing this because of what happened later that sophomore year. At some point, this woman shaved her head and appeared despondent. After that, I never saw her again. Clyde said she was going through some shit. Might this shit have had anything to do with her lips in my vampire film and Clyde's line of thinking that those lips were meant for sucking dick? I'd like to think not, but as I have come to understand how human cruelty often works in this world, I cannot shake from my mind the possibility that there was talk. And might that talk have been partially orchestrated by Clyde himself? Hard to say. He

was in his frat. I was just an outsider he sometimes talked to. And Pomona College was not a safe place for the innocent.

## JUNIOR YEAR

There was a secret society on my college campus. They posted stickers on walls or under stairs or maybe near a door or two. The stickers were placed in the middle of the night, and the next morning curious students read their cryptic messages. Difficult to decipher, these messages usually had something to do with an incipient event within the student body. Abstruse warning shots, which caused some student and faculty to look over their shoulders, aware that "someone" was watching, someone in a different kind of power.

The stickers were just one example. Also rumored was a secret library said to lurk underground. It supposedly contained spell books, dark spell books. And let's face it. Powerful colleges have secrets. At the time, I wasn't worried about any of it. It's also worth noting here that I only heard about this sort of thing through Clyde, who probably heard about it through his fraternity. It's a loose connection, but I do believe a connection can and needs to be made regarding Clyde, his fraternity, and my being targeted. Is that fair to Clyde? Frankly, I don't think I care anymore.

In the early '90s, it was common to use the word "gay" in a derogatory sense. I don't remember specifically, but I imagine it was courtesy of Clyde that the misnomer entered into my vernacular. Probably on account of the way I dressed. In my college years, I was a "metal head," on account of I liked to listen to a lot of hair bands. It all started with Bon Jovi and ended with the likes of Metallica and Cinderella. Even though my hairline was already receding - and my hair unhealthily thin - I grew my hair out as long as I could and liked to wear the occasional concert t-shirt. I also wore my denim jeans until they had ragged holes in them. With my super-thick glasses, I became a caricature of

myself: the effeminate man-boy who liked to call anything he didn't like "gay."

One evening in Fall of 1990 (Junior year, first semester), I was wearing a cutoff white t-shirt to show off my stomach above my tattered, skin-revealing blue jeans. Nike tennis shoes and a ponytail pulled back from my enormous glasses pinned the ensemble. I think I was even dressed this way for my Escort Service shift, which demonstrates a tremendous disconnect from serious worker considerations and the cerebral-academic train ride (train wreck?) that was my life. Anyway, a philosophy major from our freshman dorm (Wigg), and who spent a fair amount of time with Clyde, apparently couldn't get over my stunning display of "gay." As a joke that would eventually prove not so funny (more on this later), he took me over to the dorm room of a woman (also from Wigg, originally) whose last name suggested serious money. There, Albert and I posed for pictures. This woman gave me earrings to wear and switched my glasses. We played dress-up. But the only person getting dressed up and photographed was me. Later, I would be given a copy of just one of the pictures, one of me and Albert looking a little more interested in each other than was actually going on.

By this time, I should have realized I was a campus mascot of underground proportions, but I didn't. I didn't spend my high school years watching movies about abusive fraternities or sororities or other scholastic social games. Rather, I spent my high school years listening to classical music, playing D&D, earning straight A's, and always looking forward to my promised life as a writer, which might begin as early as college, right? It's sad how delusional I was. It's even sadder how practical my delusions were, and how society reinforced them. Pomona College was the way, of course - which is to say everything I thought I knew was wrong.

A tip-off I might have noticed happened one day when I ran into one of my dormitory neighbors, Junior year. The dorm we lived in was a freshly constructed set of towers in the east end of campus. This woman and I rarely spoke. In fact, I think the only

times we shared words was once in our junior year, and once in our senior year. Both times, what she said was impactful. Anyway, after I introduced myself, she said, "You're the one who listens to all the really bad music, right?" She was referring to the fact that I owned two large Kenwood speakers, through which I liked to play lots of hairband heavy metal at high volume. My reputation preceded me. This woman, Aces, had a reputation of sorts as well, although I never did figure out what it was. Dillon, who was probably already well on his way to becoming the campus drug dealer, mentioned her by name and said, "Be careful with that one, David. Don't trust her." Not that Dillon needed to warn me. Because, for whatever reason (and probably not a good one), she avoided me after that.

The only other notable moment from my first semester of my junior year was one time when Clyde asked to be escorted across campus. We were walking in the dark and talking about whatever he wanted to talk about, which turned out to be porn. At that time, I had never delved too far into porn. I'd seen the occasional Playboy. Maybe even a Hustler. That, and I liked to hang Paulina Porizkova calendar's on my dormitory walls and look at Boris Vallejo fantasy art books. I knew what I liked. I was an ass man, not a tits man. Other than that, I was really just hoping some day to meet a real woman and hit it off. Nothing super romantic. Just to be good friends who were also sexually attracted to one another. Anyway, our conversation eventually led to the following statement from me. "I'll probably be a martyr to porn." What I meant was that I imagined I would never get together with a woman and would die a virgin who only got to fantasize about beautiful women. Little did I know the full ramifications of my prediction, or how accurate it would prove to be. But that's a story that's just getting started.

For now, I was simply a martyr to kindness. Refusing to believe that friends could be betrayers, I never caught on until it was too late. Anyway, the next step for this college mascot (that's me) was to spend a semester abroad!

Clyde and Albert both suggested to me that I consider becoming a foreign exchange student. Clyde wasn't going anywhere, but with his frat connections and his uncommon interest in my life, it still made sense that he would weigh in to get me there. Where? Why, to the same program Albert and Jeffrey (a new friend of Albert's and Clyde's) were going to, which was at Glasgow University, Scotland. They talked me into it, and the next thing I knew, by the end of my winter break, I was on a fifteen hour plane ride to Scotland. In lieu of Clyde, Albert and Jeffrey would be my handlers there.

## A SEMESTER ABROAD

It was exciting to travel to another country for the first time in my life. I also fell in love with Glasgow. I liked the look and feel of the place, as well as the fact that I was perfectly capable of getting around town with no need of a car. The underground there ran in a circle, so I used to joke that if I missed my stop, I could just stay in the same car and wait for it to reach my stop a second time. It was a stupid joke that was cover for my love of civic simplicity. Nothing overly complicated, but still lots of variety. It was a city, after all. I also got to see some big bands in smaller venues in the neighboring city of Edinburgh. I saw, in standing room only concert halls, Scorpions, Living Color, and Janes Addiction. Oddly enough, it was the second time I'd seen Janes Addiction. The first time was freshman or sophomore year at the Coop on the Pomona College campus. Music was a big thing with me, and my enemies were definitely taking note. More on that later.

Another really nice thing about Glasgow was my walk to school. I traveled on foot most days from the Queen Margaret Residence Hall to the University of Glasgow through a botanical gardens. I don't remember the name of the gardens, but it was a beautiful affair all the way through, from the light dusting of snow in the winter to the vibrant vegetation of the spring. Sadly, I never

seemed to hit it off socially with anyone there. This was likely mostly due to my introverted nature. However, let's not forget that if I did indeed have social handlers at Pomona College, who did their best to bottleneck my social range, then that's what happened in Glasgow as well. Albert spent very little time with me there, while Jeffrey tried to get to know me a bit. He had a girlfriend from Pomona College - a sophomore while he was a junior - who was also studying abroad, only not in Glasgow, but in Stuttgart. Together, Jeffrey and Albert kept me minimally entertained socially - enough for me not to go looking for friends. To further tie me up, Jeffrey insisted that we spend our month-long spring break together. Well, relatively together, considering we would be traveling to Stuttgart so Jeffrey could see his girlfriend, Lynette. I had second thoughts about going to the Continent with them, especially after Jeffrey confided in me that he had been "unfaithful" to Lynette. Now, allow me to dig into this experience a little, because it reeks of lies and manipulation. My college associates all seemed way more interested in my sex life (or lack thereof) than I was myself. I think I was a puzzle to them, a puzzle they liked to pick at.

When Jeffrey told me he was cheating on Lynette, before spring break had even arrived, I think he did so to fish around about whether or not I was getting laid, and also to get a reaction out of me. When he told me, the first thing I did was ask him why he was telling me. He said it was because he thought I had good morals and that he valued my opinion. Bullshit. But I played along. He pretended to want advice on whether or not he ought to tell Lynette he's cheated on her. Feeling incredibly unqualified to offer my advice, I gave him some anyway. I said he should definitely tell Lynette before our spring break to give her time to decide how she felt about their relationship. Then, if and when we traveled to see her over spring break, they would have time to work on their relationship together. It was all very appropriate, "adult" advice. Of course, the reality was that this was nothing more than a college fling, and Jeffrey was simply having fun at the expense of others, like Lynette and myself.

Now, assuming Lynette was serious about Jeffrey (which is something I don't really know, as I never had a conversation with her), the maybe one of the reasons Jeffrey came to me for advice was because he knew that if I were in Lynette's shoes I would be serious about our relationship too. Although I would have loved to have simply "gotten laid" in college, I valued relationship over sex, and was therefore naturally conservative in my approach to my (non-existent) love life. Picking up on this, Jeffrey was probably trying to figure out how best to play his cards with Lynette, and not so much how to "handle" me. That was more Clyde and Albert's game, anyway.

Spring break was a headache. Jeffrey and I got to Luxembourg somehow, where we rented a car. I honestly don't remember if we flew there or took a train and a boat. However we got there, in Luxembourg we got a stick-shift. I'd never driven a stick-shift before, and when Jeffrey saw how lousy I was at driving it, he decided that he and he alone would do the driving. I don't remember where all we traveled to in what order, but I know we went to Paris, Lunéville, Stuttgart, Munich, and Salzburg. When we met with Lynette, I could tell right away that Jeffrey had not broken the news to her. I was pissed. I told him he should have done that before, that now it was too late. I swore myself to secrecy on the topic, and we pretended that Jeffrey's secret affair had never happened. We did very little that I found particularly exciting on our trip. Two items felt worthwhile to me. Otherwise it was all a waste of time, thanks to the company. The first place that struck me was a car museum in Munich. It had a lot of beautiful cars. The second place that struck me was the catacombs in Lunéville. The concierge that walked us through the catacombs didn't speak a lick of English, and my French was so bad I had no idea what she was saying either. Still, this old lady walked us through and said her spiel and the whole experience was magical to me.

When we got back to Stuttgart, that's when Jeffrey had the audacity to tell Lynette about the sex he'd been having in Glasgow on the side. A-hole. Upset, Lynette became

argumentative and Jeffrey had to step into relationship damage control. As for me, I was left out in the cold in a city I didn't care for. So, I told Jeffrey he would have to find his own way back to Glasgow, and I was going to drive the car back to Luxembourg and finish my spring break on my own terms in England. That's what I did. The first time I ever drove a stick, I drove from Stuttgart to Luxembourg. Then I took a ferry and a train to London. Finally, I was on my own. After spending a couple of nights in an incredibly dirty youth hostel in London, I rode a train out to Reading for a gaming convention. I played a game or two, but didn't really meet anyone to remember. Then I took a train or two to get back to Glasgow, where I asked to be released from my program a month early... after what happened next.

I don't remember the occasion, but there was a celebration at Queen Margaret Residence Hall that involved a dinner and a dance. The dinner was haggis. There had been talk about haggis, it being a Scottish dish that maybe sounds repulsive, as here per Wikipedia. "Haggis is a savoury pudding containing sheep's pluck (heart, liver, and lungs), minced with onion, oatmeal, suet, spices, and salt, mixed with stock, and cooked while traditionally encased in the animal's stomach though now an artificial casing is often used instead." [February 23, 2023] After eating this dish, which tasted well enough, there was some traditional dancing, in which I found myself more involved than I would have liked.

Then, as if cursed by the gods, I passed gas. While linking arms with other dancers and spinning about, I did not make noise so much as smell. It was horrific. Embarrassed, I exited the scene ASAP.

So, here was the situation. I had just publicly embarrassed myself after a stupidly stressful spring break, and my all of two friends at the time had no time for me. Jeffrey was pissed that I'd left him hanging in Stuttgart, and Albert was on his own mission, whatever that was. This was all bad enough for me to want to leave the program early, but that decision wasn't made by me until after the second Queen Margaret Hall's social event. It was an open mic. At the time, I wasn't enough of a writer or a

performer to even consider performing. I did, however, attend. Not because I wanted to, but because Albert insisted I should. Really, now. I say this because a rap song was performed by a bunch of people I didn't know, and it was about me. Skillful in the ways of denial at the time, I both knew it was about me and denied it at the same time. This enabled me to sit uncomfortably through the entire experience and also get a real on Albert as he watched for my reaction. I don't remember much of the song except I'm pretty sure it mentioned masturbation and talked about "my stinky farts." In a lot of ways, by trip abroad with Albert and Jeffrey seemed to have been nothing more than an attempt to derail me. I could have lost it at any time during that spring break, or anytime after when my social life was no longer just limited, it was sealed.

It wasn't even senior year, and I was already fading one of the more uncomfortable truths of this world.

Everyone and everything are for sale.

## PEE-WEE INTERLUDE

Just in case you might not recall how socially unacceptable masturbation was in the early '90s, here's a little factoid. On July 29, 1991, Paul Reubens of Pee-Wee Herman fame was arrested in Sarasota, FL, for exposing himself in an adult theater. There was a lot of talk about masturbation after this, mostly derogatory. This, of course, left me feeling even more insecure about my lack of a girlfriend.

## SENIOR YEAR

I'd reached my senior year in college with nothing to show for it. Sure, I'd been to Europe, but that was more of an embarrassment than anything else. In particular, after Glasgow, Albert would have nothing to do with me. My "friends" from

freshman year were dwindling, and there was no girlfriend (or potential girlfriend) in sight. I was improving academically, but that in no way made up for my lack of a life. One of my more distant friends from Wigg was named Pence. He'd always been rather distant, so when we wound up living in the same hallway senior year, I was pleasantly surprised to find he was personable. The only other friend I had that year was Clyde, who was a questionable friend at best. In fact, honing in on my disillusionment, Clyde, along with Dillon, got me to try smoking pot for the first time. Dillon made me a bong even. There were three types of pot highs, I was told. Body highs, which made me uncomfortable, laughing highs, which made me feel dumb, and time highs, which I loved. My favorite time being high alone was in my senior dorm room rolling gaming dice to randomize what got played from my CD music collection. I loved how I'd forget what I was doing but still be doing it, going through the process of rolling dice, checking the numbers on my list, making a note of the CD, finding said CD, and putting it in the CD player. It was no easy task, what with the pot fucking up my sense of time all along. Regardless of the enjoyment pot gave me, I only tried it because I felt hopeless, and was never really expecting that pot would fill that hole, which it did not. But it got me "doing drugs" with my "druggie friends," who were Clyde and Dillon. Their next betrayal was only just beginning.

My senior year, Clyde told me a few other things. He mentioned a woman we sometimes saw in the dining hall. He called her Queen B. He said she had family tied to Warner Bros. He also said she was a plotter. I never asked about her. As per usual, Clyde simply volunteered the information he shared with me. Like when he told me the following. "You know, sex does happen here, on campus. Oh, and there's a group of guys who get together and watch pornos in a secret room sometimes." He was baiting me, but at the time I saw no reason for him to do so. Pence even said something a little odd one time. He asked me, half-joking, "Do you rub yourself when you're writing? When

you're writing something sexy, I mean." I didn't know what to make of that one.

About half-way through my final semester, I had had enough. I saw academia for the monied joke it was. To make a joke of my own along those lines, I devised a new use for my gaming dice. I got a list of all the students at Pomona College, freshman to senior. I then assigned numbers to all of them and figured out a way to roll dice to randomly select students. The idea was to roll one student every day, to receive a Student of the Day certificate. The idea was that grades were no more meaningful than arbitrary awards like the kind received in elementary school. So, for the first week, I rolled up five or seven students. Each day, I placed a personalized award in their student mailbox (physical mailbox). I probably should have accompanied these awards with an explanation of my prank, but I didn't think that far ahead. Instead, I delivered one week's worth of awards and then posted in the weekly student newsletter a line that read, "Congratulations to the recipients of the PCSDA [Pomona College Student of the Day Awards] for the week of 04/??/92." Then I listed their names. This did not go over well, by the way. Particularly with Queen Bee. Because, yes, in that first week, she was one of the lucky five (or seven).

The shit hit the fan after week two. Because I wanted to keep my identity somewhat secret, I asked Teddy - my friend from high school - to deliver what I wanted printed in the school newsletter. Well, when he delivered it that second time, he was told they would not accept it. So, he ran back and relayed that information to me. Additionally, as per newsletter policy, I had placed my actual phone number on my newsletter submissions. I wanted to be secretive, but I did not consider it life or death. I considered wrong. Because one day shortly after the newsletter's refusal of my second submission, I got a phone call on my dormitory phone. "Who is this?" an angry woman yelled. "David." "David who?" "Meeks." And then they hung up. I had no idea what I was in for, just as I had no idea what probably already had been done

to me throughout my life, probably as early as that Cal-Tech dormitory prank in high school, courtesy of Jin and Gregory. I shared the details of this phone call with Clyde, of course, he being the only person on campus at the time who was to me something like a friend. Even though he spent little time with me, really. But he was definitely interested in hearing the details on this one. "I can't believe you picked her [meaning Queen Bee]." "I didn't pick her. I rolled her up randomly." "I still can't believe you went through with it." Clyde also got lunch with me at the Frary Dining Hall once around this time. He had with him a copy of the school newsletter and shared with me a snippet from the bleacher seats I never would have noticed on my own. Someone had written something mean and exclusionary about "guys who fetishize Asian women and like avocados." I had to have Clyde explain to me that the avocado bit was about masturbation (because apparently avocados can be used to put your dick in). He didn't need to explain the Asian fetish bit, although that didn't hit like they wanted it to, on account of the simple fact that I do not, nor have I ever had, a true fetish for Asian women. Still, Clyde accomplished with that lunch what he had set out to do, which was to make sure I knew I was a target while passing it off as a warning to me as a friend.

Aces, the woman I roomed next to first semester, junior year, she had something to say about it, too. It was just a day like any other. I was walking by the fountain outside Frary dining hall. That's when she stopped me and gave me some unsolicited advice. "Don't let them get to you." I tried to convince myself she was speaking metaphorically, like she could have just as well said, "Don't let the world get to you," as a senior year goodbye sort of thing, but there were two problems with this interpretation. First, we didn't know each other well enough for her to out of the blue give me life advice for after college. Second, when she said "them" she had some someones in mind. She didn't tell me who those someones were, however. Apparently, it was up to me to figure that out on my own.

I've already laid some pretty heavy accusations at the feet of Clyde. I mean, maybe he was just a confused dude who liked to drink and only joined a fraternity as a joke. Or maybe not. Now I want to talk about Dillon. With him I will speculate even more. Because with him I will formally introduce the topic of mind control.

## UNDERGROUND MIND CONTROL

Rodney King - April 28, 1992

Gay/No Gay

## ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND BETRAYAL

March, 1993

Raised as a law-abiding Christian, I never drank in high school. But when college rolled around and I saw everybody else doing it, I decided to indulge. I've already told you about my first drinking experience, at the party called "Death Row." After that, I drank socially only. Friends I drank with always called me a "happy drunk." When I drank, I loosened up a little, but was still a very nice guy. I was proud of this and didn't want to mess it up, and that's why I rarely drank to excess after that first party. I was a cautious, social drinker.

When it came to drugs, I never considered them for two reasons. 1. They were illegal. 2. I didn't know anyone who did drugs, so I couldn't get any even if I wanted to. Well, that changed my senior year of college, right around the time I played that "Student of the Day" prank. Coincidence? I think not. Anyway, here's the rundown, going all the way back to my freshman year.

I made very few friends at Pomona College. Those who were my friends were all from my original Wigg Dormitory unit. All of us shared the same RA (Resident Assistant). That's how they did it

for the freshmen. We were all supported by an RA based upon our assigned on campus housing arrangement. No freshman was allowed to stay in off campus housing, either. Freshman year was always on campus. My two closest friends were "C." and "A." "C." was a history major. "A." was into philosophy. After "A." got me to take those pictures with him, with "H." behind the camera, "A." and I never spent much time together. As "A." moved out of my very small circle, he was somewhat replaced by another student from my freshman dorm. His initial was "D." It took me some time to figure it out, but "D." eventually became the campus drug dealer, and it was through "C." and "D." that I was introduced, first to pot, and then to other drugs. I had one other friend at Pomona College. I got to know him when we roomed near each other in our senior year. His initial was "P." My interactions with "P." never added up to much until many years later, so for now I will focus on my relationships with "C." and "D." alone.

"C." was always a handful. He liked to drink a lot and had a crude sense of humor. He also rushed the NAΦ frat his freshman year and got accepted. Turns out, NAΦ was the "drug frat," but I didn't know that until my senior year, when "C." and "D." worked together to break down my resistance to doing drugs and got me to try pot. I even had a heart-to-heart with "C.", wherein I explained how my depression, which had built itself over the course of my time at Pomona College, rendered me so much in need of solace that I was willing to try just about anything to turn that around. Basically, under the watchful eye of "C.", I talked myself into trying pot.

My first experience with marijuana fractured my sense of time, and that was engaging. The time highs were the best, even better than the laughing highs or the body highs. Besides, the body highs made me uncomfortable. Still, no matter the effect, when the pot wore off, I didn't feel any better afterward. I wanted something different, something that would leave me thinking, years later, "Hey, that was a turning point." "C." took notes and suggested something different.

So, with "C." and "D.", around the time of my graduation in 1992, I tried two other drugs at the NAΦ cabin, mushrooms once and acid twice. The mushrooms and acid sharpened my visual acuity and put me in low-grade states of slightly elevated awareness. Neither was transformative. It wouldn't be until I was given a fourth drug a year later that I would experience something more transformative, and then I'd wish I hadn't. This fourth drug was supposedly ecstasy (MDMA - methylenedioxy-methylamphetamine), but I'm pretty sure it wasn't. What it was was the beginning of the end for me, when that secret society on the Pomona College campus further opened the floodgates to wash away my life. Back then, I assumed nothing was connected, because that would require most of my friends (and the people around them) being in on my betrayal. In hindsight, I see that that was exactly what was going on. I was a test subject in a social experiment. I didn't have real friends anymore. Rather, I had handlers. Anyway, let's talk about the ecstasy I did that wasn't really ecstasy.

"D." called me to his off campus apartment several days before the party. He, like the "Warner Bros." woman, had failed to graduate in 1992, so he was spending an extra year at a super expensive college and no doubt paying for it all with just some of his drug money. When I got to his apartment, that was the first time I realized he was in the drug business. His apartment was kept very dark, with beautiful black sheets, and the ambiance was uniquely foreign. Eastern Indian, I think. Just like the woman I saw resting on one of his couches when I entered. She was gorgeous. I didn't think it at the time, but she was physically a "cut above," meaning she probably had more to do with his business than I really wanted to know.

He gave me a gift. It was a bong he'd hand assembled. I felt honored. Then he talked about the party, telling me it was an X party to be held in some house in Claremont. He encouraged me to attend, so I said I would. I said my goodbyes. At the time, I did not even question "D."s loyalty toward me. It's not like I particularly trusted him. More like I lacked the imagination to

envision the level of betrayal he might be capable of. In my world, people were nice, and if they weren't they kept their distance. I did not understand the practical importance of fraternizing with "the enemy" (or the prey).

Ecstasy was big in '92. [Party story] - dosing pill wrapped in crumpled tinfoil - instead of sinking me down into a calm lake of liquid purrs, it nettled me with needles of anxiety. Majorly uncomfortable, I ducked out of that X party and rejoined the ranks of the beer drinkers. Thoughts and perceptions battled within and around me Deep Distrust, my base camp, had launched me behind enemy lines before I even realized I'd been conscripted. A fresh recruit in The Royal Army of Paranoia (TRAP), I'd no idea who we were fighting, or why. All I knew for sure was this. The drug I'd been given had damaged my ability to feel either safe or secure. It magnified my personal sense of anxiety, and this lasted well into the morning, In fact, it lasted even longer than that, but how long is difficult to gage when the sources and modifiers of my fear were so multiple. Regardless, before my "ecstasy" trip, I'd fretted in private. Now, I felt cornered and forced to monitor in real time whatever was said around me, even if I couldn't quite make out the words. Having been chemically prepped for a breakdown, it was only a matter of time before I'd have one. [argument that my paranoia was simply an abreaction - I disagree]

Wertheimer meant to dose me and make me crazy, and everything after has been carefully orchestrated by persons known and unknown, and sometimes by known persons with unknown intentions.

[earlier - Hermosa Beach, LA Riots, and weeping]

Smells Like Teen Spirit

Load up on guns, bring your friends  
It's fun to lose and to pretend  
She's over bored and self assured  
Oh no, I know a dirty word  
Hello, hello, hello, how low  
Hello, hello, hello, how low  
Hello, hello, hello, how low  
Hello, hello, hello  
With the lights out, it's less dangerous  
Here we are now, entertain us  
I feel stupid and contagious  
Here we are now, entertain us  
A mulatto, an albino, a mosquito, my libido  
Yeah, hey  
Yay  
I'm worse at what I do best  
And for this gift I feel blessed  
Our little group has always been  
And always will until the end  
Hello, hello, hello, how low  
Hello, hello, hello, how low  
Hello, hello, hello, how low  
Hello, hello, hello  
With the lights out, it's less dangerous  
Here we are now, entertain us  
I feel stupid and contagious  
Here we are now, entertain us  
A mulatto, an albino, a mosquito, my libido  
Yeah, hey  
Yay  
And I forget just why I taste  
Oh yeah, I guess it makes me smile  
I found it hard, was hard to find  
Oh well, whatever, never mind  
Hello, hello, hello, how low  
Hello, hello, hello, how low

Hello, hello, hello, how low  
 Hello, hello, hello  
 With the lights out, it's less dangerous  
 Here we are now, entertain us  
 I feel stupid and contagious  
 Here we are now, entertain us  
 A mulatto, an albino, a mosquito, my libido  
 A denial, a denial, a denial, a denial, a denial  
 A denial, a denial, a denial, a denial

### In Bloom

Sell the kids for food  
 Weather changes moods  
 Spring is here again  
 Reproductive glands  
 He's the one  
 Who likes all our pretty songs  
 And he likes to sing along  
 And he likes to shoot his gun  
 But he knows not what it means  
 Knows not what it means  
 And I say he's the one  
 Who likes all our pretty songs  
 And he likes to sing along  
 And he likes to shoot his gun  
 But he knows not what it means  
 Knows not what it means  
 And I say yeah  
 We can have some more  
 Nature is a whore  
 Bruises on the fruit  
 Tender age in bloom  
 He's the one  
 Who likes all our pretty songs

And he likes to sing along  
And he likes to shoot his gun  
But he knows not what it means  
Knows not what it means  
And I say he's the one  
Who likes all our pretty songs  
And he likes to sing along  
And he likes to shoot his gun  
But he knows not what it means  
And I say yeah  
He's the one  
Who likes all our pretty songs  
And he likes to sing along  
And he likes to shoot his gun  
But he knows not what it means  
Knows not what it means  
And I say he's the one  
Who likes all our pretty songs  
And he likes to sing along  
And he likes to shoot his gun  
But he knows not what it means  
Knows not what it means  
Knows not what it means  
Knows not what it means  
And I say yeah

OH, AND NO DOUBT, TOO

No Doubt played at Pomona College on May 5, 1990 and April 13, 1990. I remember at least one of their performances was on Walker Beach. "Paulina" and "Spider Webs."

Paulina  
No Doubt, released March 17, 1992

Paulina  
She's on the cover of a magazine  
Paulina  
A woman in my nightly dreams  
Paulina  
Who makes me grin in any pose  
Paulina  
I wish she'd take off all her clothes  
Paulina  
Well, I stare at her pictures all day long  
Paulina  
And as I do I sing this song  
Paulina  
My father says to act my age  
Paulina  
As I single handily turn the page  
Paulina  
Well, I paste her pictures on the wall  
Paulina  
Sit by the phone and hope she'll call  
Paulina  
Although I know she never will  
Paulina  
To indulge myself is such a thrill  
Paulina  
She's the big red apple of my eye  
Paulina  
I wish she'd lay down by my side  
Paulina  
Bit if she ever knew my pursuit  
Paulina  
She would probably file a huge lawsuit  
Yeah yeah, oh oh oh oh oh

"My father says to act my age" ... ?

## N IS FOR NO

Her name, let's say, was "N." Right around graduation, a nice co-graduate of mine, with whom I had never interacted too terribly much, invited me to dinner at her off-campus apartment. It was to be a pity fuck, I imagine, possibly one of mutual proportions. However, even though she set up a nice enough dinner and made herself approachable, I did not take advantage of what she had to offer. Why? For two reasons. The first was because I'd never even dated a woman up until that time, so I didn't know how to behave... which meant I kept my distance for safety's sake. The second reason I kept my distance was because I was not physically attracted to her. I should have been, though. It's not like she was ugly. She just wasn't the princess I'd always imagined I'd wind up with. Notice I say princess in the singular. This was because, even though I was no longer Christian, Christian beliefs about things like love and marriage still had a hold on me so deeply I didn't even know I needed to shake them off. So, my answer to her unspoken question of "Sex?" was an uncomfortably long yet still perfunctory "No."

## ONE YEAR OFF

Having endured four years of collegiate celibacy by hitting the books (and habitually stroking my cock), I looked at the prospect of earning a Masters and a Ph.D. in English with diminished desire. My dream of teaching English at a college some day felt less appealing to me, considering I had no way of knowing whether or not I would be married by that time. For all I knew, I was going to wind up just like my high school Latin teacher, teaching my academic specialty to students who would offer me little in return save for reminding me of my historical lack of a sex life.

If I'd had a counselor worth their salt when I'd graduated from Pomona College, they would have encouraged me to take a year off and spend it with the goal of gaining a girlfriend. "N." had at least offered me a chance to lose my virginity before traveling off to graduate school, but apparently her offer was too fast for me. Sad, that. And pathetic. However, just as I rebuffed losing my virginity to someone temporary, I likewise squandered my year off. All I did that year was spend time at some odd job I don't even remember much of and socialize with friends on occasion. These friends of mine were by that time more interested in relationships than was I, so they left me out in the cold. Mostly. As I spent more and more time thinking about endless hours of school work, I came up with a different idea. Rather than jumping straight into Ph.D. prep work, maybe I could teach English in Japan, or someplace similarly exciting and exotic. This way, my English teaching school work and my subsequent job would be like a really long summer vacation that would hopefully help change my introverted nature - get me out of my shell, so to speak.

Still, my lack of sex was a problem. Like that song lyric says, "Don't drink, don't smoke, what do you do?" I had no answer. So, backhandedly, I spent time drinking and smoking after college (much like my senior year) in lieu of getting laid. This would prove to be a problem, however. To explain the nature of this problem, I need to back us up a bit and look at my college years through the lens of substance use. Hence this next little section entitled "Alcohol, Drugs and Betrayal."

## SAN JOSE

(Foray into porn at Cal State San Jose. Early gang stalking and gaslighting. Green Day and TAFKAP.)

Fall of '93. Since masturbation was usually an effective way for me to destress, I decided to entertain myself one evening with a 3-D porno. [more intentionally buildup] - Believe it or not, this was the first time I'd ever used video to get off. Normally, my masturbatory accompaniment involved pictures of naked women, usually in artful poses. Back then, anyway. And hence the over-the-top 3-D foray into moving picture porn that night. I checked out a VHS player from the dorm service desk. It was a Friday night, and I stupidly hoped no one would notice. But I already stood out, me being a graduate student in a mostly undergraduate dormitory and all. So, either I was a virgin, or a perv. Or both. I guess being socially castrated felt good to me somehow. The next morning, in the halls and the cafeteria, I heard occasional laughter and comments seemingly thrown in my direction. [don't forget why I left the windows uncovered]. This distressed me, whether or not anyone was specifically making fun of me at any given time.

My parents called in a crisis counselor (someone they heard about through church associates, I imagine). He told me not to worry. He even went so far as to make up some story about having gone to the cafeteria to observe the other students and how they acted around me. He said he didn't notice anything suspicious, which didn't prove anything one way or the other, as far as I was concerned. So, after a week or two more of this, I dropped out of my graduate program and moved back in with my parents.

## THERAPY

1994 - prescribed Risperdal? - would have been for anxiety

## DELUDED OR GASLIT

It's called gaslighting. It's a well known and documented tactic played out by certain organizations. Even individuals. What it involves is intentionally setting up insane situations in a person's

life and then denying them all necessary validation. By forcing their victims to question their sanity, gaslighters lead those they gaslight into psychotic thinking. This was done to me both through psychological trauma, as well as through medical interference. How I was dosed at that X party, and how I was socially controlled from Pomona College on, both add up to gaslighting.

There's a third element to all of this, if not a fourth. Magic plays a role as well. Magic expressed through various agents through various means. In fact, collage art is itself a form of magic, and I was the target of (at least) two collages in high-profile music media.

This second collage involved a picture of me taken when I was asleep in the back of my station wagon at Joshua Tree, CA. I'd camped out with some college "friends," and they took a picture of me before I woke up one morning. The collage by Wiston Smith has flavors of surrealism, even dadaism, which is something I studied in college. Sick, brilliant stuff. [EXPAND] I internalized a ton of doubt and shame. Having run home to mommy and daddy (and this was, unfortunately, necessary), I again took up residence in the upstairs bedroom I'd lived in most of my life (except for my undergrad school days). Still had friends from high school, who were all moving on with their lives in ways I never would. Getting married and buy-in homes and starting families.

This version of the American dream appealed to me. Somewhat. I mean, I liked the idea of getting married and having a career. Having kids was something I've never been terribly interested in, though. Too much responsibility. As in, way too much.

Although I was never suicidal until one night in 1999, I still felt it a terrible idea to intentionally bring a life into this world of ours. I mean, really, Why inflict life on anyone? Particularly one's own flesh and blood?

And how the gaslighters can gaslight themselves. A common problem when it comes to the mental health framing of psychosocial trauma.

On top of this, I purchased a music CD, only to discover [make mention of memory of purchasing this CD-Single before it's release date in San Jose - probably an incorrect memory, as it was not released until 1994, and had I seen a picture of me in that CD collage while at San Jose, I would have freaked. the. fuck. out.] - on the inside of the cover - a small picture of me dolled up like a woman. [mention this already for Junior Year in GAY/NOT GAY]. The arrangement and timing of these seemingly random events set surreal, and everything I pieced together seemed to point back to Pomona College.

Especially when you consider that some time later I discovered a different picture of me being used inside yet another music CD package. This one was the keyhole through which a curse was cast. This curse took years to unlock, and even longer to remove. It's still lingering, btw. At the time, I felt compelled to listen to the lyrics of lots of songs, particularly those by Green Day.

Saw a lawyer for the first pic. Got nowhere. Except to make me feel even more unsafe and disrespected than I already did. The lawyer knew I didn't have a case, so he chose to tell me so by being insulting. Since my picture was surrounded by lots of pictures of beautiful women, I should take it as a compliment, right? His joke fell on pained, deaf ears.

Harvey told me I was only freaking myself out with complicated imaginings because I was so smart and therefore really good at imagining things. Impossible things, he of course insisted. When he did one time feel the need to answer my "what if" question - as in, "What if my imaginings really are real?" - he brilliantly said that the only advice he would have to give would be to tell me to laugh it off and say, "So what if I'm being made fun of?" It was good advice. It was also advice he was unwilling to help me actualize, because - again - he adamantly denied any and all possibility that I was actually being made fun in back channel

mass media like TAFKAP and Green Day. He quite simply refused to go down any further down that road with me. Instead, I had to figure it out on my own or simply not talk to him about it because he was tired of hearing about something that wasn't his responsibility and something he couldn't do anything about even if it was.

"Butt-Dave" from Teddy's brother.

## GIRLFRIEND #1

My first girlfriend was a church hand me down. What this means is I got hooked up with a married woman with a kid. She was separated from her husband, however, and determined to divorce. This would take the Christian sting out of it for some people, but not all. Also, even though she was from my Christian circle of friends, Christianity for her was merely a matter of life expediency. Born and raised and all that. She was not terribly attractive, and she knew it. She wanted a better life, and maybe I might provide a worthwhile interlude in that regard. Or not. Considering she had more to offer me than I had to offer her. She was employed. She even had her own apartment. This meant I got to spend a year living there instead of with my parents. The relationship didn't last too long, however, as I told her early on I didn't want to marry her. She was okay with that, probably because she didn't want to marry me, either. As an adult, I was too dysfunctional to offer much of anything by way of being a father to her child or even just a respectable husband. Our first time having sex lasted longer than I thought it would but was still lackluster, which was an honest precursor to our life under the sheets together throughout. My tendency back then was to ejaculate prematurely. Not super quickly, but soon enough to render our sex not even worthy of the word, IMO. I didn't really know it at the time, as I still didn't watch porn and was more interested in having sex than in the sex itself. For me, it meant I

had a girlfriend, so I was finally at least that much closer to being a person of adult proportions.

As I would later learn, sex wasn't much for her, either. From what I now know, I suspect she never orgasmed with a partner until after me. Not with her husband, or with me. Even for her, being in a sexual relationship was more about social acceptance than the relationship itself. We played the game of boyfriend/girlfriend well enough, however. Even today, I still have scans of some of the cards and love-notes she left me. I did things for her in return, like arranging for a night at the Hotel del Coronado. Even though she did eventually divorce her husband, I was husband material myself. The purpose of our relationship was for both of us to be with someone, so our friends wouldn't worry too much about us being single. Exciting stuff. When she did find another lover, one a hell of a lot more spicy than me, she ended our relationship. I don't know all the details, but he was unique in that he was a married man with control issues. He may have even brought a little S&M to the table. Whatever he brought, it was way more exciting to my girlfriend than what I had to offer.

For the year or two I was with this woman, I tried the employment thing but couldn't hold a job for long. I was too terrified of being made fun of, because when I was, I had no one to confide in that would believe me and validate my fears. So, when I overheard my co-workers saying suspicious things, I short-circuited and quit whatever job I had at the time. Here's an example of some of the things I overheard.

"He suspects but he doesn't know," they might say, about the rumors going around. At one job, they referred to me as Pee Wee. It was a convenient way for people to refer to my masturbation shaming from 1993 at Cal State San Jose. If you don't know, Pee Wee was a fictional character played by Paul Reubens, an actor who got pilloried by the media after he was caught masturbating in a pornographic movie theater in 1991.

Center for Media Literacy - no porn

For now, I'd like to underline how demoralizing my life was from 1993 to 1998. I had one short-term girlfriend. I took stabs at employment, but never held a job for very long. I also did some extra schooling, thinking I might like to teach English in a foreign country (particularly Japan). I studied Japanese but really had no knack for it. I earned a certificate in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) in 1997. When it came time to get serious about teaching, however, my social anxiety reared its ugly head and prevented me from taking action. Then, in 1998, I got a second girlfriend. [check date]

[Loss of Teddy as a friend]

[Giving up on Harvey (and Laurie)]  
Randy and Stacey, Mike, and Brad (and Liz)

## GIRLFRIEND #2

[Probably still living at my parents' when I dated Palmer] I had a girlfriend at the end of 1998. A woman with dark hair, she was in my non-Christian circle of friends. We hooked up on Halloween, when a number of us went to a showing of the Rocky Horror Picture Show. I hated that movie, and at one point felt bored enough to simply turn and lip lock my soon-to-be girlfriend. She dug my sexual aggressiveness, and it was funny, too. On account of me being made up like a skeleton and smearing black makeup all over her face. We spent the rest of the night at her place. She wasn't impressed, though, sexually, my only sexual partner up until then having been the non-event that was Girlfriend #1. So, my stunning inclination toward premature ejaculation (at the time) leather wondering how I'd had the balls to kiss her in the first place, I'm sure. Our relationship didn't last long. She broke up with me after I came back home from an extended family vacation in Puerto Vallarta. Gave me a nice black leather jacket as a parting gift. What she had to say about me to our mutual

circle of friends was probably far from flattering. But at least I knew it was possible to get laid.

## WORK HISTORY

UPS, USPS, Center for Media Literacy, Fleet Mortgage, Vegas trip, Laughlin win

## GIRLFRIEND #3

[Toyin asked if Isabelle was my "trophy wife"]

I turned that energy around and decided to get serious about a career. I landed an almost-decent job. It was a simple data entry gig, but it paid the bills. For the first time in my life I could pay my own room and board. Couldn't get a new car or pay for much of a life, but at least I could pretend to be self-sufficient.

Signed up for an introductory accounting class at a local community college. It started in January, 1999. I aced my tests, and one night, when I had a question to ask the teacher, I stood in line with a number of other students.

Right in front of me was a foreign exchange student from Brazil. She was a looker. She spoke at random to some other person about how bored she was. Then, she briefly glanced my way. So, I invited her to a gothic industrial club I'd only heard about through my previous girlfriend. "Would you like to go to Perversion?" I asked. Seriously. Those were the first words I said to her.

"Sure," she said.

This one was another whirlwind. For me, anyway. On account of my receiving a threatening phone call from some other boyfriend of hers a couple of nights after the one and only night we had sex.

Because she was so good at attracting miscreants, she ended up leaving the country before finishing the class.

Bereft, I stayed in touch with her and obsessed. Like any good loser would.

On top of this, I was laid off by my employer.

Now I had an apartment I couldn't pay for, and a serious lack of drive.

The solution that fell in my lap was a suggestion from that previous Rocky Horror Picture Show girlfriend of mine, She thought it'd be a good idea if I moved in with a bi guy we both knew.

He was getting an apartment near Cal State Long Beach and needed a roommate. I'm sure he figured I'd be stable enough, provided I could find a job. Especially since my parents were in agreement (being kept ignorant of his sexual ambiguity) and were determined to keep me afloat until I landed that job (whatever it might happen to be).

My Rocky Horror ex shared with me a cleansing spell for the new apartment. My bi friend and I performed the casting, and that night was a weird one. The glass candle holder shattered when the candle burned down waking me up with a loud CRACK, I had bad dreams that night, as well. I didn't analyze any of it. I simply made the assumption that things were getting freaky because we'd dabbled in the occult.

Within a day or two, I became suicidal. One night, after explaining very clearly and directly that I had absolutely no interest in his trying to stop me, I told my roommate I wanted to take my life. We talked about getting a gun, or taking pills, or maybe finding some poison or something, none of which were easy to accomplish or in any way guaranteed. So, I told him my idea. I would get in my car (the same station wagon that had shamed me throughout my four years of undergraduate datelessness) and drive up the freeway to a high overpass, park, and jump.

After swearing him to secrecy, that's what I did... and survived.

## MISDIAGNOSED

I came to three months later. I was in a hospital, with my mother by my side. It was a room with two beds, so I had an immediate neighbor. He was quiet most of the time, though, so it was like I had the room to myself. The story was cops had shown up at the side of the overpass and tried to talk me down. I jumped anyway. Then they went to the freeway below and discovered I was still alive, which meant I'd earned a ride to the hospital.

While I was there, they fused two of my cervixes together. They also cut my abdomen open twice. The first time was to take out my spleen. The second time was to take out my liver, which checked out okay, so they left it in. I think a couple of my teeth were broken, as well. But, to verify that, I'd have to look up records I don't have, so I'm just going to assume I remember correctly. They also had to drain my lungs, which is why I have two picture wounds on either side of my chest.

Scars. Beautiful scars. Or not. And then there were the mental scars.

Apparently, during the three months I don't remember after my jump, I talked a lot of gibberish. For all I know, it was aliens in control of my vocal chords. Whatever the reason, my lack of mental cohesion earned me the diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia.

Thanks.

On the bright side (I guess), they did rush me through the process of getting on Federal and State disability. In less than three months, I was Medi-Medi (Medicare and Medi-Cal, which is California's version of Medicaid). By the time I came to, I was a person suffering from a mental illness in need of Risperdal (again), but this time to keep the voices at bay. Never mind I'd never "heard voices" back then.

I did awaken in the hospital feeling better than I had in a long time. The doctors no doubt attributed my recovery to the medications prescribed me. I have my doubts on that account. When I came to, my mother was the first to notice. A lot of my

fear was gone. Not that I was no longer a victim. After all, what better way for my abusers to handle me than to undermine everything about me through a mental health misdiagnosis as dramatic as paranoid schizophrenia. Now, no one had to take me seriously.

## USING THE SYSTEM

Medical bills suck. They are way more class based than most believers in the American Lie are willing to admit. If something happens to your health, you need the means to afford the exorbitant fees demanded of you. If you happen to have the insurance and the spare cash, great. If not, you end up enslaved to the dollar more than you were before.

When I jumped off that freeway overpass, I wasn't planning on surviving. Especially since surviving meant I would undergo a number of surgeries and rack up the cost of not only those surgeries but of medications and an almost four month hospital stay. With a shoddy work history and a current work status of unemployed, I could not afford the bills. Neither could my parents. That's probably why the social worker who looked over my case decided it was in my best interest to be declared permanently disabled with paranoid schizophrenia. Were there other forces at work? It's distinctly paranoid (ha-ha), but I cannot shake the notion that my misdiagnosis and subsequent status as permanently disabled was all part of the plan. Whose plan? My abusers plan. And who are they? Well, that Warner Bros. woman, for starters.

Mental illness is not a prerequisite for being suicidal. Christianity says suicide is a sin. Psychiatrists see it as a sign of mental illness. I say it is a decision, a decision that is not always wrong. Sometimes it is a rational choice that is made to avoid a life of suffering. But that's just me, the paranoid schizophrenic whose life would be wonderful if I wasn't insane and thinking bad people are out to get me. After all, conspiracies don't happen, and when

they do, they only happen to famous, important people. Right? Not clueless newbies like me. So, let's talk about the nature of my misdiagnosis. What are the facts both for and against the idea that I was neither clinically paranoid nor schizophrenic?

## "YOU'RE AN EXPERIMENT"

Not long after I was let out of the hospital, I visited Steven, the guy I'd performed with in my high school play, and the one I didn't trust (like so many others). At the time, Steven was renting an apartment with a gay friend of his named Ray. My visit lasted all of one evening, and it proved to be more than a little disorienting. At the time and as per how I was raised, I said "sorry" a lot. It was my go-to word in social situations when I thought I'd made a mistake or made someone uncomfortable. I mention this, because one of the first things Steven told me about Ray, who was not home at the time, was that he was extremely sensitive to the word "sorry." "Don't say sorry to Ray, okay?" was Steven's unsolicited admonition.

The rest of what Steven had to say was similarly unsolicited yet equally prescribed. While I never directly asked Steven about his sex life, he volunteered said information anyway. According to Steven, he was getting laid and having fun with porn, too. He even showed me the beginning of a porn film starring a clown, and Steven knew I hated clowns. Then, when it came to applying Steven's lessons to my own life (for Steven would years later become an acting coach based out of Arizona), he suggested I get used to casually chatting people up, like my neighbors or anyone, because, according to Steven, sex is simply there for the taking.

After confiding in Steven my frustrations (sexual and otherwise), he told me, "You're an experiment." That's what he said. I didn't know how to respond to that. What does one say when they are told something so existentially meaningful as to be conversationally meaningless. I mean, really, where would our

conversation have gone from there? I could have accused him of knowing things. I could have demanded he tell me the truth. He could just as easily tell me he didn't mean it like that and that I was being crazy. And here I was thinking I was simply visiting a friend, rather than showing up for a psychological checkup courtesy of my controllers.

The night ended shortly after Ray came home from wherever it was he'd been. Even though I'd been instructed not to say "I'm sorry" (or perhaps because of this), I let the phrase slip. "I'm sorry," I said, either habitually or according to my programming (if there is such a difference). Royce retired to his room. Steven made no mention of my maybe mistake, and I drove home to my parents', never to see Steven again.

A couple of facts that might be of interest. One, Steven's father was loosely connected to the US military. Two, our acting instructor in high school was similarly connected. This one and this two add up in my mind to something having to do with "the military-industrial complex" and a little thing called MKUltra. I had no reason to suspect such things at the time, but in less than twenty years I'd find it difficult to convince myself I was not a tool of something not unlike (if not identical to) the Deep State. Whatever the fuck that is.

## BACK TO SCHOOL

Raised with the belief that academics were my gateway to career success, I of course decided that going back to school was my ticket to turning my life around. Having aced my trial accounting class at Chaffey Junior College shortly before my suicide attempt, I applied for the Masters/Ph.D. Accounting program at none other than USC (University of Southern California). It never crossed my mind, even though it should have, that USC was an expensive school that catered to monied interests and was therefore out of my reach. I got in, though, probably because I was a graduate of Pomona College. My BA was no doubt more

of an albatross around my neck than I realized, though, considering how short-lived my attendance at that prestigious university turned out to be.

Hopeful despite the odds, my parents rented an L.A. apartment for me in a huge apartment building somewhere north of USC. Still hung up on the Brazilian woman I'd met the first time I was enrolled in an accounting class, I emailed her just as soon as I'd moved. She was looking to return to the states and give school there another try, so I offered to help her get set up. My help was minimal, but still she took what I had to offer and decided to attend a school in the L.A. area. I don't remember anymore where I picked her up, but she made herself available to me for one night, and one night only. The energy of our reunion was quite odd. She was clearly no longer interested in me romantically, and yet she still let me take her to my apartment, where she stayed the night in my bed with me on the couch. Our conversation before bedtime was minimal. It was like she was there on assignment, or something - which may have been the case. I really don't know. All I do know was that, when we got in the elevator to go down to my car for me to drop her off and never hear from her again, she felt it appropriate to inform me that she had recently been with a man who had taken her anally. I was taken aback. I hadn't asked her about her sex life, and anal to me at the time was something I simply knew next to nothing about. And yet here was this imaginary love of my life telling me she'd taken it up the ass, much like my former Japanese instructor had informed me toward the close of that relationship. What was the deal here? Was it typically for dissatisfied would-be lovers to share with the men they don't want to be with that they're looking for something more, like anal? If that's all it was, then I was simply a loser who needed to learn how to be more sexually diversified and present. Still, what if it was something more? What if this information, from both women, was intended to foreshadow the role that anal - spoiler alert - would play in my life?

Of course, for this to have been intentionally said by either of these two women would require either that a) the web of my Pomona College tormentors was wide and tightening, or b) something or someone not unlike God/The Devil was at the wheel and driving the vehicle of my life in ways well beyond my ability to control. Of course, a) and b) here are not mutually exclusive. Whatever the truth behind the scene of things, what I was left with were feelings of sexual frustration and confusion. And my time in class didn't help.

So, how did I do academically? Poorly. The class I was enrolled in was a special undergraduate accounting refresher course held over the summer, to get everyone up to speed for the real work to begin in the Fall. The instructor stipulated that, even though one of our subjects was going to be finance, we were not to use a financial calculator. He wanted us only to use a standard calculator so we would become more intimately acquainted with how the numbers all related to one another when pushed through financial equations. Well, I took what he said as gospel, which meant I found myself incapable of getting through the homework. That's when, one day, I approached the instructor and asked him if he would ask the class, if anyone was interested, to raise their hands to form a study group. It was a big class in a big auditorium. I figured there had to be other students who could use a little help. I was wrong, of course. The instructor posed the question and I raised my hand. No other hands were raised. I lowered my hand and withdrew from the program the next day.

## POST-SUICIDAL INSISTANCY

Let's back up a bit. I want to remind my readers right now that in the Fall of 1999, I intentionally fell what I'd hoped was to my death. But I survived, and that left me temporarily cocooned in the safety net of a hospital recovery room for 3+ months. When I arrived at the hospital, I was out of my mind. I don't remember any of it, and was told by my mother that when I spoke, I spoke

strangely. She never elaborated beyond that, so I can give you no specifics as to how I presented myself at that time. I can only assume that I spoke oddly enough to warrant my diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia. This might not have been a misdiagnosis if the trauma of my fall did indeed trigger in me a schizophrenic episode. But was my supposedly schizophrenic behavior in the hospital a life sentence, or a temporary situation brought on by the physical trauma of my fall plus the emotional trauma that led up to it? I always disagreed with my diagnosis from the second I heard it in that hospital in Los Angeles. But maybe it did add up, and I needed to accept it.

After my suicide attempt, I did accept it. After all, I had been raised to trust my doctors, and my doctors were telling me that I suffered from paranoid schizophrenia. The paranoid part was the most difficult to swallow, however, as that all hinged on the notion that the Prince (TAFKAP) and Green Day CD collages did not have pictures of me inside of them, that I had not been targeted by people connected to Pomona College, and that my friends and family were all correct to ignore any and all complaints I might share regarding the various ways in which I was being harassed.

Actually, the strongest argument for the validity of my diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia is that it was intentionally incubated in me over more than a decade of trauma, "Key Moments" being the following: 1. Hentai comic prank at Cal-Tech when I was in high school. 2. Social isolation at Pomona College (and other things). 3. The administration of an unknown drug into my system at an X party after graduating college. 4. The Prince (TAFKAP) and Green Day CD art. 5. Distant social shaming. 6. Job loss, love loss, and my suicide attempt in 1999. - and then, well, 7. Being given a diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia and MEDICATED FOR IT. That last one is the biggest trauma. Also, I sincerely doubt that my supposed psychosis during those three months I cannot recall at the hospital was anywhere near the level of real psychosis I would experience in 2005. And why would I experience psychosis in 2005? Because I would go off

my antipsychotic medication, and it is a medical fact that titrating off of antipsychotics often leads to psychosis. So, chicken or the egg? Was I schizophrenic before or after I was medicated? If before, then my diagnosis in 1999 was accurate. If after, then it was a misdiagnosis. Also, whether a misdiagnosis or not, from an existential standpoint, how was it right to label me with paranoid schizophrenia if that label was the result of "Key Moments" 1. through 6., with 7. as the clinical cherry on top of it all? How was it right? The answer is case dependent. The answer is that it wasn't right, but that it would become right in 2005. But that's a few pages later in this book, so we'll hold off on that. For now, let's get back again to my time at the hospital. Why? To look at the ways my "recovery" was programmed.

The baseline of my programming at UCLA Medical Center was chemical. They put me on drugs. Drugs to help me heal physically, and drugs to (maybe) help me heal mentally. I don't know the exact cocktail I was on, except that it did include Risperdal, an antipsychotic. That was the drug I would leave the hospital with a prescription for. That was the drug I needed to take on account of my misdiagnosis. When I came to in the hospital, I felt good. That's probably why I came to, actually - because I felt good. Because my body was healing and the psychotropics in my brain seemed to be helping, my conscious mind decided it was okay to return.

Besides the drugs, I received emotional support from my mother, who was living in the family motor home in the hospital parking lot so she could be by my side every day. I also got support from the tv. There were two shows I watched. Buffy the Vampire Slayer and The Powerpuff Girls. Those were the two shows I remembered, anyway. Buffy the Vampire Slayer was the show I used to watch with Harvey and Laurie before I walked away from our friendship, and The Powerpuff Girls was simply endearing. I did not sexualize either show. However, the younger character of Dawn in Buffy the Vampire Slayer did carry echoes of sexuality in my mind. It wouldn't be for a number of years that I would be made consciously aware of my relationship to pedophilia, but I

do think that watching these two shows during my recovery from my suicide attempt established some things in the back of my brain. I will not dig deeply into it in this book. However, Infinite Book 5: Sex will cover more on the topic.

So, after my surgeries and having been placed on a psychotropic medical regimen, I was forced to face the fact that my suicide attempt had failed. In my mind, my attempt ought to have been as successful as it was sincere. Why it was unsuccessful might be chalked up to dumb luck (I didn't pick a freeway overpass high enough to get the job done - which I doubt) and/or "God wasn't through with me yet." No longer a Christian, but still thinking like one, I went with the latter. God wasn't through with me yet, and if God wasn't through with me yet, then I would not even be allowed to suicide if I tried again. That's how I propped up my resolve. If I can't kill myself, then being suicidal was no longer an option. Being "post-suicidal" was, however, which meant I'd earned the right to be a little reckless in my choices. The depth and true nature of "post-suicidality" is something I would not experience until years later, but for now it rang true in my insistence that accounting was the career for me. If attending a Junior College accounting course had meant an A grade and sex with a foreign exchange student, then why not get back on that horse and see where it would take me. Hence my decision to enroll at USC, and hence my decision - after dropping out of USC - to apply for an MBA with an emphasis in accounting at California State University, San Bernardino.

CAL STATE

Tania d'Almeida

Steven in Australia and communicating with the energies (?) of Hollywood celebrities - to be looked at in IB7

WSHT

"Norris" and encourage me to use FB

T-shirts to give voice

CafePress - I Believe in Porn - earlier, Reluctantly Famous -  
Seattle: Social Chew-Toy - SLO (?) DEEP FAKE LIFE.

Web stats. Folder images and other oddities like book sales. This is mention 1.

WSHT - we are powerful people

Danny: "I love watching retards fuck."

Also, showing concern for how their words might affect me.

RAPED

At some point, while attending Cal State San Bernardino, I got invited to a party.

...

Afterward, Wes (name?) told me he had "helped me out." What he meant by that is open to interpretation. He might have meant to say, "I helped you out [of the closet]." Or, maybe, by having arranged for me to be roofied and subsequently anally... entertained?... he had provided my Pomona College frat enemies (or Hollywood enemies, take your pick) with enough video ammunition that I could then be safely allowed to continue to live. If this later interpretation is the correct one, then that would explain why they felt in a position to put me through two incredibly taxing sexual relationships with two different women who were more my handlers than anything else. IB3 describes how Jess handled me. Now, IB4, will describe how Isabella handled me. I clearly had a lot to learn about the deviousness in the hearts of - let's just say - certain individuals.

Santa Maria

I did a lot, in the name of recovery, only to find myself empty again.

CRAZY HOUSE

TO CHURCH

TO SCHOOL

TO HELL

Coffee shop, art, lots of darkness

AS THE DEVIL COMMANDS

Ray. "I will rape your daughter." Possession.

HOSPITAL REVOLUTION

Marylin

MADNESS AT THE MOTEL

ANGRY CRUTCHES

JAIL TIME, TAKE TWO

BLUE LIGHT SPECIAL

Next thing I knew, I was assigned to some place called ASA, which stood for "A Spiritual Abode."

## Recovery House

California likes to lump alcohol, drugs, and mental health together, in terms of treatment. This package is overseen by an administration, the Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Administration - or ADMHA for short. It's practical, and problematic.

## Motherly

"Serena"

## Back in the Arms of Isabella

Despite her initial unhappiness at my telephonic reappearance in her life, it was only a matter of time before she took pride in showing me off, like I was a prize or something. In some ways I was. In others, not so much.

## A HISTORY OF BETRAYAL

As we settled in to our new apartment, Isabella shared something more with me about our status as "split-aparts." She said that we were meant to be together, but that we always betrayed one another. Because of this, it was crucial that we get it right this time. I didn't know, though. Was this the truth, or was it a lie? Or was it, in its own peculiar way, both the truth and a lie at the same time? She told me a story about our most recent encounter; she told me the events of our most recently shared life. It went something like this.

In a town in Germany, I don't know which one, but it would have been near a forest to the west, Isabella was raised by her hateful mother in a house with a basement. She was a witch, and so was her mother. At the time, it was not socially acceptable to be named a witch, but her mother had power, so she managed her affairs and kept Isabella in line.

I was a man traveling through the area. The details of the story were blurry, so there was no way to be certain how it was Isabella and I met. But somehow, our paths crossed, and we fell in love. This love was the last straw for the mother. With wicked intent and in my absence, she locked Isabella in the basement and set fire to the home. Alerted to this calamity, I rushed to the burning residence, only to stare in horror through the small basement window next to the road as my love perished in the flames. I'm not sure why I was unable to save her, or why I might not have even attempted to do so. All I know is that in this previous life (which was one of the witches in Isabella's family line of seven),

Isabella lived an isolated life only to be burned to death by her mother in a jealous fit.

As Isabella and I continued to live in Lompoc, there came a time in her troubled recovery when she told me that the nightmare of the burning had changed. In this new rendition of her ever repeating demise, she did not die. Rather, I successfully kicked in the window and, using blankets, lifted her through it up onto the street. Knowing we were not safe, we fled into the woods and lived out our lives together as hand fasted lovers until the day we died of old age in each others arms.

The curse, she said, had been lifted. But that was them, in the past in Germany, not us, David and Isabella in Lompoc, California in 2014. If the curse was lifted and they had now enjoyed a more perfect past, what did that have to say about us, today? The notion was that we would be all right. The truth was something else. Betrayal was inevitable, regardless of our base intentions. I know I wanted to do right by Isabella, and I believe Bella wanted to do right by me, as well. But Isabella was not yet Bella; she had much still yet to heal.

## TROPHY SEX

Isabella moved to the sink in the apartment's slit of a kitchen area and wiggled her butt. It was a decidedly curt wiggle. It had for me zero sex appeal, probably on account of the words she spoke to accompany her wiggle. "All my holes are yours," she said. What she said felt unkindly transactional, as if she were nothing more than a collection of body parts claimed or unclaimed by those in her life. It was a shock as well due mostly to the simple fact we rarely if ever talked "dirty". Sure I'd condoned her work on a phone-sex line years before, but what she did on that line and what we did together never overlapped, with the one distant exception of sex with her alter Alice as some sort of concession re: our would-be marital fidelity (if we ever were to actually get hitched in the legal sense).

Later sexual ambivalence in bed. Lack of knowing both myself and Isabella, and our desires. Also a lack of thought. I am not a planner. Not "in the moment." I catch wind of over-stimulus and close my awareness to keep my world smaller for the sake of manageability.

Conversation with Isabella after "Zip"

I gave up on Isabella those times I gave up on her because 1. I was scared and 2. I treated her with the trust of a coward too afraid to imagine her struggles - I took her for granted in a way, and that allowed me to view her failings as more betrayal than they actually were, especially considering her troubles with DID.

## Upland and "Episode" 6: Holy War

Having a hard time remembering ever having witnessed anyone actually eat anything at all. Refusal to witness due to existential discomfort surrounding the nature of consumption? - Is physicality an illusion? Is everything comprised of mind? 4th density - variable physicality [The Cassiopaea Experiment] - cover topic of self-harm again and other forms of Sympathetic/Imitative Magic - realizing that Isabella's self-harm was more than an exercise in control - it was an exercise of control

"Norris" - Tool - Puscifer

Web stats. Folder images and other oddities like book sales. This is mention 2.

Reading my religious dedication papers (part of the paperwork my parents gave me from storage) it felt like I was being committed to a life in service to an evil god. I don't remember the specifics, but there was something incredibly dark about it all, like I had been born to suffer. \* Later concepts of Atlantis and me as it's observer/fuel source. \* And I was a late-comer to the family. My siblings were something like 10 and 12 years old when I was born, which leads to something of a guarantee of familial resentment.

Upland never actually arrested and told being taken somewhere to get some help then off to Rancho Cucamonga privatized jail

Peckerwood status - legitimate or not - like my Nappi status - plus Pomona College and Thomas Pynchon's Inherent Vice

AMERICORPS

"We value our privacy"

PEORIA

Peoria air duct worker's story

SLO

County Mental Health intake Hispanic fatty who made me feel threatened.

SLO Therapist seemed to run on the notion that my unproven metaphysical beliefs were sign enough re: my mental illness.

Warded drive to Pomona College

## WELCOME TO SEATTLE

47° latitude

"MTG" therapist and "blah, blah, blah"

Cold call coworker

Unwelcome at MH in Seattle

Seattle pic when first arrived and later when driving to get a food order

Writers Groups and Tarot Group

LORE - Greenday and shit on walls story from hacker

Woman running in undershirt near U Bridge

My story is one of slow-burn abuse that snowballs into wrong choices and self-harm.

Maintenance about person trapped in apartment he used to pass daily - fake (?) British accent - plus earlier maintenance suggesting I blow a fan up into the loft from below - also, no window screens when I move in, and a window device that goes missing for no reason I notice - plus marijuana above the stove - small things suggesting to me that someone is entering my apartment without my permission but with a key

Mindful Therapy Group BS

## FATHER GONE

My father's denial regarding his toenails and the importance of truth to me

The last time I spoke with my father, he was in a hospital losing his shit (literally and figuratively) and our conversation was strained for a number of reasons, primarily due to his rapidly deteriorating mental condition. I don't remember much of what we talked about, but as he was aware his days were numbered, he felt the need to give me some sort of unsolicited lifetime "report card", so to speak. I was never what he had wanted in a son, just as he was never what I had wanted in a father. In fact, I'm pretty certain that having sons was never his forte, nor a daughter either. He was too self-involved and in competition with his sons to ever give them a fair shake as an independent soul. So, when he said what he said to me in our last conversation, it was only a back-ward slap of a compliment. He said it as if it surprised him to say it - and I'm sure it did. "You're a genius," he said. That was all it took. Although he prefaced his statement with some obscure references to my brain power, his summation of my life was right there in those 3.5 words. When he said, "You're a genius," he meant that I was much more mentally savvy than anything for which he had previously been willing to give me credit. The distilled and somewhat muted astonishment in his voice said it all, which was that for all of my life up until that point, he considered me to be of a lesser mind. His assessment also underlined for me the competitive nature of our relationship. I was never his son. I was never his David. I was, instead, a mental thorn in his side - a doofus he could never seem to crack. So, when he declared me a genius, the cherry on top of his resentment was the simple fact that he had failed to removed said thorn. In other words, in his lifelong game to outdo me, he had found himself lacking. Which meant the compliment he gave

me was more a lamentation for his own sense of failure. I was a genius, but still not his son. Not by a long shot.

Neither was my brother. That didn't seem to matter though, my brother having disowned me (and by diffuse extension my parents as well), years ago. My father rarely talked about my brother in conversation with me, and neither seemed to respect the other overmuch, mostly on account of differences in their religious ideologies, more likely than not.

My father was the only son of an overbearing mother who raised him alongside nothing but sisters. This meant my father was inclined to interpret himself as the central male element in a world of feminine energy. My father definitely was what I would call "a narcissist in self-defense" - which was something he taught me well enough for my own development. "A narcissist in self-defense" is someone who overvalues themselves for the sake of their own sanity. Blah, blah, blah.

"Stupid" also = weak of will - KW

My family and religion

Also, the (quite real) dangers of possession. I have noticed myself licking my lips when seeing someone who appears sexually appealing. I have noticed a rise in interest when I catch a whiff of confrontation in the media I consume. Feral. These demons of mine (and I have only tangentially described two) are feral.

Drugged at restaurant when down south for my father's memorial

2022 - BOEING

How my unexpected new job threw me for a loop

## 2022 - DECOMPENSATORY

Seeking legal recourse and none given - email after September - and earlier further undermining my sense of personal justification

Also, my not being acknowledged for my victimization and how I foresee things going against me leads me to question the point of doing anything I am supposed to do, leading to decompensation (?)

Knocking on wall and particulate

"Blood Pressure" - 5/21/22 to 7/29/22

Talk while walking in Seattle - much later compelled - almost subliminally - to drive around campus

"Taylor Liu" - "You know I have a family with children."  
and hacking

FB: "Quite the personal betrayer, this guy. He's quoted in the original version of IB3, and belongs in IB4. Very much.

<https://www.facebook.com/jim.karitsiotis>

Jim was a marketing major, so he is very well trained in all sorts of lies. In particular, not long after my roofie experience in Long Beach (after which I woke up with a lubed asshole), Jim made an offhand comment to me in a CSUSB parking lot (it was night out) about "dildos in anuses." He pretended only to be joking, but then he fished for my recount of that experience in a way that would seem I was willingly volunteering said information, when all I was doing was telling him about it to explain my being uncomfortable with his inappropriate and a-contextual comment. Also, when I expressed further concern, he changed his physical stance in a threatening way. So, after insulting me, he indicated he would get violent if I questioned things too much. WTF.

We broke off our "friendship" in 2016 when he pretended to call me to calm me down, when really all he did was intentionally push me further into upset... which eventually led to my false arrest in Upland, CA. I also called him out for hacking Facebook. It's not as simple as that, but this guy spent a ton of time on Reddit and was very knowledgeable about computer stuff. The guy's a fricking genius. He's also one of my worst enemies. He even told me once ("joking" of course) that he was Judas to my Jesus."

Sick of living on the defensive in terms of computer and air quality and noise harassment  
The difficulty of maintaining the assumption that I am underground famous without any outside and blatant corroboration

Car bump

Lights in doctor's office with female nurse practitioner

King County Metro and iPhone

July 30, 2022 - MacBook password changed remotely (?) first time

July 10, 2022 - apartment rant

"Is he gonna jump?" question near small bridge after posting about feeling suicidal earlier on University Bridge

Fine tuning mind reading

Smoking ritual

Cursed by my father and his friends - rhyming curses

"J.K. Norris" - "Won't be able to let everything go."  
Throwing things away

Bar

Hotel

Bar - Don't remember what I said - evidence of my decreased interest in remembering anything at all - giving up again

Miranda Rights - under investigation for Felony Harassment

What I did was wrong. How it was handled at the bar was decent though not ideal. How it was handled by the cops, jail, and "no-one" afterward was abysmal.

Time travel night drives. Lost wallet then in my car. Also, a compulsion NOT to double-check or investigate things too much - so as not to "spoil the magic?"

Strip clubs and finances

"I love you."

Vape juice high

Story-based delusion, like I'm the author of not just my life, but the lives of others, too.

Palm reading before Spokane

"Do you understand me?"

"Linda Hinkle"

Failure to leave Spokane after first night at the first Super 8

DIALING 911

## 911 AND BACK TO SQUARE ZERO

Foot rub - "You'll get in trouble." - physical contact is an extremely expensive commodity in today's isolationist-supremacist society

Forgotten belongings

Poor directions

Talk by director "Hofer" - German Jewish name - and her energy reeked

False accusation

Therapy regarding the specifics of why I supposedly charged a nurse and a guard at the Colville ER would have been helpful. Sheesh.

Drive back to Seattle for some reason like another drive back in time (way back), although the only way it presented itself was a distortion in the way I recognized some of the city-scape as I drove through it - and it was a convoluted drive due to a freeway off-ramp/on-ramp closure that evening

Mouth clicking - connected to foot rub? or what?

DESC like a vision of the wasteland of my future - scared straight... hopefully

Computer hack - writing files (?) and emails - not deleted Adult Empire and Facebook

Sexual reprogramming after BHU - injaculation and less libido - although some of this may be better attributed to Invega Sustenna (like Risperdal before Abilify)

Big truck (car) almost running me over

a feel that my brother was cursing me

Still missing Isabella, sort of like I missed her the several times we were separated. Only, now, she is deceased and my life is in shambles.

Mom conversation about my father's (and other relatives') fascination with trickery

Mom conversation also about my brother and sister putting food on my head when I was a baby - ties in with Jesus - Prison Jesus and Jesus Shoes - underlying sense of innocence - that part of me most in line with Bella

Sound Mental Health no outpatient? Really, Colville?

Geographical alterations post-BHU

After BHU, apartment seemed raided

April 2, 2023

It was a Sunday when it became apparent that 307 was back to the knocking. Having previously determined that I wasn't going to simply ignore it if it happened again, I knocked on his door. He cautiously opened it, peering out. I went into a complaining explanation of my experience, asking him to stop knocking on my wall. After I had mentioned to him that the sound that bothered me most (other than the rumbling sounds of his ladder or something else heavy being moved) was the staccato knock of something that had to be plastic (and hollow) being hit against the wall. He volunteered the information that it was probably "his cleaning wipes." Confused, I asked what he meant by that and eventually understood that the cleaning wipes were held in a plastic container. He said he had been cleaning after his dog took a shit and had accidentally hit the wall. I knew this was straight up bullshit, but I also needed to determine who he was on two

fronts. I wanted both his name and his length of residency. I told him my name and he said he didn't feel comfortable telling me his. Then, when I asked how long he'd been living there, he said, "A long time." So, the conversation continued, but took a turn when I got confused.

"A long time," I may have said. Have you been here since 2021? He said yes. Apparently that was the year he moved in. The same year I moved in. But when I asked him that question, I wasn't thinking about 2021, I was thinking about 2022 and the summer when the knocking got ridiculous after Boeing. So when I asked about 2021, but meant 2022, I was focused on the summer, hoping (stupidly) that he was a new tenant and had become a new tenant after the knocking had stopped after that summer (and conveniently when I was truly already off the rails in terms of self-control and sanity). I also asked if management had ever spoken to him about the knocking. He said no, but supposedly (as his lie was evolving) that was before he moved in (in the late summer or early fall of 2021). But the knocking was 2022, so he was full of shit.

Still not registering everything just at that moment, I wrapped up our conversation apologetically. At one point he gave me a name. Was it his name? Who fucking knows. The name he gave was Shiloh. Then I returned to my apartment and within a matter of just a few minutes, there came one insistent "fuck you" knock on the wall from 307. Lying piece of shit mother fucker. And, as the days progressed, the knocking continued, probably in an effort to encourage me to move out, where no doubt I would find myself harassed in other ways. After all, the real estate underground (and other undergrounds) involved in my torture had been very blatantly harassing me ever since the passing of Isabella.

## THE MEANING OF IT ALL

There's a dark twist of a joke hiding in the subtitle of this book. "Recovered Dreams" can be read at least two ways, as noted earlier. The first way would be to say that it's about past dreams found anew. That's the first half of the story. The second half is what happens to those new-found dreams, once they're found. They get "re"-covered, as in covered again. They lose their luster and turn out not to be the dreams I thought I was looking for, if I knew what those dreams were in the first place.

Dreams. Non-manifest desire. The difference between what is and what is wanted. I wanted to be married. That was a big one. Marriage was a dream instilled in me at a young age. It's also a dream so essential to the core of me that how it plays out against the canvas of my life explains just about everything about me. I think. Because it concerns the experience of my self in relation to the world around me and all its inhabitants. It is being. It is the story of (my) life.

Story is another big word. What is story? It is a suppositional telling. Meaning it supposes things. Fact facts are factual. Story facts are suppositional. They are placeholders of any given story, which is an imaginary construct assembled in the mind of the reader. Can you imagine a quiet child banging two blocks of wood together? Can you feel the coarseness of the wood? Can you smell the fresh dirt on the child's delicate hands? Can you hear the soft-sharp "clack, clacking" of the blocks as they bang together? Can you see the other children nearby turn and smile at the sound? If you answered "yes" to those questions, then you participated in the suppositional experience of my words. If not, then my words failed to live up to my dream of them. Either way, your experience of my words was separate in time and space from my experience of composing them. Likewise was your experience separate from any actual manifestation of the events my words attempted to portray.

So, why would I write this book? Is it any more meaningful than the sound of two blocks of wood banged together by the hands of a child?

Hopefully. It's my dream, anyway. To tell my story in a way that is both informative and engaging.

My story. The first story I remember hearing about me in my preschool days had to do with marriage. A church friend of my parents had a daughter I "fell in love with", which meant I wanted to marry her at the local miniature golf course and fly away to our honeymoon in a helicopter from the roof of said family entertainment establishment. How much of that story was of my own invention, and how much of it was fed to me through familial cajolery is difficult to say, but I definitely had it in my mind at a young age that the pinnacle of human relationships was that between a man and his wife. Why am I preceding the story of my experience with my four-year-old dream story of projected marital bliss? Because in its succinct absurdity, it summarizes my life's trajectory as that of a boy who never becomes a man and never marries anyone, least of all the woman of his dreams. The dreams are there, of course; and throughout my life they disappear and reappear, only to disappear again and cycle through in ways that at best are more a warning to others than a source of inspiration.

So if my dreams aren't inspirational, then why share them? Because the failures of my dreams do inspire. They show what is worth while. Those nuggets of experience that last, even when the dream of them gets covered over by disappointment. Those nuggets of relationship that still grab through time and memory. It's more than inspiration for what not to do. It is inspiration for what proves worthwhile despite everything else. And when I say everything else, I mean everything. Because the everything that is ephemeral in its failing is always girded by a different everything, an unassailable everything that gives meaning to meaning itself. I'll try to dig these nuggets out of the morass of my life story. I'll try to polish them and shine a light on them. I'll try to show what

they mean to me in a way that makes clear the everything that they contain.

That's why I am writing this book. It is to share with you the dream I have of exquisite nuggets of the story of my experience in such a way as to encourage you to experience your own life story with an eye for those details that last, even when your dreams no longer do.

"Am I mentally ill?" Is a question that reverberates everywhere. Am I gay? Am I a pedophile? Am I a hypocrite? Etc. Etc.

Living in my head vs living in my body

Pornography signed out of accounts only to have them still available later - the manufacturing of desire?

"It could be worse," is a statement of nightmares. The statement of salvation is, "It could be Nothing." [?]

I am all of my voices until I am only some of them (none of them?) - division breeds reconsideration in the minds of god

Selena Gomez: My Mind and Me "courage" "product"

Lives as exchangeable product

How it is that our experience is an assemblage of micro-intentions

My basic "nice-guy" (malleable and caring) nature and raw sense of justice (?) makes me an ideal candidate for black ops experimentation in terms of mind control and metaphysical experimentation

Bring in the notion that we are all "test subjects" under alien rule - or I am - same difference

I never, never, NEVER meant to lose or dishonor Isabella (or Bella, in particular). And yet I did. Not because I chose to, but because I was forced to choose to. And if this book doesn't make that abundantly clear, then I never know anything about anything... ever.

There has to be a contingent of persons fascinated by my failings - especially considering San Luis Obispo and everything post-2016, really

There is that which is, and there is not that which is not. This kicks forward the notion that what is "right" is that which is, and what is "wrong" is that which is not. Such a notion kicks the legs out from under morality in the sense of "should" and "should not". How those legs are returned is to suggest that morality in the sense of "should" and "should not" would be proscriptive suggestions on how best to achieve desired outcomes of one sort or another.

Pedo-schizophrenia

Ways I have been 86'd mostly through porn, which were the original attacks in high school and college, even though I took forever to truly engage with porn, and even then my stigmatization was a key component to my involvement

Part of the reason I act out is because I live in such a social vacuum - fueled by stigma

How I am a victim and yet it is difficult to excuse my addictive behaviors or dangerous to rationalize antisocial programming

Society as the perpetrator: Invasion of the Body Snatchers

We are all one. That must include everyone, even though we refuse to lay claim to such, because none of us wish to become failures - therefore the failed among us do not count

My extremes in terms of over-anticipation vs. non-anticipation

In IB5 as well: Porn as an exercise in control - and how that is its own trajectory - so here in IB4 introduce the word trajectory

Web stats. Folder images and other oddities like book sales. This is mention 3.

Outro, and lead-in to IB5 - What James said. "Some of the most dangerous people in the world are in the porn industry."