

Title

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a novel

written as Gaud Rockefeller
by Eddie Corona

part of the Brick Jayne universe

Title (novel) ... written in 2004 as Gaud Rockefeller by Eddie Corona

Title. prologue.

"A good beginning makes a good ending." —old English proverb

Eddie Corona drove up to Pitzer College. He was in a green Ford Ranger, and everything was going his way, as far as he knew. He left Chaffey College—a place that wasn't far from *Pitzer*—and he wondered what life would be like in the future.

Eddy Richards was a guy that had Eddie in one of his philosophy classes. It was a *blast*. Eddie was always going off at the mouth about who should suck who's dick, and who was wrong in society.

John Felshaw was in that class, but Eddy Richards wouldn't remember him. John was always talking about going to Lytle Creek and Sapphire, and having a good time. Will Blake was one of their buddies, and when Jeff Chapman wasn't in Indiana, and hoser by the name of Rueben Marx would travel with them (he had long, black hair, and looked rather queer at times).

Eddie started a rip that wouldn't end. He didn't *know* it. He was always talking about free speech, and down with the Man, and down with Whitey (he was white, but he didn't care because he believed the rich, white people of the world didn't care about *his* white-trash-ass).

Eddie didn't play the lottery out of principal. He was a communist, to the

bone, and he believed that the mentality of society should be one that it didn't celebrate one winner at the expense of everyone else. Instead, people should progressively try to make their lives better incrementally, and he believed in what Bill Clinton said of the American Dream. He said the American dream was that each generation should have a little better than his parents' generation had. The *Republican* philosophy, however, was one that *one* could make it—*one* guy could grow up to be president, an astronaut, an actor, or anything he really wanted to be—if he really *worked* hard enough.

Eddie got on people's nerves at Chaffey, but it was good enough to get him in the quasi-liberal school called Pitzer College. Eddy Richards, however, *rebelled* against Eddie's philosophy. He believed that people *should* play the lottery. It gave them hope. It bought them a dream.

Eddy bought a dream, and he won. He lost as well. Guns 'n' Roses said that just because you're winning don't mean you're the lucky one. Eddy would find that from experience. He won the lottery... and he won a lot more.

Part I: Forty Years

"Time. It needs time. To win back your love, again." —*The Scorpions*

Chapter 1

"Imagination is more important than knowledge." —Albert Einstein, *On Science*

"I have the *title*, man!" Eddy said to Tony.

"No you *don't*. We're fuckin' *nerds*, okay? We're not *supposed* to have titles of *cars*!"

Eddy Richards got up, and he didn't care what anyone said. He said, "I got the *pink* slip, daddy! And there's nothing anyone can do *about* it!" He held up the pink slip to the Sun, and passed it to Tony afterwards.

Tony Simpson took it from him and he held it up to the Sun as well. It looked as if he was scanning for the little metal things that are in dollar bills—the ones that the government puts there to make sure that no one leaves the country with large amounts of money in suitcases because they'd get caught going through the metal detector. "Let me see that," he said afterward. He was no longer scanning it for particles inside of the paper, but rather reading it near his face (he didn't bring his glasses, and he couldn't see nearby without them). "Either way, I *don't* think you have it, and I won't believe you until you drive *up* in it."

"I got the pink slip, *daddy*! That's all I have to say." It was a Lamborghini that he just bought. He had won the lottery, he was out of town for a couple of months, and Tony was in denial that any of his friends were instantly rich now. "I *know* that I've gotta watch my *back*, now—"

"I know," Tony said but Eddy kept on talking.

"—and those fuckin' people that can't let a good person have a good *car* are going to be *after* me."

Tony shook his head. He was a nerd, but he wasn't a nerd of the classical kind. When he was in high school, he had listened to Oingo Boingo. They were long gone, but his attitude of being an outsider was still there. He reckoned that Oingo Boingo got rich, forgot about their following, and lived in mansions around California somewhere.

Tony said, "You don't have to say that!" Amy Johnson walked up. Tony said to her, "Is *this* the way it *goes*!?"

"No. I've been around him enough to know that he's not *joking*." She started to say something else, and a crowd of people gathered around in a park where they were at. They sensed the jubilation in Eddy, and Amy thumbed her nose upwards, as if to say that Eddy was now a stuck up prick.

"What do you *want*?" Eddy asked Amy.

"I want you to *tell*..." she started to say, but Amber—a friend of hers—came up, and she was angry. "*Amber*?" she asked in amazement.

Eddy said, "You are *ALL* I have, Amy," and he put his arms around her.

"Oh," Tony said disappointedly. "I see how it *is*." He insinuated that it was about the women, because he made a gesture with his hands that looked like boobs coming from his chest.

"It's *not* that," Eddy said in jubilation again. He couldn't quit his feeling. He said, "And at the same time, it *is* that."

Amber kissed Eddy on the cheek, but Eddy could tell that she wasn't with him for his money. She didn't even *know* that he had won the lottery. If she knew, she wasn't showing it. The kiss said, *I'm yours, okay?*

Amy was disappointed by what was going on. She saw that she lost someone. She said something again, but once again, Eddy couldn't hear what she said.

He was disappointed by the jealousy that seemed to mount after the revelation that the pink slip was real. More than that, he was happy, because he realized that they weren't in it for the money. He was surprised, even more than he was happy, and the emotions he was going through were constant, and built. He said, "I do *not* need to change, but I've wanted one of these things for a long *time!*"

Someone drove up in a Lamborghini, and people wondered if it was Eddy's. The Lamborghini was red, and Eddy enlightened them that it *wasn't* his. He knew of the guy from the dealership he had been at, but he wasn't a friend. He was just someone that was there.

"Are you going to *speak?*" Amy asked, and Eddy couldn't figure out if she was talking to Amber or the new guy, whose name the rest of the group didn't know.

"Let me *introduce* myself!" the man said. He was angry. Eddy was nervous, though.

"I don't *know* this guy, like I said before," Eddy informed them, and tried to convince them that he was an imposter. He added to the man whom had just come up, "Who the fuck *are* you? And what the fuck do you want with my *life?*" He was a guy from the dealership, and Eddy sensed something strange—something *other-worldly*—about him when they first met. Eddy wanted to know the guy because he figured that he was someone important. As fate had it, it seemed to Eddy that the guy just wanted to move in on the mojo that he no doubt was going to be *part* of.

Tony sensed that the guy was there for reasons that he *shouldn't* be there. When you sell a car, you move *off*. You don't throw it in other people's faces that you *also* have the car that was just dealt. Tony was a bit nervous, though, and he must have been feeding off of Eddy's fear because he shook his head like he didn't know what to do.

"I don't *like* this guy!" Eddy said aloud.

"I *know*, now," the guy said in disappointment.

"What do I get with the *car?* A *dad?*" Eddy wanted to know.

The guy was in surprise. He thought they had something special at the

dealership, and he thought (obviously) that it went beyond a dealer/ buyer relationship. "You don't *know* this," the guy started to say, "but..." He trailed off. He started looking around at the people in the park.

"Who *is* this guy??" Amber wanted to know. She wasn't talking about the new guy in the *car*, though. She wasn't talking about Eddy, whom she had known for years, and she was talking *to* the guy in the car, which made Eddy a little mad.

"Listen, Amber. I don't *need* you in my life." Amber started to say something to him, and she put up her hand as if to tell him to stop talking to her. "I need *freedom*, and that's why I *got* the fuckin' car when I did—before they'd typecast me as a nerd with *money*."

"So you think money can buy your way *out* of it?"

Eddy readjusted his attitude a bit, and he said calmly, "No. I want to buy a *fortress*. And I want the press to leave me alone. Ever since I won the lottery, everyone's *asking* for things... and if I let them think that I'm a loser... *still*, then I'm going to be a loser forever." He looked at her, and he knew that she was listening, at least *mildly*. He said, "I can't *handle* that!"

"Okay. I *know*," she said in a demur tone. "I'm important in your life," she said with a bit of reservation.

"You bet your *ass*!" Eddy said about her being important.

"I don't *know*..." Amy started to say with near jealousy and confusion. "I *see*..." she started to say, and it seemed that she was in a series of incomplete sentences.

"I don't *need* this *shit*!" Tomas said to Amy. He came up from near the swings, where he was watching their kids. They were young, but they started early in their teens to have children. He started to calm when he saw that Eddy wasn't hitting on his wife.

"I don't *need*..." she started to say again. Amy couldn't finish her sentences, and this time, she just fainted. Eddy figured it was because she had never been in the presence of a millionaire before, and it just hit her.

Chapter 2

"Welcome to your life. There's no turning back. Even while you sleep, we will

find you acting on your best behavior, turn your back on mother nature." —

Tears For Fears, *Everybody Wants to Rule*

the World

Eddy woke up at precisely eight in the morning on the day after he received his black Lamborghini (it was a *Diablo*). He was having good dreams, and he couldn't remember them. He was woken abruptly, but he didn't set his alarm clock. He made a point *not* to put anything disturbing in his apartment (he was stilling living small, and in time, he'd have a mansion, if everything was going his way). He didn't set any timing device, like the TV to wake him up. He closed the blinds, and he even put foil around the edges where the Sun sometimes crept in and woke him.

It was *popping* that woke Eddy. He was irritated. He *knew* he was having a good dream, and he was even tempted to say that Hilary Duff was in it, though she was surprisingly skanky to him. He couldn't remember the details, but he knew there was something about his penis being all over her face.

The popping continued, and what was *left* of the dream quickly phased into a residue as he went through the era, though so brief, from between waking and being *full* awake. "Fuckin' *popping*!" he said. He looked down at the heater that he kept on the floor. It wasn't *on* the night before, and he thought that somehow, he was having an electrical surge, of some kind, that was in his house that he couldn't identify.

He walked over to the heater, he unplugged it... and the popping continued for about another thirty seconds. He could *tell*, though, that the popping sounds weren't coming from the heater itself. It *could* have been an illusion of acoustics, but he doubted it. As he got up from the bed to go to the heater, he noticed that popping sounds seemed to be coming from his dresser drawer, as well, but it was like locating a cricket. You never really knew where they were... unless you were right on top of them.

"Fuck it. I have things to *do*," Eddy said. He got up, he got dressed, and he felt *eerie*. It was a strange feeling. An image, all of a sudden, popped in his head. It was of the man that sold him the Lamborghini, and drove it to the park where he told Amy and Amber about his new deal. Was *Tony* there as *well*? He wondered because he was finding it hard to concentrate. The popping started to trickle in again, the eeriness didn't escape him, and Jim—the guy who sold him the Lamborghini, and he was now remembering *his* name—was on his *mind*. He couldn't get him off, and there was a look of consternation.

Eddy thought he was going mad, for a brief second, but he thought it was afterthoughts of the dream he had had that were leading him to fabricate all this stuff in his mind. He believed that until he paused for thirty seconds to listen to the still of the room... and then it *popped* again. He thought the house was haunted, but only for a brief second. He pushed that thought away, and said nonchalantly into the thin air, "I'm going to get some pussy *today*! Fuckin' haunted *apartment*!" He didn't plan to get pussy, but he briefly felt that his apartment was alive. He thought it was like a haunted house, but in ways he couldn't fathom before.

He left out the door, and didn't turn back to that apartment ever again.

Chapter 3

"I'm tired of all this business about beauty being only skin-deep. That's deep enough. What do you want—an adorable pancreas?" —John Keats, *Ode on a Grecian Urn*

"I *need* you, Tony. And I'm nervous as *hell*." Eddy held out his hands and showed that they were shaking.

"You just won all that *money*!" Tony said, but it was a little sarcastic.

"I already got a call from Stephen *King*!" Eddy waited for a response, and he didn't know if he'd be taken seriously.

"How do you *know*... Stephen *King*!?" Tony asked. He was surprised, and became quite upset soon after. Eddy believed he was a little jealous that it was happening to him, and not good ol' Tony Simpson.

Eddy shook his head because he knew that Tony was misunderstanding him. He didn't *want* to meet Stephen King. Not under the terms that he did. "He called me up, he said I was in something called the *Illuminati*. You ever *hear* of it?"

Tony shook his head yes. "Call me *Bip*. I'm in *too*."

Eddy knew that he was lying, or trying to fit *in*. "They say that it's this secret society that *all* millionaires join when the first come in." He waited for a response, got none, then said, "I only became *Buddhist* because I was poor."

"You're going to have to explain *that* one," Tony said, but his anger was gone. Eddy thought about calling him "Bip", for the hell of it, and refrained. Tony said something about his dad, and Eddy looked around at his surroundings. He was

outside of his apartment—the one he'd never go in again—and they were drinking chocolate shakes that they bought at Del Taco. Pearl Jam blared in the background from a radio that was nearby (it was Bip's, and he'd go by that name, off and on, for the rest of the day).

"I was Buddhist, you see, because I was sick of being pushed *around*. In other words, they say that if you stand for nothing, you'll fall for anything." Eddy drank from his shake and threw it to the floor when he was done. "I *stood* for Christianity, at a time, but in this *neighborhood*—" Eddy looked around and saw the litter that was *everywhere*, "—you get pushed *around* if you stand for something... and I *know* it, and you know it *too*!"

"So you're a Satan worshiper," Tony said, and it was more of a observation, though not serious, than anything else.

"No. I'm *not* a Satan worshiper, but I got sick of fighting the system—the invisible Roman oppression that all Christians see—and I figured it'd be best to go Buddhist because it's like getting on that raft, and going wherever the white waters lead you."

"I understand," Tony said as he shook his head in agreement. It was more of a Buddhist nod than anything else, and it wasn't sincere. Eddy was changing before his eyes, and he didn't know what to make of it.

"No. You *don't* understand, because I can have *power* now. I *can* be the Roman oppressors, but I *won't* be."

"*You* think so?" Tony said. He wasn't talking to Eddy, though. He was talking Jim Anthony who had just walked up and probably heard the tail end of the conversation.

"*This* is exactly what I'm *talking* about! If I stayed Buddhist, I'd be fag like *him*!" He pointed to Jim, and Jim hardly acknowledged him.

Tony took off down the street with Jim, not even saying a word, and Eddy was a little surprised. Eddy walked the opposite direction to a payphone that was about twenty feet from where they were talking (Eddy lived near an AM/ PM, and it was convenient in that sense). He called up Rene Gibbon, and told her his plight. He told her about the popping sounds that were coming from his room, but he brushed it off because he didn't think much of it at the time. He told her about the conversation with Stephen King, and she called him a liar. He said that *Jim Anthony*—the guy who sold him his car—was hitting on him, leaving messages on his cell phone, and he was doing strange things, like showing up unexpectedly. "Watch *out*!" she said. "The *scorn* of those guys can be worse than a *woman*!"

"I *know*," Eddy said. He already felt it. The buildings, if you were ever to go to a large city, are flooded with the names of men, but not women. There are *companies* that are named after men. They control the world, for the most part, or at least in the agreement between Eddy and Rene.

"Look on your *currency*!" she told Eddy. Surprisingly to Eddy, he pulled out a dollar without thinking of it. "It's *up*!" she said. Eddy didn't understand what she meant, and didn't even know if she was talking to him.

"I feel insecure," Eddy said.

"Don't we *ALL*?" she asked him. Eddy didn't know who to trust. She hung up the phone before he could say more.

Eddy thought about the trip to Del Taco, and how *weird* it felt. It was as if someone on the internet... or maybe the *news*, for that matter (since he was a *lottery* winner, of course) told everyone there to treat him like he was Truman Burbank from Jim Carrey's movie.

"I don't know what to *do*," Eddy said to himself after putting his head on his forearm. He walked away from the phone. He noticed people coming out of the AM/ PM where he was at. They were drinking Pepsis, and they were eating burritos. But the *look* that they gave him was eerie. They were pointing at their labels, nearly enticing him to go into AM/ PM and spend his wad. "What *is* going *on*?" Eddy wanted to know. He *wanted* to talk to these guys. He wanted to ask them, *Do you know who I am? Do you know I won the lottery?* Eddy thought he should have left town on the same day that he got the Lamborghini. It was an eerie feeling. They weren't looking at the Lamborghini—*that* could have attracted their attention if it was *there*—because it was in the garage at his apartment complex. The walk wasn't far, and he had yet to learn that in LA, *no one* walks. He wasn't in LA technically, but in California, the cities don't end, and he *knew* it. "Goddamn *Truman*!" he said to no one. "Only a no one walks in LA," he said. "Fuckin' *loser*!" he said. He was talking about himself, though, and he was surprised he was saying the words. They bit him, and hard.

Chapter 4

"If you love something, set it free. If comes back, it is yours. If it doesn't,

hunt it down and kill it."

—seen on a t-shirt in Rancho Cucamonga,

California

(flowers—pink ones—in the background of the text)

Eddy was bound to get out of his neighborhood, but he didn't know that forces were against him that he was oblivious to. There were people writing up proposals—they were his *neighbors*—and it was intended for him to give them money. One person wrote a thing—it went around on internet *fast* that it ought to be done in his complex where he lived—about saving the whales. They didn't tell him—the family of this person that wrote it—to put that he could easily donate to *Greenpeace*, or something along those lines. No. This guy (from direction of his family) was going to tell Eddy that he was going to save the whales *himself*! (And he had never been to the ocean because he was a sixteen-year-old loser, at least in his own eyes, but he didn't *know* that Eddy could find out how much he knew of the ocean by simple investigation that his money could now buy.) One guy wanted it for a dying grandmother that had already been passed on for four years. Eddy *sensed* that things like this would happen. One guy—he played guitar in a band—was *bound* to not let Eddy leave, not because of money, but rather because he wanted him to experience what his band was all about. It was called *Bananas*, his band was.

Eddy didn't care. He wanted to get out as soon as possible. He put up a "for sale" sign on his car—his *old* one, a Camaro from the sixties—and got an immediate response. It was from a lady that lived down the street. She drove up in a Mercedes—it was a *new* one—and she said, "I'll give you *ten* dollars for that!" She was trying to joke. She was sixty, or so, from the looks on her face. She was old, at least in Eddy's eyes, and he knew she didn't *want* the Camaro. She wanted *him*. She wanted his company.

"This is a recurring theme, lady," Eddy said aloud. He was afraid to look her in the *face*, though, and he was sick of all the shit he was going through since he won his money. "Ten *bucks*? You *almost* look serious!" He knew she was trying to joke... or at least trying to send a message to him that his car wasn't worth a shit, but now that he won it big, he could maybe fit in *her* game. "No. Lady... that is *Monopoly* money to me. I don't care if you gave me two *thousand*!" he said. He said under his voice, "It's what I'm *asking*, and you look a little *skankay*!"

A little girl walked up to the Mercedes. Eddy was trying to figure out if she *knew* this older lady who was trying to jip him out of his sentimental machine. "*I have two thousand!*" she said. She must have been fifteen-years-old, and Eddy didn't know where she *got* two thousand from.

He didn't take time to figure it out. "*Sold!*" he said. "For ten *dollars!* To the young lady in the flowery dress!" It didn't say the same thing as a flowery shirt he had seen earlier. He was relieved by that, and he literally sold his Camaro to her for twenty dollars to her ten minutes later (she insisted that he take more than ten, and it was more of a gesture than anything else).

Chapter 5

"He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches." —George Bernard Shaw, *Man and Superman*

Eddy Richards stepped into the Beverly Hills Hotel. He was wearing jeans—they were Levis that he had gotten during high school a few years back—and they were faded with a few holes in the bottom part of his right leg—the *pant* leg—from riding a ten speed when his Camaro was down and getting it caught in the chain. The lady behind that counter wanted to shun him, but she didn't. He was wearing a Rolex—Eddy was—and she chalked him up to being a musician she had never heard of.

In Rancho Cucamonga, where Eddy had grown up, the internet was mad city-wide, and even the people *on* the net didn't know how mad it was. The *CIA* knew because they tapped such things after people won lottery jackpots. They didn't do it forever. They did it for a while.

Eddy thought about Jim Anthony. He was a dickhead, and he didn't leave him alone. He thought about the internet, and he wondered if he got far enough away from California's Inland Empire (as it was called in the basin away from Los Angeles) to escape the madness. He knew from experience that they were losers out there. Very few people did anything to help their lives. *And then one day you find ten years have gone behind you, no one told when to run, you missed the starting gun!* A lyric from Pink Floyd popped in Eddy's head.

He looked around. He saw the lady behind the counter. She was calm. Eddy carried his bags in—they were old, and they were maroon—and he wondered how long he'd be wearing Levis and Vans. He wondered a *lot* of things, and he wondered

how long he'd be listening to Pink Floyd. They were garbage music for the masses, and he knew it, but he *had* to listen to them to feel cool in the group that he was with... before he won all the money. He thought he'd be listening to Mozart in a month or two. First things were first, and he had to settle into a hotel, at least temporarily.

He thought about the girl that he sold his Camaro to. He took her number—she was fifteen, indeed, and going on sixteen in a month—just in case she had any problems with it. He didn't want to hit on her because he was years removed from high school, and he had yet to learn that the Illuminati which Stephen King had told him about on the phone (if it *was* Stephen King, because Eddy wasn't a hundred percent sure that he wasn't being taken) lets their members go to Thailand, and the like, to get whores for their liking... and then they'd pay politicians domestically to make sure that statutory rape laws were passed, and enforced with rigor to the masses that they held under their umbrella.

Eddy walked up to the lady that was writing something miscellaneous on a pad in front of her. "I'd like some *service*, okay?"

"You want a *pimp*?" the lady asked. "I recognize you from the internet," the lady said. She was bashful when she said it.

"*What*?" Eddy asked. He shook himself off, *believed* it, then said, "You've been *waiting* for me all along then, huh?"

She tried to hush him before he asked his question. Her bashful look vanished, and she started to walk away. It was *nearly* as if she was in a rage.

"You've seen me on *TV*, huh? I was that *lottery* winner from a while back!"

She got mad, but it wasn't at Eddy. She was raising her voice, and when she walked back, she looked behind her as if a *manager* might hear her. "You have *no* clue... what you've..." She started to cry, "...*done*... to my *life*!"

Eddy *didn't* know. She was very attractive. She looked like a brunette that he had seen on a movie, and if she didn't have a name tag that said something (he wasn't close enough to read her name), he'd *think* that she was a movie star, and not someone that was working there. "What *have* I done to your life?" Eddy asked. He was disappointed in himself that he wasn't sincere. He *wanted* to be sincere, and part of him was. He felt like he was in a dream—an alternate *universe*, of some kind—and he didn't know what to do. "What do you *want*?" he asked. But he was asking a lady that walked up to the attendant behind the desk. He felt like a celebrity, and he was ashamed of the Beverly Hills Hotel because he figured that they had *higher* caliber people that came in all the time, and they should be able to *handle* things.

"You *know* Stephen King, right?" she asked. It was the attendant, and not the lady whom had walked up.

"Yep. You reading my *mind*?" Eddy asked.

"Yep," she said, but she was joking. Eddy Richards really wanted to know if she was reading his mind. He didn't *care*, but he didn't know how things worked. "He *likes* you," she said. "He told me so himself."

"Are you *spying* on me?"

"Yep," she said.

Eddy was flattered. He thought he'd be mad, but after the craziness that was going on in Cucamonga, this was craziness that he *welcomed*. "Does he know—?"

"Yep."

"—that I sold my car?" Eddy finished his sentence even though she answered before he finished asking.

"He knows *everything*, and if you were smart..." She pulled Eddy near her, he was scared that she did (he thought she might jab something in his eyes, because it was a culture that was unlike anything he'd grown up around), and she wanted to whisper something, but gave him a gold necklace instead. It was thin—something you wouldn't expect the ultra rich to have and give as a present—and it had a butterfly (a *small* one) on the end of it. "It's *yours*." She said it and was glad to have it over with. He could see it on her face.

"What does it *mean*?" Eddy wanted to know. By now, he felt like he was in a dumb game, and he was nearly mocking her, or her system.

She called security from the back. Three large men came with suits. She said, "Have *HIM* arrested!" but she wasn't talking about Eddy. It was a man whom Eddy assumed was the manager.

"What's going *on*?" Eddy wanted to know. He was a *little* scared, the feeling that he was in a game wouldn't leave him even though she said it forcefully, and even though the men came from the back.

They got her by the arms, and put them behind her.

Eddy got in a rage. "What *are* you *doing*! Don't you know I can *destroy* you!" He was serious, and even though he didn't have money for long before, he was serious in what he *meant*. "I don't *care*...!" he started to say aloud, and he saw a Catholic bishop come from around the corner. The men—the ones who previously were getting the lady behind her back by the arms—now seized Eddy, but he could tell that they weren't altogether serious. It was like a play in football that had gone wrong. There was sportsmanship in the air—he could *feel* that—but he insulted them

in a way that they weren't used to be insulted, and like in sports, things got out of the box. Things got *serious* for a while, but Eddy started to sense that they were *returning*.

The Catholic bishop came up to Eddy as soon as the guards let him go. "Is *this* what you go through?" Eddy wanted to know. They were *testing* him, or so he was figuring. He was "new money"—it was a term he had heard long ago, and he wasn't sure if it was *Titanic* the movie where he had heard it from. "Let me go!" Eddy said after the *bishop* started to twist his arms behind his back. "Is this guy *real*?!" he demanded to the attendant that was behind the counter. "What *is* going on here?"

"*They're* new money!" she yelled, but she was talking about the Catholic bishop (one of his buddies had joined from around the corner, and Eddy wasn't sure when *he* came because he was struggling to get out of a hold). He wondered how she knew what he was thinking about the "new money" and wondered if it was telepathy or a coincidence. "*Telepathy*," she quietly said to him.

"I don't mean to get 'Stephen *King*' on you, but..."

"I know. The *Shining*," she said. It was exactly what Eddy was thinking.

She let him in, after all, and he stayed in a large room where Elvis had supposedly stayed (she didn't tell him so himself, but rather, it was the girl who had quietly interrupted before the shit hit the fans). He thought for a while, and instead of thinking of Jim Anthony, the *car* dealer, he was thinking of those Catholic guys who came out in their garb that was so fitting of the times he had visited their temples, their shrines, or whatever the fuck it was that they held their services in!

He called for room service. It was the lady that was behind the desk that came up to visit him. She brought him a doughnut. She said to him, "You just *believe* me," she said, but it was insincere in comparison to what he had first seen of her when he was downstairs, earlier.

She didn't *give* him the doughnut—she left it on the tray that was beside her. Eddy wanted to have sex with her, and he was sensing that this new world was unlike anything he had ever seen. He was sensing that she wanted to have sex with *him*, and he was supposed to ask something in some kind of code. That's what he was reckoning, but he couldn't get his ghetto straight-forward talk out of him.

He said, "You gonna *blow* me, or *what*?!" He was halfway joking. The hotel manager came from around the corner. She took him to Eddy's bed, Eddy stepped aside, and for the first time in his life, he saw a live woman give head to guy right in *front* of him. He was dumbfounded, but he watched for the few seconds that it happened.

The man became a bit uneasy at Eddy's watching the two of them do it—

maybe Eddy was supposed to join *in*; he didn't know—and he got up and tried to put his cock in Eddy's mouth. "I don't *need* this," Eddy said. He had claimed to be a Buddhist to his friend, *Tony*, but deep down, he didn't know what he was. He just knew when he was uncomfortable. He felt comfortable with the lady for fleeting moments when she first came in. Eddy said, "Is this your *wife*?"

"You bet your ass!" the man said. It was insincere, but they both raised wedding bands on their hands in unison with each other. Eddy knew it was a front of sorts—he had heard of such things from the Hollywood area before... through tabloids and rumors—and just pretended it didn't happen.

The couple stayed in the room for another hour. Eddy felt secretly comforted. They didn't talk much, and Eddy sensed that it was because the Catholics that were downstairs that had somehow wanted to run their mafia shit on him (that was his reasoning). It didn't matter. He had a good time, for fleeting moments, and when the couple got ready to leave, he realized they were in cahoots with one another.

Eddy said, "The Catholic church was in the red during the latter part of the nineteen nineties. Now they are in the *black*. They are turning a profit. Quite honestly, I don't *trust* a church that's making money."

The lady pretended not to hear, and Eddy wasn't sure if she listened. She humored him, at the very least, and made her way out of the room when it was over.

"I *don't* know what you're saying," she said five minutes later. She wasn't with her husband, and she was touching Eddy around his genital area over his pants. She was good to him—that much Eddy could tell—and he sensed that she might be *trapped* in this thing called a marriage.

"Is he *good* to you?" Eddy wanted to know. He wasn't really interested. She was very attractive, but it was late at night, and his life had been crazy.

The lady knew that it was too late, and she sensed that nothing was going to happen. She nodded her head yes, that he was good to her. She looked like a school girl when she did, but she was in her early thirties from the looks of it, though it was a *young* mid-thirties look.

Chapter 6

"I can't stop thinkin', thinkin' 'bout sinkin', sinkin' down into my *bed*!

I called my mother, she's just a cunt now, she said I'm sick in the *head*!

She said, 'You ain't special! So who ya' foolin'? Don't try da give me a *line*!!!

But I can't stop thinkin' 'bout seein' you *one* more time!"

—Guns 'n' Roses,

"Bad Obsession"

The next night at the hotel wasn't as strange as the first night had been. Eddy was settling in, and if it weren't for a homosexual leaf-blower by the name of Hector Jimenez, his day would have been *completely* okay. Hector—known as *Francisco* to his buddies because he had a *reverence* for the city of San Francisco—had been there quite often, and he was secretly faggot to everyone around him except for his buddies at home. He lived in a commune of fifteen other leaf-blowers, and other bottom-of-the-barrel kind of people from society. He fagged off whenever he could, but he hid it from his boss for the most part.

Eddy Richards was taking a walk, and had gotten as far as the Roxy on Sunset Boulevard. He didn't want to drive his Lamborghini yet. He was still accustomed to being a normal guy, in relative terms, and it'd be a while before he could be *comfortable* riding the machine everywhere he went.

Hector—the leaf-blower in question—propositioned Eddy, and Eddy politely ignored him... at first. Hector got furious. He knew Eddy had won the lottery—the leaf-blowers, and things along those lines, were quick to communicate, and since they were so poor, they used phones and other primitive methods to get across their information—and he approached him with the idea that he wasn't going to take no for an answer. He figured, because he was quite large for a Mexican, that Eddy couldn't turn him down. Eddy was in Hollywood, and on the west end, there were a lot of open homosexuals. He figured that Eddy was taking a stroll there and left his car behind because he didn't want it advertised that he was homosexual just yet in his life as a millionaire. What he didn't know was that Eddy had a disdain for social-climbers of any kind. He didn't *trust* them.

The faggot leaf-blower came up to Eddy and tried to talk to him. Eddy was sure that he was *Chicano* because he couldn't fake a Spanish accent (he *tried*, at the very beginning). Eddy had known enough about Chicanos because there were some that married into his family. He knew that they were people that were neither accepted by the people from south of the border, yet they weren't accepted by the white people (by and large) in society, *either*. He knew they were *desperate* people, and it was indicative of the fact that they had no music of their own, or at least very little of it. There was Carlos Santana... and he was Mexican from south of the border,

as far as Eddy was concerned, and there was Rage Against the Machine. Besides that, there wasn't a lot.

The Chicanos listened to black music. It reflected what went on in their lives. They weren't a politically-conscious group, for the most part, and they liked their music to reflect sex and heartbreak—something they knew a lot about. The *Mexican* music—the *real* stuff that was mariachi—was all in Spanish, and if you were a Chicano, there was a good chance that you didn't understand it, therefore you couldn't connect with what was perceived to be the roots, at least in a lot of minds.

Eddy *knew* that Hector (he introduced himself as such in broken attempts at fake Spanish) was desperate, but he didn't know for sure *why*. He knew the background, obviously, but he saw it in his eyes as well. It was as if he was a broken man, and he was trying desperately to break into something of meaning. Eddy didn't want to have any part of it. He hadn't been laid in five years, and having been priorly poor, the *first* thing on his mind was to find a stable relationship with an attractive woman, preferably of Asian or white descent, since they generally carried less baggage with them (unless they lived with Mexicans, of course). That was what was going on with Eddy, and he didn't like it.

"Hey *faggot*!" he said to the leaf-blower, Hector.

"Don't call me that," the leaf-blower said. He wasn't mad. He felt *included*, and Eddy could tell that he was even grateful that Eddy shed any words on him.

"You're a desperate motherfucker. Are you going to follow me around the rest of my *life*?" Eddy was a bit sarcastic, but he knew how the memory worked. He saw a wreck when he was in eighth grade, and he couldn't forget the images. He *knew* that if the Mexican got in his mind, he might be there for a long time. "Will you fuckin' *go*!" Eddy demanded.

Hector shook his head no... and Eddy could tell that he was serious.

Eddy didn't care, and the leaf-blower apparently didn't care any more than he did. There were other leaf-blowers down the street, and Eddy saw that they had a system. Eddy walked for a block, and saw Hector behind him. When he got far enough away, Hector stopped following, but he made gestures with his hand-held device to the next blower down the street. "You guys really *blow*!" Eddy said to the next one.

The next one cued another down the street even farther, but he wasn't blowing leaves—he was clipping hedges. He was wearing a hat that looked like it was made of brown twine.

Eddy was in a personal hell for about the next ten to twelve blocks. There

were five leaf-blowers in all, mixed in with three hedge-clippers that kept fucking with him. When he got to the last one, he said, "Don't you guys *work*?" He was serious, because the last guy wasn't even blowing leaves, he was so caught up in the signals that were going on up and down the street.

When Eddy finally started to get into the Beverly Hills part of town outside of the end of Sunset, he came across a guy that was stroking his meat in public. It wasn't George Michael, though it was legendary that he had once done so many years ago, not far from where Eddy was staying. "If your my best isn't good enough, then how could it be good enough for *two*?" Eddy asked the stranger. The guy that he came across looked like Blue Beard. "I'm not a *cop*," Eddy said, "And you better watch those *Mexicans* down there!" He pointed in the direction of Hollywood.

"Oh. You don't have to worry about *me*!" Blue Beard said. He had a patch on his eye that reminded Eddy of the Raiders—the *Oakland* Raiders. He zipped up his pants and then he gestured to his puffy beard. "This? *Real*! And the paint? I got it at the Fun Corner in..."

"Hardware *store*!" a lady said. She had come from around a hedge, and there was some white cum on her lips. Eddy figured she was sucking his cock—must have been big because she *sighed* when she came around.

"Do *all* you guys work this way over here?" he wanted to know.

There was disappointment in the lady's face. He could tell she no longer wanted to talk. She thought he was fake, and being that he was new to Beverly Hills, he was phony to her because she hadn't seen him around before, but *Blue Beard* knew that there was more to it than that. He knew that the lady had a *loyalty*, of some sort, to a power that was greater than them all.

"I want you to meet sociologist, Jeffery Winters." She gestured to Blue Beard toward Eddy, but Eddy could tell that she didn't want to be in the situation. Most of all, Blue Beard didn't want to be there.

"I have this to say to *you*, cunt!" Blue Beard yelled into the air. He was talking to the pope in the sky. He did it often. "That pope *HATES* me!" he yelled.

Eddy thought he was crazy. He didn't know that all of Hollywood was that way in some regard or another. "Is this a *street* performance?" he asked.

"*Bluey*," the lady said to the man with paint on his face. She wiped off some white liquid-like stuff, and Eddy thought it *might* be cum, but then again he *didn't* know if it was real or if he was being put on, like on some hidden camera show.

"I come from Hollywood High School," Blue Beard said, and he reached out to shake Eddy's hand. When Eddy attempted to return the regard, Blue Beard pulled

back his hand really quick toward the side of his head as if to comb it with his fingers. He said, "I *gotcha*! This is Mustang Kelly, by the way."

She reached out to shake Blue Beard's hand, and Eddy thought it was weird because they had apparently already known each other. All Blue Beard did, though—and he was *Bluey* to her—was to twinkle her palm with the tips of his fingers.

"This is *not* fun," Mustang Kelly said. She added, "I *don't* have a real name. Mustang Kelly is what they call me because my sister is Mustang *Salley*. Okay?"

A surreal instance unraveled when Bill Gates drove by in a custom-made Boxer. Mustang Kelly, as she was known by Eddy, waved to him madly.

Eddy went to the hotel that day, and he thought of the strange occurrences. It was a shame. He was a millionaire now, and the blue bearded guy seemed open enough, yet he had no friends to speak of, as it stood. He was going to call Tony Simpson in a few days—maybe they could golf at a luxurious resort somewhere near—but he needed time to *settle* in.

He *wanted* to think about the time he had with Mustang Kelly, or whatever her real name was because she registered in his cognizance, but Bill Gates was in his mental screen even *more*. He had only passed by, and that's all it took for his conception to start pondering the money he'd spend in the near future. An even *more* grotesque image kept creeping into his *mind*, though—it was the leaf-blowers and it was Hector Jarnipio (or whatever his real fuckin' name really was)—and he kept thinking about turning him down as a sexual partner, the ignorant fuck. It bugged him because he had these images of leaf-blowers around the country doing to him what they did on the ten to twelve city blocks of Hollywood, California. It truly seemed to Eddy that the Mexicans were taking over the State, again, and he wasn't sure that the guy was really a homosexual—maybe he just played that way to get *money* from Eddy—but he had visions (and they were *horrific*) of this happening over and over and *over* again.

Eddy tried to masturbate that night because he was all alone, and he wanted to fantasize about the possibilities that rode with living the fast lane of one of the more prestigious parts of the world, at least in *his* mind it was. He *tried*, but he kept seeing that fuckin' leaf-blower in his mind. He kept picturing it every time he'd go to the ATM... or even the *market*, for that matter, there'd be a Mexican around him that wanted *something* from him.

"Goddamn fuckin' Alamo!" Eddy said into empty air. He stopped stroking his thing because he couldn't get the leaf-blowers out of his head—by now, there were *ten* that crept into his memory—and he zipped up his pants and got ready to change

into his pajamas. "Why couldn't we have *WON* that fuckin' *ALAMO*!?" he asked aloud, but he knew the answer. It didn't really matter. The Mexican filth were in California before the white people, and no matter how many maps were drawn up, they'd *always* believe that it was their place. "Ignorant *fucks*!" Eddy said.

Chapter 7

"He won the lottery, when he was born,...

Do no wrong, so clean cut, dirty his hands, it comes right off!

Police man... police *maaan*! Police stopped my *brother* again!"

—Pearl Jam from *Versus*

Eddy got up a little early the next morning. He had peaches with his ice cream. He didn't want breakfast. He wanted a *break*! He wanted joy. He had won the lottery, and he wanted to start *enjoying* life like he won the lottery. He *wasn't* enjoying life. Meeting *Blue Beard* and his buddy was an eclectic experience, but if that had been all, then he'd be having fun. He *wasn't* having fun. He wanted to sleep peacefully the night before after having a self-induced orgasm. It didn't come. Instead, the *visions* of the leaf-blowers came. And he reckoned that they'd *always* be leaf-blowers no matter what. That's the way history was, with few exceptions. He had once heard from Lewis Farrakhan, or whatever his name was because he wasn't really sure of it, that white people once ate their babies. He said that popular belief in America doesn't teach that *black* people had once ruled the world, and Eddy reckoned that it was probably around the time of the crusades, but he was unsure of the complete history. He remembered talking to a guy at a bus stop that all that black people wanted, at least in the modern era, was five Southern States to settle in. He reasoned—and Eddy was sure that he was referring to Malcolm Ten, as he was known in Eddy's mind because of a comedy bit that was done that referred to X as its Roman numeral—that black people *can't* return to Africa. It's like putting a wild animal in domestication, and then returning it to its cousins. He didn't think (*Eddy* didn't) that this guy was saying those exact words, but that's how he remembered it.

Eddy remembered him talking about "African Americans," and how often the term kept changing in politically correct lingo from the dominant hegemony. He said, *Do you hear Italians say that they're Italian American? No. You don't!*

What are you getting at? Eddy wanted to know that day at the bus stop. It reminded him of Seattle because it was raining.

Well. The guy seemed rather smart, and he continued on, *They call us African Americans... but what are you?*

I'm white.

Okay. You're white. But what's beyond that? Does a Philippino say that he's Philippine American? No. No one does!

Okay. I get it. I'm Irish, I guess. I think that's what you want me to say.

Okay. You're Irish, and that's your ethnicity. But what nationality are you?

I'm American, I guess.

Okay. I'm American, too, but why do I have to signify my nationality every time that I'm asked for my race?

I don't know. I guess that's a good question, Eddy said to him that day. He was surprised because the guy was wearing no identifying marks that would place him as a radical. He had on Air Jordans, and his hair was done in a nice and neat afro, and the pick was sticking out of its back, but there was no sign of the black, yellow, and green marks on him that would tie him to his motherland, as he explained things.

The guy said, *I don't need to say I'm from Africa, either, do I? You're not from Ireland!*

Okay. I got ya', Eddy said, and he was getting a little scared because the guy was getting emotional. *I don't want to know you,* Eddy said, and that was the beginning of him getting in a shell. He said, *You're my brother because we're American, right?*

No. I'm African. I'm not African-American. I am African!

Eddy remembered this, and he thought about the leaf-blowers. He thought about the plight of the black people, and he was in pain when he did it. He thought about giving his money away as he currently scooped ice cream—it was only vanilla, but it was good—and he thought about how in vane it'd be. He could give all thirty million that was put in his account (after taxes because he had hit big enough) to everyone in America... and each person would roughly have a dime. What good would that do? And what good would it do to choose one particular leaf-blower to help out? It made no sense, especially regarding the fact that the leaf-blower—*Franny* was his name, Eddy thought, and he was having trouble remembering all the new stuff he was coming in to—was *rude* to him. Why reward *rudeness*? It made no sense.

Eddy got done with his meal—it was considered a *meal* to him—and the lady from behind the counter came up to him (the original one that had later sucked a cock on the first night that he met her). "I *know* you," she said to a Mexican as he passed her. But Eddy could tell that she was shining him on—he was a hotel worker there—and she didn't want to be confrontational. Coming into Beverly Hills was a revelation to Eddy. It was a new environment. He could tell that things were different than he could have possibly imagined. Being that it was the new millennium, enough time had passed since Civil Rights legislation had taken place. Eddy had heard through distant relatives that *weren't* on the Richards' side of the family that long ago, they used to hit Mexicans in school for not speaking English. They used to make them sit in the back of theatres, and they used to only let them swim once a week at the public hole, and that was when they were getting ready to change the pool water. It didn't *matter* to Eddy much, and maybe the Civil Rights legislation needed to be passed, but he was smart enough to know (or he *believed* he was smart enough to know) that things go in cycles. The Mexicans were oppressed, but he could feel it on his *skin* that they were playing head games with the people that they were around in Beverly Hills.

Eddy thought the lady was going to come over and take his plate at the breakfast table where he was at. He wanted conversation, but the lady suddenly changed her mind about approaching him. After the hotel bellboy was shined, he started to cry, and Eddy couldn't tell if it was fake crocodile tears, or something else. She wanted to be there talking to Eddy, but the bellboy could tell that he was losing her, somehow. They must have had something going on. After all, she had been sucking the cock of the manager, and that took only one night. Eddy didn't think it was necessarily sexual, but he could tell that the bellboy knew who he was. He could tell that the lady (still wearing the name tag that Eddy couldn't exactly read) was being *played* by the bellboy. He could tell that the bellboy wanted attention, and it was out of the scope of what he was hired to do.

"These Mexicans are *DESPERATE*!" Eddy yelled. "Can't I get some *help*!"

A waitress came over to talk to Eddy. She was wearing a pink outfit, and she reminded Eddy a little of Alice from television reruns. Eddy looked over at the Mexican, and he could tell that it wasn't even the mystery attendant's attention that he wanted. No. *That* Mexican wanted *Eddy's* attention, and he was getting it through the attendant, at first, but the reason he *knew* that it wasn't her he was interested in was because he left her the moment that Eddy started talking to the new waitress who had come along.

"My name is *Flo*!" the waitress said. She was happy. She was *jubilant*, and Eddy hadn't had that feeling since he had talked to Amber, Amy, and Tony in the park on the first day that he got the title to his car. "My name is *Flo*!" she said again.

The attendant—her name was Katy, and Eddy could see the tag clearly enough for the first time—came over when the Mexican bellboy left her to go near Eddy. The Mexican said, "I *know* you won the *lottery*!" He was rude, out of line, and Eddy expected him to get fired on the spot. Instead, the attendant put a load of cash into the waitress's hands.

Katy said, "My name is Katy—I can tell you're looking at my nametag in a funny way—and I come from Chicago. This is *May*—her name is *not* Flo, but she treats our guests well." That was the reason she got paid—because she attended to Eddy, or Eddy was *guessing*, and he had been a little rude about being overlooked when the rude bellboy started crying in public.

Eddy asked, "What's with the *Mexican*?" He wanted a genuine answer, but saw in Katy from Chicago only a moment of confusion followed by genuine laughter.

"I *don't* like him!" she said aloud looking in the Mexican's direction. Eddy could tell that it was her secret language, though—she had been using it the first night he met her—because she was speaking *about* the Mexican, and not Eddy. Katy from Chicago was clever about that.

"I don't *like* that fuckin' Mexican, and I have the right to *peace* if I have breakfast on my *own*!"

"Well peace you'll *have*!" the waitress said. She gestured towards two uniformed men that looked like they *may* have come from the military. "You *see*, son... In the modern era, you can't call Mexicans, '*Mexicans*.' You can't do it if you're rich and you just won the lottery. Those *guys*—the ones with the uniforms on—are going to be following you for a while. It happens with *all* lottery winners, they say. They told us about you coming, and they want to make sure that you're not going to start a *race* war, or something along those lines, with the money that you just earned with your dollar-ticket lottery *thing*!" She was mad near the end of her sentence because she didn't want to be put through it all. She wanted to tell Eddy secrets about the society that *she* lived in—she was a waitress on meager pay—and she wanted to tell him to look at the cover of Supertramp's *Breakfast In America*. She wanted to say that it inspired her to become a waitress in real life. The cover is of a lady that's holding up a tray of orange juice in one hand. She was going to remind Eddy that the terror alert was at the *orange* level, and it had been that way a *while*, at least in her mind. The *orange*, in the picture, was located by two tall buildings that

looked remarkably like twin towers. Either way, she was going to say that the album came out in 1979, and that was years—not *many*—after the Twin Towers had been built. She was going to say that ecologists, and the like, were planning on blowing the thing up from day one. She was going to say that it was like Babel, and people were playing God with their World Banks, and their International Monetary Funds, and things along those lines. It was a premonition that someone had, and she believed sincerely someone in the Bush administration had *intimate* dealings with getting the buildings torn down. She was going to add, nonchalantly, that it was a good idea, and if Eddy thought she was a kook, she could refer to Michael Moore's book (the guy that did "Roger and Me") called *Dude, Where Is My Country?* in which he cites the New Yorker as a prime example of *public* knowledge that the bin Ladens and the Bushes were in bed with each other. Either way, it didn't matter to her because she was a lowly woman... but Eddy with his *money*... He could *do* things.

The two uniformed men looked uncomfortable. They were about twenty yards away, and they barely hid that they were *spying* on Eddy. The more they moved, the more Eddy believed it wasn't actually himself that was being *spied* on. It was the Mexican. It was the Mexican that was fucking everything up. It was the Mexican who was probably like the Hector Calderon, or whatever his name was (Eddy couldn't remember his name, but his face wouldn't leave), who only wanted some sex or money. The guys—the ones that were sent to keep tabs on all new lottery winners—were probably there for protection as much as anything else. Eddy didn't think he *needed* it. He wanted to talk to that waitress. She looked like an interesting person. She had a verse memorized from the Book of Mormon. It was from the first book of Nephi in the eleventh chapter, verse thirty-six, of all things (an evil *number*, if she were to tell Eddy about it). The verse went, *And it came to pass that I saw and bear record, that the great and spacious building was the pride of the world; and it fell, and the fall thereof was exceedingly great. And the angel of the Lord spake unto me again saying: Thus shall be the destruction of all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples, that shall fight against the twelve apostles of the Lamb.* She was going to say it, profess not to be Mormon, but to at least ask the implications of everything taken together. Joseph Smith was originally from New York, they no doubt were building buildings back then. Maybe he saw in New York the same thing that people saw more than a century after he was attributed to have written the Book of Mormon (the legend was that it was written off plates that were supernatural, somehow). She was going to talk about filthy Mexicans, and how the twelfth chapter of the same book in verse twenty-three said that they were an abomination—the people with dark skin. She knew that Mormons had hope for them.

If they were good—if they were white in *behavior*, or at least the way she took it—they'd come back in a later lifetime with lighter skin. But people like the whining bellboy? She wasn't sure if he had hope. He wanted attention for attention's sake, and he didn't have much to give the crowd besides his ability to carry bags. That was her *problem* with them, and she was going to ask Eddy if he'd at least consider the Book of Mormon, and some of its teachings, as *metaphor*. She wanted to know if it'd be more than fiction, but in a covert way. She was going to tell him that that was the way it had to be. *These Mexicans*, she was fond of saying in her private time, *don't quit!*

That was going to be her speech, and if Eddy offered her money... she wasn't going to take it.

Chapter 8

"The roller coaster ride's a lonely one." —Stone Temple Pilots, "Sour Girl"

When the waitress—*May* was her name, and Eddy remembered that quite well, for some reason—was gone, Katy came up to Eddy. She looked nervously at the two men that were uniformed. Juan, the bellboy who was throwing a fit that he wasn't being paid attention to be a lottery winner, was approaching the men that were spying on Eddy (or *were* they spying? Eddy wondered). He was getting his ass kicked by them, and it pleased Eddy deep inside that something like that would happen. "Get *used* to it," Katy said. She had the cute little hair that went halfway down her neck. She didn't remind Eddy at *all* of a Katy he had known that had come from Boston, but *her* face kept coming into Eddy's head, just the same that the faggot Mexican's kept coming into his head from the night before.

"Get *used* to it, huh?" one of the uniformed men said. He was sitting closer, now, and Juan got his ass beat by them and was on his way. The uniformed man must have been reading Eddy's mind because he was going to ask the same exact thing.

"This is *eerie*," Eddy said to Katy. She was attractive, and looked a little like the lady (he couldn't remember her name) that played in *The Mask of Zorro*. He was trying desperately to get the man with the uniform out of the situation, but he figured that he was no different from the Mexican that blew leaves... and he was no different than the bellboy that just got his ass kicked. He was no *different*. He was desperate

as well, and even though his uniform *hid* things, it didn't hide that he was a seeker, and not one that was being *sought*. "What's with the *desperate* dude?" Eddy asked Katy. She started to motion to him, as if she was going to say something enlightening, but Eddy continued, "Can I *pay* him to leave?"

"No. They're *assigned* to you... from the National Guard."

"What the *fuck* are you *talking* about?" Eddy asked. "Is this a *code*?"

She said, "Yes," but she shook her head no, and Eddy broke into hysterics because he hadn't seen something so funny in a long time.

The bellboy came back in the room, and was holding an ice pack near his eye. It distracted Eddy for a while, but he continued on with Katy because he felt he *had* to, "I'm going to go... but you can show me *around*, right?"

"*Can I?*" she asked. It was loud. It was serious. She was asking the two uniformed men, though (the other one joined the one that came up and sat nearer to Eddy).

Eddy recoiled a bit because the lady was beautiful. He had no idea why she would *want* to be with him... but he was willing to take the chance so long as it didn't complicate things and start a precedence in his new environment that would lead like dominoes falling of the bad kind.

"I *like* you," she said to Eddy. She blushed because he repeated her. She didn't want that to happen.

Eddy got up and left. It was rather abrupt, but he was finding, as a lottery winner, that he was much like the pied piper. There were the Mexicans from the day before that were following him around and trying to control his thoughts and behavior. There was the bellboy that was trying to get his attention. There was the waitress that was trying to tell him things... and getting *paid* for her efforts, at the very least. There were the incidents with the fuckin' security from the first day, as well as that of the Catholic officials (if that's what they were).

He figured that if he went to his room, he didn't have to be too paranoid about *someone* finding him. At the same time, he felt lonely because he felt the opposition. If it wasn't the officials that were from the government (supposedly, because they could have been paid privately and meant to *look* the government officials), then it was the Mexicans and/ or the Catholics. He knew there were a lot of censors out there, there were a lot of people that wanted his money, but now he was finding that he had *mojo* that was going on, and that's something that you can't buy... at least to Eddy, he couldn't imagine it happening.

"Why do you *know* so much!?" Katy wanted to know. It irritated Eddy that he

kept thinking of the girl from Boston instead of the girl that was in front of him and was from Chicago. "Why do you *know*...?" she started to say again, and then she saw Juan come back in the room (he *had* been in the distance, fairly) and he looked nervous as hell, almost like he saw a ghost.

"Why do I *what*?" Eddy asked... but he already knew. The lady didn't look like a gypsy of the typical kind, but she was a mind-reader. Eddy was sure that he had seen her before. He just didn't know *where*.

"I saw you in a *dream*, okay?" she said, and it no longer bothered Eddy that he wasn't having to voice what was going through his mind.

"Okay. I *guess*," Eddy said. By this time, he was getting ready to *jolt* to his room (he had only been strolling there, or some Goddamn shit like that), and he hoped the Mexican would stop following him. He hoped *Katy* (or whatever her name really was; maybe it was Madam Lady, or something like that), would come to his room and have powers that could put hexes on brown people. He figured it'd be a matter of time before *Arabs*, and Goddamn shit like that, would be following him as well.

When he got to the room, he went to the bed, got under the covers, and waited.

He halfway expected Katy to follow him in. He left the door halfway open, just in case she would.

Chapter 9

"Dogs of the world unite!" —George Clinton, "Atomic Dog"

Juanito—he became "Juanito" in Eddy's mind—was in the lobby watching television when Eddy got up the next morning. He was on a mission. He was going to find himself a home, and he was going to rent a place for his buddy, Tony, which would be nearby wherever he wound up. He had great intentions, but he noticed a peculiarity about Juanito that was even more strange than anything that he been going on. Juanito said to him in a deep Spanish accent, "I have these pictures because the guys from the agency are going to watching you. They paid me a million *dollars*—" ("Dollars," wasn't correctly pronounced, but Eddy made it out anyway.) "—

no, it was a *thousand*—to tell them whenever you had left."

"*Fuck* you, Juanito," Eddy said to him.

Juanito was watching a commercial, and he was flipping through the album that they gave him. There were pictures of Eddy's family, and he was supposed to tell the "agency" whenever one would come in and ask for him. They figured—the "agency," as Eddy had heard, and he was trying to piece it together in his mind—that there were people that would want his money. Eddy hoped it would just go on for a short period of time, and he thought about the maxim about fame and fortune being binding. He couldn't think of where it came from, but he was starting to think that things were better off when no one knew him... and when he had no money of relevance to talk of.

He looked at the television screen after looking over Juanito's shoulder as Juanito looked through his photos. He sang a song from Eric Clapton—it was "I Shot the Sheriff"—and he selected the line, "Sheriff John Brown always *hated* me! For what, I don't *know*!" He said to Juanito, "You're sheriff John *Brown*, you know? You're keeping tabs on me, and you're a *loser*!" He looked to the screen, and saw a puppy that was trying to decide between brand name dog food, and generic brand dog food. The dog went over to the generic and he sniffed. He went away from the bowl, and he chose the *brand* name: "Horse's Delight" was the name of it. He said to Juanito, "That is *you*! You are the *sellout*! You are choosing the brand because you can't get any better. You *know* that, right?"

"Yep," Marlene said. She was an attendant that had replaced the gypsy from the night before. She had flowing blond hair, and she was quite attractive when she smiled. Her name tag, for some reason, was a bit bigger, and it was even *attractive*. She had flowery designs that were around the writing, and Eddy wanted to know her quite a bit. She promptly said, "You're no different, you know?"

"And I guess neither are *you*!" Eddy said to her in a loud voice. "At least I *admit* it! I bet this guy supports the United Farm Workers on the weekend and he comes here trying to be a millionaire through quick *bucks*!"

"You're no..." Marlene began to say. Eddy couldn't stand that her beautiful smile turned to something of dismay. She wanted to say something about his hair, and how he was no Tom Selleck, so he better not expect much in the town of Hollywood. Eddy didn't care because she looked beautiful beyond belief, and in the technical sense, he thought that maybe agents wouldn't think she was any better-looking than the gypsy lady that had given him strange experiences. It was her *glow*, and Eddy knew that if he exposed her, it would leave. You can't tell anyone anything

about something the precious. It fades too fast because it's like having a parrot and having the whole world want to see it. "You're no *winner*!" she said. Eddy knew she wasn't serious, and that was okay with him. Juanito was around, and Juanito was trying to gather all the information he could. He was a loser, in that regard, and Eddy figured that the Beverly Hills Hotel *sanctioned* him to do that... or they just didn't have the power to stop the "lottery commission" (or whatever it was that governed the fuckin' shit that he was going through). Eddy didn't want to be honest around Juanito any longer, *either*.

He said, "I'm going to *tell* you something, lady."

"Go *on*," the lady said, but she lightened up a bit.

"This piece of shit city," Eddie referred to Juanito through a head gesture, though, "is going to tear me *up* if I let you have your way with what you want to go on here." Halfway through his sentence, he didn't even know what he was saying. He had done public speaking a couple of times in high school, and that's what it reminded him of. Your lips are moving, but your mind is elsewhere. He said, "I'm going to *destroy* this piece of shit city," once again, referring to Juanito through a head gesture, "if they try to make me silicone like everyone else." Eddy paused to see if there would be a guilty reaction from the lady who he was talking to, *apparently* with the name of Marlene (Eddy figured her real name was Deborah, or something along those lines, and she was using a cover, like so many people in Hollywood *did*). There was no guilty reaction from Debbie (or whatever her *real* name was), and he figured that her rack was *real* (she had a nice one). Eddy thought to himself that he'd *have* them someday. He did. It was later that night after he found his home in Malibu, and a rental on the beach that was near enough *by* it for the sake of Tony. For Tony, he put up a Simpsons sign that he had found at a swap meet. It was great. He was envisioning Tony coming over and being ecstatic that he had done so.

Deborah (or *whatever* her real name was, because she kept going by Debbie because Eddy let it slip that he thought her name was so) went to Eddy's room on the night that he had his house-buying. He felt up her rack a couple of times (she enjoyed it for a fleeting moment), and then he pulled down her sweats. She had pubies that were beautiful, and Eddy couldn't resist putting his face right near them without actually touching her vulva. It was great to him, but she disappointed him ten minutes later when she said, "I want to meet Kirk Cameron. You think you can *arrange* that?"

Chapter 10

**"I'm looking for special things in sodomy... Inside of me!" —Five For Fighting,
"Superman (It's Not Easy)"**

Eddy felt the Mexican presence around him when he left Jarnipio (or whatever the guy's name was that was watching the television in the television in the lobby while he flipped through his photos in his album). He wanted to cry, a bit, because he knew Jarnipio (or whatever his name was) had *some* control, not only over the agents that were sent to watch him the day before, but also over the leaf-blowers that were outside, up and down the street.

Eddy didn't make the same mistake he made before. This time, instead of walking anywhere far, he got in his Lamborghini Diablo, and he checked the black paint to make sure that there were no key marks. After seeing the valet man leave—he was Mexican as well—he checked the whole car thoroughly. He *hoped* that his house would be ready. It was quick, because the real estate agent that sold him the house happened to also live in the Malibu home where he planned to live for the next few years. He *let* Eddy stay there while the papers cleared (Eddy gave him an extra thousand dollars in cash to make sure it'd happen), and all he wanted was a full day to get his stuff out.

He went to the rental that nearby after a long trip up the Pacific Coast Highway. He felt like a sellout because he wasn't giving his money to charity. He had lived in his Cucamonga ghetto for so long, and it didn't take him long to *care* if he was a sellout or not.

He blared Kiss through the whole drive up there, and he made sure the music was loud. It kept his mind off the Mexicans, and it kept his mind off of other things... like how Tony'd react when he got his new apartment. He didn't want to start over from *scratch*, after all, and he figured that bringing *one* friend over from the old neighborhood would be good. He was wrong, eventually, in how he thought Tony would react, but he wouldn't find that out until later.

"Christine Sixteen" was on the radio when he thought of the new implications of his new life. He hadn't thought of politics *too* much before, but he was told that

you don't discuss politics and religion in public. He was finding that it was further from the truth in his new environment. His real estate agent—he was a guy that looked like Richard Gere—told him *exactly* who, in town, he was supposed to talk to if he were to remain successful as a person, and successful as a millionaire. Eddy listened, and he listened well.

The *contrary* was true, in Eddy's mind. Once you got far enough away from the rat race, *everything* was okay to talk about... but the filthy Mexicans. They had to be referred to in artistic terms, and the Richard-Gere-looking guy told him explicitly only *once*. "You can call them sleestack, if you want, and when you're at a party of *older* adults—ones that hadn't seen the original *Land of the Lost*—you have to call them something else. We call them 'oil spills,' sometimes, and everyone knows what we're talking about, okay? You fight the offshore drilling, but you're really fighting the dark people that'll clogging up your shore if you're not careful about who you let in." The guy paused before he gave Eddy the papers, and he said, "This is your title to the *house*, for all practical reasons. Keep in mind that this *is* politics, to a degree, but no one will ever admit that."

Eddy looked at him strangely, and he said, "You're saying that if I don't fit—if I don't *talk* like you—you'll run me out?" He wasn't upset. It was like going to school, and being told a policy of tardiness or something. It was fair game, and Ben "Tinselton," as he was known—Eddy was remembering his name, now—was just letting him know the rules. He sensed that Ben *wanted* him there, at least to try out for a while... and if it was to his liking, he might want to stay. "Tinselton," Eddy assumed, was given to him because he must have been giving a lot of Hollywood people the lowdown on what to expect. "I don't *need* this," he said to another agent when he came in the room where the papers were being signed.

Deep down, Eddy didn't want to be there, but it was like picking your poison. He *knew* nothing would ever be the same in his old hometown again, and he wondered if he was caught in *The Lottery*—a story he had read during high school (one of the few he actually read without referring to Cliff's notes, or movie rentals). *The Lottery* was about reverse fortunes, and as fortune would have it, he'd take a *reverence* toward reading, and he wouldn't look back to his old high school ways.

Eddy reflected on all of that as he listened to Kiss, and as he drove up to the driveway where he'd live in the future. He was halfway expecting to see a Mexican—maybe Ben "Tinselton" (his last name truly escaped him, and it bothered him that he could only think of his nickname given by the celebrities he sold to) had a gardener that would stick around. Instead, he was shocked to see Jim Anthony. Jim Anthony

was holding out arms that stretched wide, much like Christ on the cross. He was doing a hugging gesture, but Eddy could tell that he was nervous as hell. He could tell that he didn't want to *be* there, and somehow, he had been coerced into taking a different attitude than he had in the park when he was showing off in front of Amy, Amber, and Tony. His attitude changing to one of peering awestruckedness when Eddy got out of the car, and *maybe* he didn't know that it was Eddy to begin with (that's what Eddy figured because of the sudden change in attitude). He wiped that look off, though, and he looked like a broken man. Eddy never *wanted* him broken. He just wanted him to stop *hitting* on him. He wanted to believe that when he was hitting on women, he didn't need to have to look over his shoulder at Jim Anthony, and his large gold necklace with the Ireland-flag symbol on it. He didn't want that, and he feared that because they got off on the wrong foot, they'd never be the same in public. After all, Eddy was going down the path of least resistance, and he was figuring that if he were to ever completely break from the white trash people in home town, he'd have to *accept* Jim Anthony. After all, he seemed to be everywhere—nearly omnipresent—and he was figuring that he was *way* more than just a car dealer of expensive vehicles. He must have been something else, and dealing cars was just his front.

Eddy didn't care. He approached the home where he'd be living, and he asked Jim, "Are you going to let me *past*?" He didn't do a thing about Jim's wide open arms because he sensed there was something *wrong* with it. He waited for an answer, and got none verbally. Instead, Jim ushered him in the house, and he was frustrated as a motherfucker. Eddy wondered where *Richard* was at—no, it was the Richard-Gere-looking guy, and he knew he'd have to start remembering names a little better or else he'd be insulting a whole town—and didn't see him around at all.

"I *know* you now!" Jim said, and for once, his nervousness started to subside, and he spoke with a little confidence. He started to ask about the Mexicans that were bugging Eddy—he had something to do with the spy ring that was set up to feel Eddy out to see what *kind* of rich guy he'd be—and Eddy didn't respond to him

Eddy looked around the large place, instead, and he wanted to feel *home*. He *knew* he'd feel home eventually, because for all practical reasons, his home ("house," it now was, even though it was an apartment he had lived in) was a million miles away. It was on *Mars*, for as far as he was concerned. He'd never go back there again, and if he did, he knew it'd be the death of him.

"You *have* to deal with me!" Eddy told Jim.

Jim tried to ignore him, and he wished that someone—maybe his buddy, the

real estate guy—would walk in the door. Eddy could *tell* that he was hoping for someone else to save him because he was looking at the door with no control of being able to look *elsewhere*.

"I *know* you don't want me here," Eddy said.

"Shush," Jim said. He tried to convince Eddy that it was genuine—like he *really* wanted him there—but Eddy could see it in his eyes that he had never had acting lessons before (he no doubt was *not* a producer, or something along those lines in the cinema field) because his eyes shifted madly.

"I'm going to *kill* you," he told Jim. But he wasn't talking *physically* of killing him. He was reading his thoughts—he was reading his *body* gestures—and he knew that *Jim* was thinking that he was going to kill *Eddy*. "This place feels like Xanadu. You ever watch that movie of *Citizen Kane*, or whatever it was?" Eddy asked Jim. He didn't know what to do, but he was making the most of the situation... and he was exposing Jim for what he was: A guy that *pretended* to be important, but wouldn't even admit that he didn't belong any more than Eddy did.

Chapter 11

**"Our revolution is full of holes. Has something gone astray?" —Oingo Boingo,
"Tell Me Where My Friends
Go"**

The history books are littered with archetypes of people that existed in society and *continue* to exist in society. The English had their Celts and their other-worldly

kind of ways. The early Americans in cinematography had *The Wizard of Oz*, but they didn't have the internet. They *had* an internet, but it was mental. Eddy was finding these things out, and the fact that computers existed really mean a thing: It only made their jobs easier, and it made it necessary that *true* psychics were needed fewer and farer in between. The Mormons, for example, were a spiritual bunch, but they relied on local control more than anything else for the upstart of their religion (it was explained to Eddy that way when he had visitors that came to him that rode in on two separate bicycles). Other people came to visit Eddy in his first week there—it was Malibu that he was at, and he was proud of the fact that it *started* to feel like a home—and they were rock 'n' rollers. He said to be careful about church groups that would come around. They were tainted, at least in the rock stars' minds. They were tainted because they became what they fought. The Catholics—the ones that bent Eddy's arms behind his back when he was at the Beverly Hills Hotel—had priests and bishops that spied on people, but they spied in ways that modern police used psychics to help them with crimes that they couldn't solve. The priests, though, utilized the *real* internet, and it made it easy for the leaf-blowers to go along with their collusion.

Eddie Macral was one of the stars that came to visit Eddy Richards. He said, "We are both Eddies, and even though you spell your name different, we are *guardians*! You keep that in mind, and you keep in mind that if you went to Magic Mountain—it's not *far* from here—you could be a key chain in their gift shop that *said* so. You're real name is *Edward*, right?"

Eddy nodded his head yes.

"Well. We are *guardians*, and we ward things off, like *Stewarts* ward things off as well. It's part of our name, and it's part of self-fulfilling prophecy."

"I came here to Malibu to *escape* all the craziness," Eddy Richards said to Eddie Macral.

"Then *don't*!" Eddie said aloud, but he wasn't talking to anyone present in the room. Eddy Richards figured he was talking to a ghost—maybe it was a *Catholic* one—and he couldn't get rid of him.

"Are you saying that since Vatican two, when the church changed so many things in Catholic theology that they *weren't* supposed to change 'Holy Ghost' to 'Holy Spirit.'"

"I *guess* you got it," Eddie said reluctantly. "But someone's spirit can be atheistic, *right*? In other words, you say someone has *spirit*! You say they have *spunk*!"

"But it's a figure of speech. I know what you're saying now," Eddy Richards

said in response.

"There's a *conspiracy*, you know, and my dad told me about it long ago, but I never believed it."

"I know," Eddy Richards said to his co-Eddy (-*Eddie*) partner. He said, "They've been telling me a *lot*, and I'm not just talking about the supposed Jehovah's witnesses that come around... and all the *rest* of the bunch."

"So you're part of the *conspiracy*!" Eddie Macral said in disappointment.

"You *don't* know the ghetto that I grew up around. I *can't* stay there because people can't behave. It's smoke and mirrors, and I'm finding that the Catholic church is more of a social institution more than anything else. A Jehovah's witness came and he showed me something in *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*—a book written by the pope in the nineties—that said that God is on the side of the poor... *always*, and I think the pope is playing *God* because he is siding with the leaf-blowers, though I don't know why. *And...* I don't *buy* for a second that it's not *real*. I don't buy for a second that they don't *know* when someone wins the lottery. I don't buy for a second that they don't try to *convert* the guy."

"So the fifth chapter of Mathew says the same thing, *right*? In the sermon on the mount. He says—*Jesus* supposedly does—that the poor and the meek will rule the Earth. You're *saying* that regardless how successful you are... even if you behave like *Solomon* who was a rich king... the Catholic church is going to try to fuck your shit *up*!?"

"Yep."

Eddie Macral went to Eddy Richards' new house, and he went there to enlighten him about how *his* click wanted him to behave. In the end, it was Eddie Macral that had something to learn, or Eddy Richards *believed*.

Eddie Macral explained something to Eddy Richards that he already know about. He said, "Those *popping* sounds—the ones you first told me about on the phone before I came—I have something to say about them. They're from the CIA—"

"I *know*," Eddy Richards said.

"—or they're from the Russian mafia, and I *don't* think you know."

"Go *on*, then," Eddy Richards said.

"When they first *build* these places—*no* one is God, you see?—there are people that come in. There are carpenters and gardeners, and even if there *weren't* psychics that spied on you through telepathy—it goes on all *over* the place in Summerland, a place not far from here—they would get you electronically because it's that good and technology is that *swift*!"

"I *don't* understand," Eddy said.

"Call me paranoid, and in a song that we do—"

"The World.' I already know it."

"—we talk *jokingly* about what goes on."

"Okay," Eddy Richards said. "Do *you* have a group that does this?"

Eddie Macral shook his head no, but he said, "We don't *need* to. We spy telepathically—out group does—but we're linked to Illuminoids that Stephen King never told you about. You *do* think it was him that really talked to you, right?"

"Yep. Weirder things have happened, so why *not*?"

"An Illuminoid is someone like his Illuminati crowd. George Washington was a Mason, and they thought they were going to rule the world. They *did*. Either way, since then, there have been people in Scandinavia that believe that *they* never should have been removed from power. You know New York used to be New Amsterdam, right?"

"No," Eddy Richards said, and he wanted the weirdness to end, but he *knew* that it'd help him in the long run if it made him no stupider than he had began to begin with. "No, I *don't* know."

"Well the Scandinavians have people in power that are still in royalty, and I'm talking about *recognized* royalty. There are about ten different groups that *call* themselves Illuminati, but the truth is that they compete with each other. For all practical reasons, I call them *Illuminoids*. It's something I picked up in a book." He handed Eddy Richards a copy of *Behold a Pale Horse* from a sack that he was carrying near him (a guitar was in a case not far away, and he wanted to play a song from it). "There is a lot of bullshit in here, and you're going to have to sift through some of it because it's *meant* to be that way. In other words, we can't have everyone knowing *everything* about the way we live."

"Okay," Eddy said. He grabbed it, and he noticed a *glare* in his eyes. He noticed something change. Life wasn't what he made it out to be. "So you're saying that that *popping*... that that thing that goes on a *night*... that someone... some *fuck*, has put electronic devices in my *house*!? Why are you *telling* me this!?"

"It's to prepare you, and quite honestly, it's to get it off my conscious."

"But paranoia begets more paranoia, right?"

"That's what I'm *telling* you, but you're going to have to treat Tony no different than he'd treat you. We *have* spies, and like Daryl Hall and John Oates song, we are spies, but on your *side*, you see? It's from a song called 'Private Eyes.'"

"That's a *joke*!" Eddy Richards said. "But I get it. I really do. They went

through it too, didn't they?"

"Yep," Eddie Macral said.

He left and he didn't take the bag pipes that he had brought along with the guitar. He figured Eddy could use some music, and the perfect path to rock 'n' roll was through zaniness.

Chapter 12

"And thou shalt eat it *as* barley cakes, and thou shalt bake it with dung that cometh out of man, in their sight." —*Ezekiel 4 : 12*

"*METEOR SHIT!*" the TV said. Eddy Richards was alone and he was trying to shake the demons that clouded his memory. He kept seeing the Virgin Mary in his head... but she wasn't in typical attire. She was at a diner with Humphrey Bogart and Jerry Lewis. She was giving head to Dean Martin. Eddy couldn't *shake* it. The movie that he put on was Stephen King's *Creepshow*. He figured that seeing things on the screen would be *better* than anything that was going on inside of his head. He kept seeing the Catholic officials that tried to rough him up at the hotel in Beverly Hills. He kept seeing the leaf-blowers, but they were attacking people instead of just blowing leaves past them. He was at the part in the movie when Stephen King was on screen (he was playing one of his own characters) and he got a meteor that was full of green stuff. Eddie Macral had said to watch out for *any* leaf-blower that had a small tattoo of a green dot on his left hand. They were in the mafia, but it was laughable because it was outdated, at least in the modern era. There were *connections* because of the real internet that showed these people, and they were under relative control. They'd get *wild* once in a while, but like the bikers that had to put their helmets on, they were rendered to the status of relative nobodies. It didn't matter to Eddy. He had called Tony, earlier in the day, and he expected that Tony would be happy with what he was given. Though it wasn't a house with a title (Eddy figured he'd *give* him one, eventually, if he behaved in his new environment), it was a rental with the same accommodations, and he should just be happy with the way it was. There was a sign that had "The Simpsons" written in cartoon like shit, and Eddy replaced it because he figured that it'd be too much of a joke to Tony when he came. He *felt* like joking when he thought up the idea when he first came to Beverly Hills—

what seemed like *forever*, ago—but that feeling had faded when he saw the real way things worked. Priests weren't people to be trusted. Rock 'n' roll artists were people that were scared off their gourds. Mexicans were people that had a well-nit network, and they decided to take down anyone that feared them, much like Eddy remembered it as a kid, but this time it was way more subliminal, and the mind-fucking was almost something you wanted to give *in* to. The *problem* was that the mind-fucking had no purpose. In other words, Eddy couldn't figure out *why* they did it, outside of pure jealousy or ignorance. After all, they could *pretend* that the rich people didn't exist. After all, they didn't *build* the houses—well, they literally did, but they didn't design them, and they'd still be living in adobe houses if it *weren't* for white people—and they didn't design the plants that gave them electricity. Eddy couldn't figure it out. Why couldn't they just let white people *be*?

He figured it was a type of hazing, but it was hazing *for* the Mexicans, and Eddy started believing in God (or some higher power, because of all the telepathy going on) and he figured that God was *hazing* the Mexicans.

Eddy wasn't sure what to think, and he reached a point of such frustration that he got on the internet. He was led to a Chelsea Clinton web site, and it told him things that he didn't want to hear (there was a picture of her holding a cup—a *white* one—and it was positioned in a way that it looked like the toilet paper that Eddy liked to spooge into when he was jerking off in the old neighborhood). He figured it was a sign, but he moved on. He *prayed* that there was a way that he could contact a site that he *Jarnipio* on it. Maybe there was something of city photos that the City of Beverly Hills had—no, it was *Hollywood* where he was harassed by they "jarnipio" (it became a generic term to him, eventually) that was blowing leaves. He was going to pay someone a hundred bucks for confirmed filming of fucking with him wherever he went. He was going to do that, and he was going to pay anyone ten bucks that would just lead to *leads* about where the guy was. Eddy tried to be Buddhist before he became a millionaire, and like he was explained to Tony, it was because he was sick of the Roman oppression, but now he was seeing that the oppression was *real* from the Romans (at least in the Catholic church). Either way, he couldn't get away from it, and he couldn't get it out of his mind. He thought to pick up the bag pipes, and thought to blow away his problems. He wanted to blow away the *jarnipio*, though, that was fucking his world in his mind.

Eddy set up a web site, and tried to be subtle about what he was asking for. He was asking for information about the people that were fucking his world. He figured that you keep your enemies close, and you keep your friends further away.

Why? It's because it's best that way, and he set up a site that portrayed him as a Mexican, himself. He said that Jarnipio (was his name *Frank* in real life?.. because he couldn't remember) owed him money, and he said that his name was Hector Rodriguez (he didn't consciously register that Hector was the real name of the jarnipio that was fucking with him, and thought it was a coincidence when he later thought of it and *remembered* it). Either way, that was his plan. Tony was to come the next morning, and he'd be surprised by the sight that he was to see (he was led on the pretences that he was merely seeing Eddy's new house).

A neighbor came over bright and early on the morning that Tony was to arrive. His name was Jimmy, and there was no relation to Jim Anthony, the prick who wouldn't leave Eddy alone. He looked a lot like Jim Baker, the evangelist from television so long ago, but he denied being him. He said to Eddy that he put on "Pete's Dragon" when Tony showed up. "You see?" Jim said (he gave no last name even when asked). "In Pete's Dragon, there are kids that can make *money* off of the dragon, or something along those lines. I can't remember because it's been so long, but even if you *don't* put on the movie, you need to refer to him as a dragon, but don't call him a dragon *directly*. Make him feel paranoid. Call it 'hazing,' in your own mind, if you want, and if he's the real deal—if he's ready to be one of us—then he'll take it, okay?"

Eddy was reluctant, but he agreed. He said, "Are you going to stick around to help me out?" Jim shook his head no, but he knew that he was ready to help Eddy, and Eddy had no idea why. "I just won the lottery. I didn't get picked by *God*, or anything. Why are you guys treating me so specially?"

"I know. It's not like you invented the light bulb, or something, but it's *got* to be this way. If you let in dipshits that drain you, there's not turning back. *Some* rock 'n' rollers are like that, and the fuck up the whole *neighborhood*."

"It's like Maxwell Smart with going through all the doors, huh?" Eddy asked. He thought he must be on a new level that Tony had never wondered about.

"You *got* it!" Jim said, but he wasn't talking to Eddy any longer. He was talking to the thin air.

Tony came a little late, that day. He was driving a Toyota Altima, and he was cruising with Snoop Dog on the record player (Eddy couldn't help but think of it as a record player even though it was a CD player because all the changes, and the fags named Jim that kept showing up). Either way, Tony was bumping, he wore glasses that were tinted darkly, and he took them off with some nervousness. Eddy could feel tension in air, he was losing capacity to concentrate well, and he smelled shit

that was blowing in from the sea and associated it with the dirty-smelling Mexican who had harassed him before moving to Malibu.

Eddy said, "What's *up*, dragon?" He waited for a response, but didn't one. Jim (the guy who looked like Jim Baker but denied being so) walked up to Tony from seemingly nowhere, and Eddy knew that they *knew* each other, somehow. Eddy was thinking that the *internet* was the reason, and it didn't matter to him if it was the internet of the mind that the Mexicans supposedly used, or if it was the internet of the plastic sense that people called "geeks" played with all day. It didn't *matter*, and it was getting eerie. Eddy said, "I have this fuckin' Mexican gardener that I want to *fire*, Tony! Are you *up* for it?"

Tony tried to shrug him off. He realized—Eddy did—that Tony was under *mind* control from the Jim-Baker-like guy, and he was getting mad at all these people that claimed to be other people than they really were. It was obvious that Tony had been gotten a hold of, somehow—maybe it was by the "old money" people—and they threatened or coerced Tony into behaving a certain way.

"I want to *golf*, Tony, but I don't know the right hoops to jump through, and I don't know the right hurdles to jump. For all I know, that Jim Baker motherfucker next to you is a billionaire and he'll snuff me out with all his buddies if I don't go along with his *plan*!"

Tony was released from the Jim-Baker-like guy, and he started to approach Eddy. He didn't say a word.

"You better *leave*, Jim Baker!" Eddy said to the man that was grossly overweight, and probably hadn't been laid by someone that *wanted* to lay him in more than ten years. "You better *go*!"

Eddy waited for him to leave, and he went in the house himself when he realized that Jim (whatever his name *really* was) wasn't going to take off. Tony followed him, they played Playstation, and Eddy watched the video that Jim had given him earlier that morning. It was "Pete's Dragon," and Eddy said to Tony, "*You* have to refer to the leaf-blowers around your town as dragons unless you don't want to come here anymore, okay?"

"Yep," he said, but he wasn't sincere.

"I have a house for you. I have it down the block, and it's only a rental."

Tony didn't answer, but he could tell that Eddy was serious, and Eddy could tell that he was flattered by it.

Eddy said, "I'm not doing this alone, and it may be a year or two before I bring along Amy and Amber... *if* I ever bring them."

"Yep," Tony said. He was now serious, but he looked a little scared, but it was only for a little while.

Eddy feared that he'd be rejected. There's a song by *Eddie & the Whistlers* that's about a guy who ups and leaves his rich family. It's called "Visions of an Angel," and it's based on the fact that rich people can be *pricks*.

Eddy didn't get that from Tony. He was glad. They golfed, and by the end of the day, Eddy had to beg Tony to leave his new house. He wanted Tony to settle into his *own* place, and even though it was only down the street, it must have seemed like *miles*. Eddy figured it was because Eddy had already gone through the hazing, or a good *part* of it. Tony would be hazed, and he knew it. *How* would he be hazed? Eddy didn't know, but it was painful to think that there was no way to stop it.

Chapter 13

"It's better to have loved and lost than to never have loved at all." —shit people say

Tony settled into Maui, and it was easier than he thought. He *had* been in Malibu for a couple of months but, quite frankly, he got *bored* there. Eddy was battle things with the Mexicans, and he was battling things with the Catholic church. For some reason, Tony skipped the hazing phase, even though Eddy had given a credit card worth a million dollars in spending limits (it was a Visa). Eddy lived near Halle Berry (or he *thought* it was Halle Berry, because he could look down at her patio from his second-story balcony, and he saw her sun bathing topless, every now then, even though she didn't seem to mind that he was there. Eddy wasn't a voyeur—not in his own mind on the conscious level—but the guilt from his old society rode him pretty well. He didn't *mind* seeing Halle Berry bathe under the Sun with only a bottom bikini on, but it wasn't a turn on, and he thought it *might* be. She was there in the nude, and she wasn't *naked*. Adam and Eve were naked in the Bible. That's what Eddy was taught to believe. He saw Halle Berry, and he knew she was *nude*. He wanted to talk to her sometime, but he heard that Hilary Duff was in the neighborhood as well, and

something strange told him that if he was with a black lady (it didn't matter at *all* to him), the *neighborhood* would trip out, and they would send niggers from the hood to do stuff to Eddy that he didn't want done.

Either way, he tried to avoid her for that reason. Every now and then, he would think she was beckoning him. When he *thought* about it, he thought it was a ploy. He thought it was something done to *bait*. She almost assumed that he'd be a voyeur, and maybe he was when he was desperate and penniless, but *now* he had hope. He not only had hope, he had fear, and it was too much. He was like William DeFoe's character in "The Last Temptation of Christ." In that movie, William played Jesus Christ, and he was to be with Mother Mary. No. That wasn't the way it went. Eddy was having trouble remember exactly *how* it went, and he thought it was Mary Magdalene—yes, that was it—that he was to have a family with. In the movie, Jesus was good friends with Judas all the way to the very end, and Judas was portrayed as a misunderstood person, and *Peter* was the guy that was quick to arms and not seeing the big picture. Either way, in the movie, William DeFoe said to the character that played Jesus that he was simply *afraid* to do wrong things (Jesus was portrayed as very human-like). In other words, he *wanted* to do things, and Eddy imagined he would have burgled like the Invisible *Man* if he could, but it stopped him that he *knew* that society would judge him too harshly.

Either way, Eddy was in Malibu, and he was trying desperately to overcome his fears. He sensed that it wouldn't be worth it to go over to Halle Berry's place (if that's who she indeed was, and every time that Eddy tried to get a map of the stars—an *official* one—he got contradicting ones, and he knew that he should have expected it because if *he* was a star—and he *felt* like a star for a while in Beverly Hills—he'd throw people off as well). He had masturbated to her before, but he felt *eerie* in doing the same thing to his neighbor. He sensed spirits around, or so he started *believing* they were spirits rather than haunting memories, and he *thought* that if he was with this Halle Berry lady, Hilary Duff would *not* be with him. How? Even if it *wasn't* spirits, the fact that he'd have *guilt* when he met her would be detected by her on his face. He *knew* that, but it created a quandary. He started living like that character in "The Last Temptation," and he started living like he was in fear all the time. He couldn't *shake* it. He felt the spirits—he was sure of it now from the *Catholic* church—that were oppressing him without even *being* there. Why? He didn't know. He thought it was jealousy. He thought it was the fact that the priests in that church are sworn to poverty, and they are *jealous* of people that have money. Either way, it didn't matter to him, and Eddy thought the best way to handle it was by writing on the internet.

Eddy sent Hilary things to her web site. He didn't get anything official in response, and he figured that even the CIA—the ones that weren't in cahoots with the Catholics—were people that that were tapping his computer, routing emails here and there, and he figured that it *might* be happening to Hilary, and all the stars as well

Eddy felt lonely, and he played the bag pipes when his frustrations were reaching a head. It felt like a prison, in a lot of regards, and he figured that if he just gave it time, *something* good would happen. He wasn't sure.

He called up Tony on the third month anniversary of him moving into Malibu, and Tony moving on to Maui (Tony still paid for his place that Eddy had rented that was down the street that had the original Simpsons sign on it) and he didn't get a response. Tony had a cell phone, and Eddy figured he was living it up in Hawaii, and he feared that he'd like it *too* much out there, and he'd never see him again.

He didn't know that Tony was going through the same emotional roller coaster, and he turned his cell phone off because of thinking of home too much when he was away. He had met Don Ho, they had a good time, and he thought he'd tell Eddy about it some day.

Chapter 14

"Some say you can count the number of friends on one hand. I say you can count the number of *enemies* there." —Eddie Macral, guitar/ keyboardist for the band, *Freight Train*

"Have you any dreams you'd like to *sell*? Dreams of loneliness, like a heartbeat drive you *mahaad*," Eddy sang to himself. He was listening to old music, and he couldn't get over the feeling that he was being controlled. Was he being controlled by Fleetwood Mac? He *hoped* not, but he was listening to their music because it made him feel good, and like the part in "Dreams" in which they sing that "when the rain washes you clean, you'll know." Eddy figured that he wasn't completely clean, otherwise he wouldn't be feeling so shitty. Tony had come back from Maui with a guy named Jonathan Gelshire. He met him there, and Jonathan said to Eddy, the first time that he met him, that they met each other in *Nam* (he was bitter that he was white, and he didn't like the way the native Hawaiians treated him *some* places). Either way, he referred to the place as Nam, but he had the time of his life.

Eddy had gone to a Freight Train concert all by himself. Eddie Macral, before he did "Women"—a remake of a Def Leppard song—said to the crowd, "They say in England that Clapton is God because someone wrote it on a fuckin' wall! I say that I am God... and now you have to *bow* to me!" The crowd cheered, Eddie went on to speak some more, and he said it with the reverence and believability of Will Blake—a poet that Eddy Richards knew of that had lived in the eighteen hundreds. He was talking about nature, and he was talking about Neekay (except that it sounded like *Nie-kee* when he said it) and he was talking about "Back to the Future, part two," and how it seemed like he was in an alternate universe, of sorts.

Eddy listened to Fleetwood Mac when Tony returned from Hawaii, and he wasn't altogether *happy* with Eddy (he couldn't figure out *why*, and he wanted to ask him). Eddy got up, and after shaking Jonathan's hand in a nonchalant way, he said, "I have dreams I'd like to sell!"

"Let's *hear* them," Jonathan said. Tony was still mad, and was standing beside him.

"Okay. Here it *goes*!" Eddy played the music he had recorded from the bag pipes. There was something about pot smoking, and there was something letting things *go*! Eddy was on a roll, and he wanted to be Eddie Macral, who had wanted to be Eddie Van Halen before *him*. He figured it'd be a great thing, and Hilary Duff would hear of him someday, and she's *love* everything.

Jonathan wasn't happy with the music, but Tony started to lighten up.

Eddy asked, "What do you *think*?"

Tony said, "Don't *bug* me," but he wasn't mad any longer, and Eddy could tell.

Eddy said, "Let's go to *TGIF*! I hear the have a killer *trivia* game there!" He *knew* they had a killer trivia game, and he had been there many times before because he was lonely, and he liked just being around other people sharing their loneliness together in drunken stupors while pretending to be geniuses on the computer game as they sat around the bar. It made Eddy a little sad to think about, he tried to shrug off the feeling, then he asked, "Are you *up*?"

Jonathan was up. They went, and they played. Tony drove a new Chevrolet Suburban that he had traded in for, and by the end of the night, he was cussing out Jonathan and Eddy because they were having such fun. "*Fags*!" he said to them before dropping them off at Eddy's Malibu home.

"No. We're in to *women*!" Eddy said. He had Hilary's number. Someone at the bar had given it to him, and he hoped it was authentic.

Chapter 15

**"Necessity is the mother of invention." —plaque at the entrance of the
*Cockroach Institute***

Eddy slept well on the night that he came back from TGIF. It was great for him to be there, and girl whom he hadn't seen in long time were there as well. Kristi Smith was her name, and they had a great time. Eddy was thinking of Hilary the whole time, though, and he figured it'd be a matter of *time* before he met one of them. Kristi was the one who gave Eddy his number—the one he wanted of Hilary—but he didn't know that it was *Kristi's* number, in all actuality. She had given it to him with Hilary Duff's name because she figured it'd be the only way he'd call her back. He was bragging about his Lamborghini, he was joking that he was in the CIA, and he was going on and on about Hilary Duff. She gave him the number, and he hoped she'd call him back.

Hilary didn't *know* of Eddy before this. She didn't watch the news very much—she was on tour, and even if she wasn't, she wasn't caught up into world events like *other* people—but she started to *dream* of Eddy, and she didn't know why. Maybe it was her subconscious, she reckoned later (after *meeting* him), and she *had* seen him on the news from winning the lottery (she never watched lottery winners, she'd tell him, and she didn't know *why* she would have had that dream).

The CIA had computers that they put in people's homes who were important enough to follow. For that matter, they put them in *other* people's homes just in case they hit it big, or they *had* someone big that would come and visit them.

Eddy had a two-way mirror that was right above his bed. He didn't know that there was a secret camera that was microscopic that he lived under, and he didn't so much care anyway. He had already been told about all the spies that were out there, and it didn't matter if it came from the CIA or not. The CIA was full of lonely people, and they checked up on Eddy when he was sleeping. They watched him after his drunken stupor on purpose. That's when he was most uninhibited, and they had their computers so finely tuned that they could tell emotions on people's faces. They

didn't need *people*, in other words. It was like reading a thumb print through the computer, but *emotions* were being checked.

The CIA knew that Eddy was dreaming of Hilary, and vice versa, because the two people's emotions were coinciding beyond the scope of *any* statistical probability (Hilary was in a hotel room where the CIA had conveniently placed cameras that could pick up would-be sleepers' feelings).

Eddy didn't think much of it, but the CIA thought it was something that had to be tracked. Eddy had a big forehead, and he asymmetrical features about his face. The CIA was figuring that it was in America's best interest as an *image* nation that they ought not ever to get together. Hilary didn't know that, or at least she told Eddy so when they finally met. It was two months later, Eddy's emails apparently got through, and *artists* helped it happen. They had their methods as well.

Chapter 16

"Restless souls, enjoy your youth... Like Mohammad, it's the truth...

All that's sacred, comes from youth... Dedications... not even true..

With no power, nothin' to do... I still remember... Why don't you?!"

—Pearl Jam from *Vitalogy*

"Tony. I *have* to tell you about Hilary Duff." Eddy had been dating her for a few months, and he had experiences that no one would believe. In the mean time, Tony was taking Eddy's credit card, and he was traveling around the world. To be truthful, Eddy didn't even know *where* Tony was going, but Eddy suspected that some of his travels were to Italy because he was picking up the Italian language quite a bit. "She was sucking my *cock*! Tony, you *have* to believe me."

"No," Tony said reluctantly. He was talking to Axl Rose. Axl had been in the place in Malibu, and Eddy was becoming a star, of sorts, or at the very least, he became an enigma.

Axl Rose didn't do anything but to walk around nervously. Eddy didn't really have his cock sucked by Hilary Duff, by he had taken her by the breast the *very* first moment that they were in reaching distance, and it *felt* like the gods were on his side.

"I have to say that she put me on Zyprexa," Eddy said.

"Slow *castration*," Tony observed.

"I think I was a radical, in her mind, and Zyprexa—or whatever pharmaceutical company it is that *makes* it..."

"I *know*," Tony cut in with, but Eddy didn't know what he was talking about. He didn't know what he "knew."

"What *are* you? A *sellout*?" Eddy asked Tony.

He shook his head vigorously, and since he had come back from Nam, he was completely different.

"I *think* those Roman guys in Italy must have *done* something to you. I *can* easily check the credit card receipts, but I won't... I wouldn't *do* that to you and figure out if it was Rome that you went to..."

"*Why*?" Tony asked.

"You're all I got, right now. And Jonathan Gelshire." Eddy waited a little while because Axl brought a friend by the name of Greg Tigris. He had come from Italy, but Eddy wasn't sure completely if there was a tie to *Tony* going to Italy... if that had happened. Axl's friend was a nuisance, and surprisingly, Axl Rose was a nuisance as well. Eddy had watched in in concert long ago... and it was great. He watched him a year later, and he was cussing out the crowd. Eddy couldn't make heads or tails of Axl Rose, but he was *fun*.

Eddy met Axl Rose on a trip to Hollywood. Axl was whining about wanting "college music," so they went into a thrift store and *stole* some. It was crazy, Slash was there as well, and Slash boned out because he feared the cops. To Eddy's surprise, there was no fear in Axl (or *little*) and there was no fear in *him*. He was surprised by that, most of all.

Eddy asked Axl, "Who *is* this guy with the fuckin' funny *get up*?"

"*Don't* ask me," Axl said, and he was becoming guns and roses of the emotional regard. He could see rage quickly suppressed by calmness—though a *forced* calmness—and he figured that that was why he was in Guns 'n' Roses to begin with: Because he had these extreme moods that reminded Eddy of yin and yang.

Hilary Duff came up to the door, started to knock, then let herself in.

Eddy said to her, "What's up with *you*, skank!"

She wanted Eddy's approval, and Eddy couldn't figure out why. She was a star, to many people, she got emotional, and she zipped by Eddy and went to Axl Rose.

Axl said to her in a calm voice, "He's just *like* that." He was sincere, and Eddy was surprised at the genuine calmness on his face, but he was surprised more by the

fact that Axl didn't grab her boobs, or something that *Eddy* had done when he first met her.

"You *know* that she's sixteen, right?" Axl said to Gregory Tigris. He said it in a manner that Greg could have Eddy arrested for admitting that Hilary had sucked his cock, even though Eddy was making up (*exaggerating*) that part of the story. He had merely grabbed her by the breast, and he started kissing her face. She kissed back, and Eddy was surprised. She was *scared* of him, and Eddy didn't know why. He had started to feel like a stud because he had previously been with Jennifer Lopez.

"You *don't* understand what I'm doing because I can't hold these stories *in!*" Eddy said to Axl. "I'm *not* of the caliber of Hilary Duff, but for some reason, she approached me, I started to suck her tits, and I *told* her that I was more than willing to go to jail for statutory rape, if that's what it took."

Tony started to say something to Gregory, and Eddy sensed that Greg was some kind of *cop*, or something. It didn't *bother* Eddy. He wasn't afraid of the cops when he stole the CDs with Axl, and he wasn't afraid of any implied threats from Tony or Greg.

By the way, Tony was queer, now (maybe he had been all along), and was open about it. The girl that had talked to Eddy on the phone so long ago—Rene Something, and Eddy couldn't remember her specific name in longer because he had been in Malibu too long, and the *dope* was starting to go to his head, and reality and fiction were blurring a bit—said to fear the scorn of a homosexual. The men had their networks. Tony had hit on Eddy, Eddy rejected him... and Eddy was sensing that if he *didn't* reject him, he'd be fine with anything he did.

Eddy thought about that shirt that he had seen so long ago (was it ten years, because it *felt* like it?) in Rancho Cucamonga that said to kill the thing that you love if it runs away from you. But Eddy had been a fan of Sting, and even if *Sting* had turned queer (there was a rumor in Malibu that it was true), it didn't matter because he had a song that said to set *free* what you love. Eddy didn't buy it, any longer, and he was too attached to Hilary to let her go.

"Would *you* go to jail for her?" Eddy asked Axl, and he was serious.

Axl nodded his head yes and there was no hesitation.

"Tony..." Eddy said to his good buddy from the old neighborhood.

"I *know*," Tony said, but once again, Eddy felt like he *didn't* know. Otherwise, he'd let him finish a fuckin' *sentence*!

Tony tried to hit on Hilary, and she rejected him. He must have thought that Hilary was community property, and maybe that was why he went to Italy: To

become a *fascist*.

Eddy let his thoughts go, and he tried to kick out Gregory Tigris. There was something *wrong* with the guy. He thought he'd get objection from Tony—and Tony *mildly* objected—but in the end, Eddy was surprised that Gregory left... and Tony didn't whine *that* much.

They played golf later in the week. Tony shot an eighty-eight, and he was proud of himself.

Chapter 17

"Robert DeLeo plays through Eden cabinets. Dean DeLeo uses Demeter amps. Eric Kretz has injured himself on Yamaha drums and Paiste cymbals." —from the sleeve of *Core* by STP

Eric Kretz was sucking a coke. He put it to his mouth and it was one of the generic brands. "Why *are* you doing this to *him*?" Eric asked Eddy about Gregory Tigris.

"Fuck *you*, you insincere bastard!"

Eric put down his coke. He reached for a kleenex, blew his nose, xeroxed a copy of his latest lyrics, then put his styrofoam container into the trashcan. He said, "I need to get out of the music business. It sucks too much." A frisbee was nearby. He held it up—it was a red one—and he said to Eddy, "Let's play catch."

They played catch. All was good, and then they started talking about the lochness monster, and things like that.

Chapter 18

"If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen." —Eddy Richards to

Gregory Tigris

Gregory Tigris was a guy that was working for the Roman Catholic Church. Eddy didn't like him. He didn't like the Roman Catholic Church.

Ruben Mater was a guy that *worked* with Gregory Tigris, at least on the surface. He was a Roman Catholic, only by name. He had a skull in his room that had a Nazi insignia on it. It made Eddy weirded out, but Gregory was a guy that was created by Jews, and it was an oxymoron, almost, what was going on. Gregory was *Frankenstein*. He was on the front page of a Jewish-owned paper that only circulated in Malibu, and the surrounding areas. *Stein* is that name of a quintessential Jew, and *Frankenstein*, the monster, was really given his name by the scientist that created him. Eddy didn't remember the specifics, but he thought there was hidden meaning in it all. The Jews, according to Adolf Hitler in *Mein Kampf*, were people that were without a homeland, and they managed to *get* a homeland by smoke and mirrors. God didn't part the Red Sea—that's what *Eddy* believed—but by *saying* that God parted the Red Sea, and by saying that he tore down the walls of Jericho, the Jews *justified* having a homeland, eventually, and it last centuries.

Gregory was a guy that was working for the Roman Catholic Church, at least on the surface, and Jews helped promote him through their papers. He held their agendas. He was into "ethics," at least on the sense that he pretended to be in connection with the Absolute, a term that was used by Aristotle and it was emphasized to capitalize the word whenever it was written because the way that Gregory saw it, there *were* no relative truths. He had the right answers, and he had Absolute.

Either way, Eddy didn't believe this. He believed that the only reason it was *perceived* that way was power. "Might makes right," Eddy said to people at times, "And history is written by the winners." Eddy didn't believe for a *second* that the slaves were wrong in fighting for justice, and when they sang to Pharaoh to let their people go, they were really singing to the oppressors, some of them Roman Catholic, some of them Protestant, and some of them Jewish. He didn't care. He was being oppressed, and it was by the same guys that were oppressing the slaves, so long ago. There was a book in Timothy—one of them—in which Paul writes to treat your slaves okay. Eddy was believing that because he wasn't going along with the plan—the dominant hegemony—he was being oppressed.

Eddy had millions to work with—there was now twenty-eight million in the bank that he still had access to—but with the *collusion* of all the Jews and the people

that *claimed* to be Roman Catholic, he *knew* that he was fighting against trillions of dollars if he were to ever try to take them down.

He *didn't* want to take them down. He wanted them to leaven him alone, though, and ever since Hilary Duff came into his life, he found that he was in tabloids—the same ones owned by the Jews that ran the local *Malibu* paper—and they were printing things that were *slanted*. Eddy didn't mind that, because of freedom of speech, and he wouldn't have sued for libel even if he *could* get money from the people that were printing lies. The thing that *did* bug him was the thing that he was told so long ago—that gardeners, carpenters, and so forth were hired to put *bugs* in his house. He couldn't play his bag pipes, and he couldn't play his new Casio keyboard (he got a cheap one because he was bitter about the image of Hollywood, and how they needed *Korgs* to feel good about themselves) because he knew it'd be on the internet. He went places, and he was mocked in what he played. He *couldn't* prove that he was bugged. He just knew.

There was a girl at an ice cream shop that was sitting near where Eddy settled to eat his rainbow sherbet ice cream thingy. She was talking about his music, and she was talking about it in reverence. It *flattered* Eddy, and he figured that *maybe* Hilary Duff got a hold of it and spread it around (he gave her keys to the house, and maybe she grabbed a copy of one of his tapes). He didn't *think* so, though, because she was talking about *other* things that he had said in conversation.

Eddy thought about the circle of psychics that he was told exist. He thought about the Jews and wondered if *they* were the ones that were spreading things. He didn't know if it was electronically, and he didn't know if it was just psychic phenomenon, but he figured it was a combination of both. He even wondered if the *Germans* had some kind of psychic connection, and because Eddy was German (at least *part*), he figured that they may have been one of the ones that were looking *out* for him.

I'm just a spy, but on your side, you see? went through his head, and it was the Hall and Oates song that his buddy had told him about. The girl at the ice cream shop was talking that she *liked* Eddy, but she wouldn't talk to him directly. For that matter, she wasn't using his name, but rather about "the guy that always comes to eat sherbet, and he plays the bag pipes." Eddy *knew* it was him that she was talking about. Maybe she was scared. He didn't know. The Catholic church had mafia connections that Eddy was being quickly aware of, and he didn't know what to do except go home, *sing* about it, and hope he wasn't taken in by a Jewish-controlled gestapo, of all things, ironic as it sounded. "Gestapo" was a word that he became

aware of that was merely "secret police," in German, and he realized that it was a *short* saying for the full, "*Geheime Staatspolizei*." Up was down, and left was right, in the rich world. Eddie Macral had a song that he released on a solo record that was called "Gestapo, Just Stop It!" He wasn't talking about the Germans, Eddie Macral had told him on the day that he first visited him. He was talking about the Jews, and Eddie added, *Jews jew people—look it up in the dictionary because it's a real word... And Germans are germane people. That means that they are straight-forward about what they say.* Eddie paused that day and said, *I guess I'm jewing people because I'm hiding the fact that I'm afraid of them... and so was Adolf Hitler.* Eddie added that history goes in cycles, the Jews were once enslaved by Pharaoh, they were enslaved by the Babylonians, and they were massacred by the Germans... but *why?* And Eddie was unsure if any of it was true.

Either way, that didn't stop Eddy Richards from going about his business. Eddie Macral was a good guy to him, but he didn't have all the answers. *Keep playing your music when you get in the groove,* Eddie told Eddy on the day that he left his bag pipes there. He was scared, but there was nothing he could do about it besides *take* it. He wanted to weather the storm. That was all.

Ruben Mater was a guy that was simply *jealous* of Eddy, and all his riches. He worked as a car washer at a local joint, and he saw Lamborghinis come in all the time. Whenever Eddy would see him, he would tip him well, but Ruben felt bitter at the way life was. He was Roman Catholic only by name, and his association to Gregory Tigris was one in that "the enemy of your enemy becomes your friend." They knew each other through church, Greg and Ruben did, and Ruben was willing to take down Eddy because of jealousy. It was simple as that.

And the fact that Eddy never gave him a ride, when asked, of his new Lamborghini.

Chapter 19

**"We have got to make sure that something remains. If we lose each other,
we've got no one
to blame." — Oingo Boingo, "My Life "**

Scott Norwood met Eddy Richards on the internet. He told him that he *threw* the game—the big Superbowl where he missed the game-winning kick—and he was going through some *shit* because of it. They spoofed him on *Ace Ventura*, and he couldn't go anywhere publicly for *years*. Eddy wasn't sure if he was talking to the real Scott Norwood, and he didn't care. Scott gave him some information, and Eddy was grateful for it.

"It's all about the engrams," Scott said through their audio signal (there was video, too, but he had a towel over his head). "The Scientologists have it *right*... and I know you've heard that they were investigated for fraud from Time magazine, or wherever you got your source, but the Catholic church has been investigate for fraud, and Bill Clinton was almost *impeached*! It doesn't make the United States bad, does it?"

Either way, Eddy didn't want to hear about it, and he had told Scott (if that's who he really was) part of his story. He said it was like society was down on him beyond belief, and he couldn't get out of the hole where he was at.

Scott Norwood turned out to be a very fake guy. He pulled off his towel, by the end of the conversation, and he looked more like Colin Powell than anyone else. It sickened Eddy, and he wondered what was really going on.

The information he got was interesting. He said that was how the CIA was spying on people (the guy was really not Colin Powell, and Eddy could tell with clarity after a couple of seconds—he wasn't even *black*, but rather it was painted on his skin to hide his identity) by using electrical currents that came from the mind. Actually, Eddy was sure that they came from the *brain*, but that was okay.

The popping sounds in his room correlated to emotions he was getting. When he was thinking of insurgency, which he did quite often, they would start *popping*... but the CIA had it wired through satellites so that Eddy was connected to other people (when Scott said this, Eddy was sure that even *he* wasn't sure of himself). He said that they were wired together, and Eddy took it to be a euphemism that *they*—the other people—were wired as well, and the secret camera that was in Eddy's room really didn't matter (Eddy told him his theory of it, because it came to him in a dream). He said that Hilary Duff was wired, and since she was the bigger world figure—hence, she was more important to the United States—*she* had popping sounds that she had to deal with, but they weren't from her room, as Eddy experienced popping from *his* room. Rather, it was done so that if Eddy thought any bad thoughts of her (like breaking up, unexpectedly, or telling the world they were together), *Eddy* would get popped to hell, and there was no way that he could locate where the popping

sounds were coming from, because they *sounded* like they came from the walls.

Hilary was a joy, though, and there were rare times that Eddy truly felt like she was a nuisance to think about. Scott Norwood said the same thing happened to him, and if he thought about telling the world that he threw the game (he said he smoked much pot, since then, and he wasn't even sure if he *really* meant to throw the game), they would be popping him to shit... and they'd pop the *loved* ones that he was around.

Scott told him about 1984. He said that the book explained that the way torture would be in the future would be prolonged. 1984 was written in the late 1940's, and it was already past. Nonetheless, the ideas lived on. The government tortured you if you went against them. Eddy wasn't *against* the government in the classical sense. He wasn't trying to provoke them, but he felt he had to defend himself against their agents when the Catholic officials finally stepped aside, and Eddy wondered quite often if there was collusion between the two: The Catholics and the "real" United States officials. Either way, it didn't matter. It didn't matter at *all*. When Eddy refused the unwanted advances of United States' officials, they tried to break him. When they couldn't break him—he talked freely in public of the horseshit he was going through—they put him on a list. They declared *war* on him, but the United States, in its extreme capitalistic sense, was really like this... so Eddy had to choose, he figured, between the horseshit Catholics or the fuckin' stupid United States. He *didn't* realize that things were like this before he got his money.

Eddy was in love with Hilary Duff, or he *believed* he was in love. He knew that she loved his presence, and when things were going wrong, the popping would begin. It drove him batshit, and if the reason he was supposed to be around her was so the United States could look good, it *exacerbated* a problem. It made bad things worse.

Eddy was talking to Scott Norwood, and he was surprised that the CIA didn't cut off his transmission. He was surprised by that a *lot*. He was surprised that they didn't come to kill him. He was new money, but he wasn't spending it the way they *wanted* him to spend it. They wanted him to decorate his car like it was a NASCAR, or something. Eddy didn't really know, but that's the way he felt, and he explained it to Scott Norwood.

"So don't talk to *me*!" Scott said, but like so many *other* fake things around him, he knew that Scott wanted talking to.

Eddy thought about the engrams, he thought about how he was dreaming, and he thought about how the popping woke him up in his room. He thought about the engrams, and he thought about how they were *stealing* his dreams. Sometimes

he'd be dreaming of Hilary—he didn't mind when this happened—and he knew that he'd be talking to her about whatever new revelations were going on in his life. He had read a *Cat In the Hat* book, and he knew that there were *codes* in there that adults pass up, most often. There were things like that. Either way, he *didn't* mind when it was Hilary, but once in a while, the CIA would allow *other* people to come into Eddy's dreams, and it was like the dream police. "The dream police, they are inside of my head!" Eddy said to Scott before signing off on his computer.

Julia Roberts was one of the girls that he dreamt about, and it was sad what was going on. She was *jealous* of Hilary Duff because her beauty, and in a dream, she gave her a poison apple. Eddy remembered that, and wrote it down on his hand before the popping *really* started to fuck his head. It was a shame, and Eddy didn't know if it was real. He didn't know what an engram was, though he had read the article in Time magazine so long ago that said that Scientology had been busted for electronically bugging people... and claiming that it was *telepathy* that they were using to get information. Eddy didn't care. He really didn't *care*. It could be true either way, and all he wanted to do was dream of Hilary, and have her every night.

He had told Scott Norwood that they—the *public*—were lessening his ability to see her. It made Hilary sad, and Eddy could see it in his dreams... and sometimes they were *daydreams*. He could see it. He asked for advice. Scott told him to go out and look at the waves at his beach house. He said that when he was a kid, he had a cousin that almost drowned. The cousin got knocked down by the waves, struggled to get up, and nearly suffocated on salt-water because he became short on breath. He said that he learned a lesson. Scott told him, "When you get knocked down by the waves when you're a kid, don't *fight* it. That's what *I* learned. It'll take you to shore, most the time. It'll feel like forever, but it's best if you just let the waves ride you in. It's best if you let nature take its course, sometimes."

Chapter 20

"I don't want to play the wedding game and drift away, leaving an illusion."

—Def Leppard

"You can use your illusion, let it take you where it may, we live and learn and

sometimes it's best to walk away."

—Guns 'n' Roses

Lard Tits was a fat and brown Mexican, about five ten, and three hundred and fifty pounds. He used to go to Raider games, and though he shed his goatee later in life, he had one that *all* Raider fans had at a time. He was friends with Ruben Mater, and it was funny because Jonathan Gelshire was tied to them as well (they eventually became part of a cult called "Amway"). Ruben Mater was with Jonathan Gelshire one day at the Coliseum (when the Raiders played there) and he was dropped off when traffic had gone to a screeching halt. They decided to get some beer, and they were surprised when they came back to street, not even five minutes later, and traffic had whizzed by, leaving them in the dust (they had thought it'd stay at the standstill that it was). Either way, that left them looking for their car—a needle in a *haystack*—by foot. Ruben Mater went up to the first guy that he could find (it was his first Raider game, and he was oblivious to the "look" because he had never worn a goatee), and he asked him, "You see a fat Mexican?... Wearing a *Raider* shirt? He was with some buddies that were going to barbeque on their tailgate?"

The fat Mexican that he asked had a goatee, and a Raider shirt... and was about to set up his *own* barbeque. He *almost* thought that Ruben was joking, and Jonathan stood around dumbfounded because he was looking at the same thing as the Mexican being asked. Granted, Ruben had been drinking heavily, but the parking lot was *full* of Raider fans that were Mexican and had goatees. The guy said, "Take your *pick*!"

It was funny to Jonathan Gelshire. They took off, and sure enough, they found Lard Tits, and the rest of his gang, not even ten minutes later. Lard Tits asked him, "How did you *find* me?"

Ruben said, "After I was joking that you had a goatee and a weight problem, I said... *No*. I'm looking for *Lard Tits*!"

Ruben had been joking that day, and he *had* known Lard Tits's real name... but thereafter, he forgot it. Lard Tits had laughed at himself, and didn't mind the nickname.

Over the years, they formed a special bond. They went to Amway meetings, Lard Tits shed his goatee and, instead, had a more conservative *mustache* look. He still looked like a dirty Mexican to Jonathan, but that was okay. They were in their secret society, and that would rule their world.

Tony was oblivious to a lot of what went on, and when he met Jonathan in

Hawaii, Jonathan didn't let on that he knew so much about secret lingo, and shit along those lines. Eddy Richards had been approached by Amway many years before he won the lottery, and he turned them down. They teach you, in Amway, that if a person isn't helping you make money, he is not your friend at all.

Eddy had a job at AM/ PM. It was only part time, and he was going to Chaffey Community College in his spare time. Amway required that you buy all your groceries (and the like) from them. They required that you place your products in such a way that you're in a subliminal Truman home, in the vane of Jim Carrey's movie. Eddy had a friend that he went to school with—Dave Johnston was his name—and he invited Eddy to Coco's one day to meet with his superior. They were to put Eddy in their pyramid scheme, but Eddy felt he already had things going for him. He didn't know if Dave was a friend in the typical sense. He was more like a buddy, most the time. Dave wanted his money. Eddy wanted to be like everyone else. He wanted his *Ben and Jerry's* if he didn't feel like eating Dryer's ice cream (Amway required *strict* product loyalty, at least in the beginning phase of their hazing process). He wanted his meager paycheck to pay for beer. He wanted to grow his hair past his shoulders, and he *didn't* want to be a homogenized motherfucker that would eventually be like the guy that he met that would ruin things for him in Malibu, at least in a temporary manner. He didn't want to be like *Lard Tits*, in other words. He didn't want to be a fat, Mexican, sellout loser that had his GED, and nothing more. He wanted to feel good about himself because of merit, and not because of who he knew, or the ass he kissed, or the cock he sucked.

It was *hard*. It was very difficult. When Eddy first met Lard Tits, it was because he was on Amway's shit list. They had been told that he wouldn't be sold, and that was cold, and he didn't need to be so *bold*. It was as simple as that.

Lard Tits especially wanted to take Eddy down because he heard that Eddy was trying to fire the gardener that was at his house—the one that had come with the house when he moved in. Eddy knew he was a spy, and he had an eerie *feeling* of the jarnipio that did his lawn, *anyway*. Lard Tits had a GED education, and he had the mindfill that Amway puts you through. He had instinctive emotions that said to take anyone down that didn't *fear* you. He got it, ironically, not from Amway, but rather from being a Raider fan. Al Davis had once said that he'd rather be feared than respected. He was talking in regards to the speed that he had in the wide out position, and it was just a philosophy that he had *anyway*. The Raiders, though, had a problem in that they played "not to lose," toward the end of their games, rather than to *win*. That's the way that Lard Tits saw things. He took his three hundred and fifty

pound frame, and pretended that he could do a better job at quarterback than Jeff Hostetler (that's who the Raiders had going for them, at the time). It didn't matter that he could barely maneuver to the beer stand, let alone run a sprint for more than five feet. He was a couch potato, but that changed when he got in Amway, and when he started taking people down that they had problems with.

Eddy had a mentality that he developed in his ethics class. The question was posed about a hypothetical island that was found that had many resources, such as gold, silver, and the like. The question was posed that, "Should the island *remain* untouched if it were simultaneously discovered by three countries? In other words, if it meant world *peace* that Eurasia, Eastasia, and Oceania—three hypothetical *lands*, in this case—all stayed out, should it be *done*?"

Eddy thought so. He really thought so, but Lard Tits was of the mentality that things had to be explored. He wasn't for letting reserves exist in the United States, and if *he* were in Eddy's class at the time, he would no doubt say that Oceania (if it encompassed the United States, and/ or Americans) ought to subvert the other two. They should *sign* a peace treaty, but when push came to shove, they should covertly explore and/ or exploit the new find. They should *raid* it, in other words.

Lard Tits was about to marry a girl by the name of Cathy. She was a good girl, and Lard Tits figured that if he impressed her before their wedding, she'd be his forever. He took out Eddy. It was as simple as that. He didn't know what he was *doing*, but he did it anyway. Ruben set the whole bullshit up. He never *did* like Eddy, and he was having fun. He had watched a Simpsons episode in which Homer was laughing at a man on TV who had an unfortunate thing happened to him. Homer said, "That's *funny*!" He was talking to Marge, at the time. "Because it happened to someone *else*!" That was his attitude about Eddy, and when Lard Tits threw a full bucket of pig's blood on Eddy in public, Ruben exclaimed next to him, "Take *that*, you Stephen King motherfucker!"

Amway would not have approved of that language in their meetings. In public, it didn't matter. All gloves were off, and now that Eddy had effectively gotten the Catholic church out of his hair, Amway felt he was fair game.

Eddy said to the both of them, "This is *America*! I don't need Amway to tell me what is *American*!"

He was around a crowd of fifteen people at the ice cream store that he frequented. They stood around, and they thought he was a pathetic loser. One of the ladies said, "You're a *stupid* motherfucker!" They didn't feel pity for him at all, and Eddy was surprised.

Chapter 21

**"I'd rather be... I'd rather be... I'd rather be with an animal!" —Pearl Jam from
*Versus***

Eddy found that with all his millions, he *couldn't* escape the bullshit that he wanted to get away from. Lard Tits, after he threw the blood on Eddy, pulled down his pants and whipped out his brown pecker. It would *haunt* Eddy for a long time, and not because of the fact that it was a penis—Eddy had seen some porn movies, and he *seen* penises besides his own, and he was very uncomfortable about it—but rather, because one of the people that was at the ice cream shop was a little boy of the age of four, or so. He was wearing a picture of a monkey on his shirt, and the monkey was pretending to be sleeping on a big banana. Those details were worse of all. The pig's blood from Lard Tits would come off. The image of his pecker remained. The guy was showing something off, and it was *not* that he had a mind. He had body—an over-sized one—and that's all he was worth in society.

When things come down to it, we all have hormones, we bleed red blood, and the figures on your bank statement don't mean a thing. That's what Eddy would tell people on the way to New York. He had been an ecologist, nearly by default. He was raised a Christian, and like he told Tony, he became a Buddhist because being meek and poor was too much. He couldn't handle the backlash of always turning the other cheek, and he simply didn't have enough to walk the extra mile. Also he could have lied to himself and said that he loved his brother as himself... but he didn't... and that created a paradox, because in Christianity, you were taught not to lie. But at the same time, you were taught to love your brother as yourself, and you were taught to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind. Eddy couldn't do it, and he barely grasped that a god even existed, especially after taking some classes at Chaffey and feeling enlightened by what they taught.

There was a saying by Wolfgang von Goethe that said, "He who has art or science, also has religion. He who has *neither* art nor science, let him *have* religion." Eddy felt it was his duty to get an art, and in the end, ecology sufficed. It *became* his religion. It had creation stories that rivaled Christianity. The Desana believed something in the Amazon rainforest, and the Inuits believed something in the northern part of America. In between, there were *thousands* of creation stories, and

Eddy liked every one of them because they fascinated his mind. He believed the story of Adam and Eve was that of a myth, and at the most, it was one of allegory. He believed a *lot* of this, and he was shunned by people that called themselves *Christian*. He *claimed* to be Buddhist because he had to take the rapids where they led him. He read in *Hindu* philosophy, of all things, that you're thrust into a world of divided perceptions. At a point, someone *somewhere* is going to try to make you like them. Eddy saw it in the Mexicans, and he tried *desperately* to get away from the Catholics as well. He thought about that desperate lady that tried to buy his car—the *Camaro*—from him. He thought about the girl that eventually bought it. He thought about that brown penis that Lard Tits whipped out after throwing the blood on him.

For the most part, Eddy was a recluse, and he got into ecology because of what he was told of the oil spills that were outside. Sure, they were a reference to the Mexicans in the neighborhood, but Eddy started thinking about the birds. He saw a kid on the beach throw sand into a sea gull's eyes. It *pained* Eddy... and he got over it, but the image haunted him for a while.

He thought about the brown penis, and he knew that he was going to have to get out of Malibu. He knew that the fifteen people at the ice cream parlor were on the side of Amway. Eddy *tried* to be on the side of Amway—he figured it'd get him away from the Mexicans, and them coaxing him all the time to go to a United Farm Workers' meeting—and he *tried* to fit in. In the end, it was his asymmetrical face that led him to being rejected by them. He didn't *look* good enough, and when you were in Amway, you had to be an effective public speaker. Eddy *was* effective, but only when he was mad. When he was happy, he just wanted to be drunk and having a good time. He didn't want to think about who was burning what flag, and what Mexican was let in over whatever other white person. Amway rejected him.

Eddy decided to go to New York after the thing with the pig's blood. The *Mexicans* were getting on his nerves beyond *belief*! It seemed that Amway—or *someone*, or something—let them know that he was easily taken. It made Eddy mad. It made him want to never see a Mexican again.

The bottom line was that Eddy thought that all his money would buy him control. He was wrong. When he *wasn't* in public, and when kids weren't hopping around him like mad Teletubbies, he'd be home trying to mind his own business. He guessed that the fuckin' *Catholics* figured they owned a part of him, for whatever undefined reasons. After all, in the Bible, there is an old lady that mysteriously died when she didn't give her money to the new cult that had been forming (it would later be known as Christianity, and it was in the book of Acts, as Eddy remembered it).

Eddy suspected, though, that she didn't mysteriously die. He suspected she was *killed* by the motherfuckers that were like Peter—a madman that was willing to cut off anybody's ear if he didn't get his way. Either way, Eddy thought his money would buy power, and for a while, it did. He got to meet Axl Rose, and he got to meet Eddie Macral. Tony Simpson was a cool guy for a while, and things worked out... but that brown *penis*!

It's funny how things stick your head. You can have a thousand good memories, and then have them all knocked down by one single incident. Eddy didn't think he'd ever think the same of Malibu, again. He didn't believe that *everyone* was in it to see that he went down, or that he left, *but* that fuckin' *Mexican*! That big Lard Tits with his bowling ball *shape*! He couldn't be forgotten.

Eddy went to the Amtrak station, and he got ready to leave. At the least, it'd be a vacation. At the most, it'd be a new start. He couldn't get away from people in California. Maybe he could do it in New York... a town of seven million people, or so.

Chapter 22

"Damned if you do. Damned if you don't." —Bart Simpson when he was taken to the school of

privileged children

Eddy got on the Amtrak, and he thought he was going to leave all his problems behind. He had been told that the Mexican mafia had signifying marks on them that would distinguish who they were. Eddy couldn't remember what they were—green dots, red flowers, blue daisies—it didn't really matter to him. A large man—not round, like the bowling ball Lard Tits—but rather six two, or so, blond with a mustache, and carrying a softball mitt with him got on the train. Eddy didn't know who he was—he said something about hedge clipping for a living—and he didn't really care. He stank of sweat, and he started to try to talk about small things, like

his penis, and like the work he did in the backyard. He was always scolding his dog for not running away. That kind of thing. Kind of stupid.

Eddy thought he'd escape his problems when he decided to go to New York. He saw Tina Fey—she boarded the Amtrak *with* Eddy, and she was on her way to Philadelphia to see her parents—and he wished her the best. She was on the west coast for *some* reason that Eddy didn't understand.

Either way, Eddy thought that riding a train would be good for him. The filthy Mexicans rode busses—*Greyhounds*—and the air trip would have been too fast. He heard George Carlin say one day that it was *America's* job to beat up on the brown people, and Eddy thought about the war for the first time that he had been to his new Malibu home. He was thinking of the hedge clippers that the softball guy was talking about, and he was thinking of Saddam Hussein, and how evil everyone had *thought* he was... until he was behind bars, and then he was just a docile, little pup.

Eddy thought about the stink that he could smell from the softball player. He thought about that brown penis that Lard Tits flashed without any shame at all. He thought about Tina Fey, and why *she* was there (was she *following* him?). It didn't matter. It really didn't matter.

As things would turn out, the biggest enemy that Eddy would have on his trip to Chicago—it was a stop on the way to New York—was boredom. He *died* for the action that he was getting. He made fun of a lot of people... and they fought back. He thought all the *old* money people were uptight, *tightwads*. He didn't want to be that way.

The docile man that was a softball player introduced himself to Eddy, but Eddy didn't care to hear him. He said his name, and Eddy didn't give a shit what he said. As a matter of fact, he started saying, "Ya, ya, ya, ya, ya, ya, ya!" in a loud voice. He had enough of people trying to get in his world. He had been treated like a god, he had been treated like a pauper, and now he was being treated like something in the middle.

It was the best feel of all. He thought of Fog Hat's song about "Centerfield." He was wrong about the singer, but the song hit him like a bone going through one of those things that you put your finger in when you want a prize from a carnival and you have cotton candy on your fingers.

Chapter 23

**"The cosmic process has no sort of relation to moral ends." —T.H. Huxley,
*Evolution and Ethics***

Eddy Richards had to smell the stink of the softball player for a couple of days (he sat near him on the Amtrak). He didn't *want* to. Something interesting happened that he didn't *expect*, though. The Amtrak train was not *exclusive* to only white people, and upper-class kind of people. No. In the first-class area, where Eddy was, *Mexicans* were there, but they were few. There was *one* Mexican that let him in on something. It was a girl by the name of Raquel Hernandez. She said that she lied to other Mexicans and said that she slept with him many years back... and *that's* why so many Mexicans had it in for him. She was in the Mexican mafia, she said, and there were connections that were uncontrollable. She was attractive, but she was quite dainty. She had gone to a ritzy school in northern California, and got there on a grant. She said she *liked* Eddy, and that's why she lied about him when she saw him on the news. The thing that sucked was that Eddy *wished* he had slept with her. If indeed he was going through *shit* because a high-powered Mexican said she slept with him, then—*dang!*—why not have the enjoyment of all the breasts, and the groping, and things along those natures. Instead, he had homosexual leaf-blowers that hit on him, and he had gardeners that were probably putting secret cameras around his lot. He didn't know for sure, but he felt *funny*.

"You want to *sleep* with me?" he asked Raquel.

She nodded her head yes.

"That's too bad," Eddy said. He really believed it was too bad, and with everyone that knew who he was, he *knew* it'd be impossible. He said, "I'm not as rich as I seem."

"Spiritually defunct. I *know*."

"That's not all. I didn't win the *lottery!*"

"You *what?*" she asked, but she was joking, and that made Eddy feel good.

She put her head on the shoulder of the softball player on the other side of the aisle after leaving Eddy. Eddy was going to say that the lottery thing—the whole thing of him winning it—was the CIA's way of letting the public know that they had picked someone as a Christ in society. In reality, he was going to explain, they don't *give* money to the winners, and it's much like that game show—no, it was wrong because Eddy didn't know which of the Bachman books Stephen King had told him

about on the phone—in the future in which they *lie* to you. They send images of people having fun, but in reality, the contestants that passed their tests were sent to be no more than skull and bones.

It made Eddy think of George W. Bush and John Kerry, both having gone to Yale at the same time, and both in *Skull and Bones*—a secret society in which naked wrestling supposedly took place. He *knew* something was up with the election of 2004, but he didn't know *what*.

There was a rumor that George Bush senior was in Skull and Bones, as well. The rumor was that there was a nude photo of him masturbating in a coffin. It made sense that hazing went on, and when Eddy thought of it further, it made *perfect* sense that it was a way that presidents—all major presidents of the modern era, including those of companies—had this incriminating proof that made sure that they stayed on line from the *real* powers-that-be: The Illuminati that Stephen King had told him about on the phone so long ago.

Chapter 24

"If you can't go back to your mother's womb, you better learn to be a good fighter."

—Anchee Min, *Red Azalea*

"Freedom of speech has a *price*," Bill said. On the third day of the trip to New York, the softball player finally introduced himself as "Bill."

"*What?*" Eddy said to him. "I *have* to take these guys *down*!" He was talking about the people that were fucking with him. He planned to go to the National Enquirer and tell them all the shit that's been going on. Then again, he figured they were *over-loaded* with shit that was similar to what he said.

"I *tell* you," Bill said, "They *will* call it libel... or *slander*, or whatever it is." He paused, ate some of his turkey sandwich, then said, "Freedom of speech has a *price*."

"Have you ever thought that that's why it's called *freedom*? The root *word* is 'free' right there. Don't you think that FREE-*dom*, ought to be *free*? Otherwise, it'd be called *price-dom*, wouldn't it?" Eddy was halfway joking, but he knew what the

softball player was talking about. Eddy had been telling him about the Illuminati, and how left was up, right was crooked, and down was blue, and shit along those lines. He looked in Bill's *face*, though, and saw that there was confusion. He was trying to hold back his urge to say, *You only have a high school education, so what do you know?*

Bill ate from his turkey sandwich, and he sipped from his Pepsi.

Eddy went on to talk about something he had read, long ago, while going to Chaffey College (he wasn't proud of his education, at that time, because he was finding that the stupid softball player was more enjoyable to talk to than anyone in Malibu had been). He said that there was a book by Anchee Min called *Red Azalea*.

"I have that book," Bill said. "I have *City of Quartz*, too."

Eddy didn't know if he was lying, to fit in, or if he genuinely was a closet reader.

Eddy continued, "Stephen King warned me that this would happen. There's a paper in the *Treatise of Zoton*—er, uh—the *Treatise of Zion*, I should say. In *Red Azalea*, it's explained that every family had to have at least one working class person, no matter who it was. If you had a family of *acrobats*? It didn't matter. After the leader of China—*what* was his name?—took over after World War II, he made sure that *all* Chinese had at least one working class person."

"*Why?*" Bill asked.

"It's the same reason they threw pig's blood on me in Malibu."

"I don't *get* it."

"I'm saying that this school—Chaffey College, it is—they *need* someone like themselves. They had me on internet, and they'd be *jealous* that I made it big... without *merit*, of course."

"You're saying that you can't *win*!"

"You bet your ass! Because I tried to please the *Mexicans*... and they wanted too much. And I tried to please the white people, and the Libertarians, and the Democrats, and the Communists, and the Catholics, and the pagans, and the Protestants... You get the *picture*, right?"

"If you fall... No. If you *stand* for nothing at all, you'll fall for anything. I *heard* that somewhere."

Eddy got mad for the time since he won his money. The pig's blood splashed on his face... and he was in joy. The guy whipped out his pecker...and he felt bad for the guy—not *himself*. Other things went on. Jehovah's witnesses came over and Eddy thought of them as lost souls. Tony was selling his secrets to people in his home town (though he was given a credit card of a million dollar limit to use, he wanted

more, just in case he ever went through it all). Jonathan Gelshire seemed fine... but *he* had a tie to Ruben Mater, and Ruben Mater *hated* Eddy Richards with a *passion*. Other things were going on, and the only two guys he truly liked were Eddie Macral and Axl Rose. They were *real*. They were *rockers*. They didn't have all the answers, but they sure were fun to hang around. And Axl wasn't always telling him he better get in the Guns 'n' Roses fan club or else he'd be kicked out of his click. Quite the contrary. When Eddy was playing his bag pipes, he said to Axl that his dream was to play Barry Manilow music. Axl said that was fine, *he* wouldn't do it, but the more power to him.

The guy was listening. The softball guy was truly listening, and Eddy nearly thought he had been broken down by the perpetual silence of the past two days. He was a champion softball player on the way to a tournament across the country. He wore his glove on the train even though he didn't *need* to. He hoped it sparked conversation. He hoped it sparked *awe* when it did. But Eddy had enough going on in his mind. He didn't *need* to know about what it took to be a good softball player. There were people out to get between Eddy and his money. Nothing separates *faster* than a fool and his money. Bill had told him so on the way to the east coast. Eddy thought he heard it in a song. He was *sure* he heard it. Badfinger.

Chapter 25

**"I've been trying to get down to the heart of the matter but my will gets weak,
And my thoughts seem to scatter, but I think it's about forgiveness,
Forgiveness, even if you don't love me anymore." —Don Henley, "The Heart
of the Matter"**

When the Amtrak train had gone through Colorado, Eddy noticed that the softball player was looking out his window quite a *bit*. It was long. It was monotonous. It was the home of *The Shining*, and *Misery*, both written by Stephen King. The softball player seemed disturbed, then, and Eddy hadn't yet got to talk to

him.

When the Amtrak train left Chicago (it was on a six-hour delay because an engine had been blown), Eddy passed by US Cellular Field. It's where the White Sox played, and Eddy thought it'd be a great place to watch a game sometime. The train whizzed by it as it had whizzed by the Coors Field, after a brief stop, of course.

Eddy thought about the name "Comisky," and how it was weird that all had become corporate over the last few decades. The Fabulous Forum had become the Greatwestern Forum when he was first born. He became a Laker fan later on, and they moved to the Staples Center (Springsteen opened it up with a concert there).

He thought about all the corporate implications, and he thought about Irvine Meadows becoming Verizon Amphitheatre, and he thought about the Blockbuster Pavilion (in San Bernardino, near his home, and former home to the US Festival in 1982 and 1983; nearly as famous locally there as Woodstock was to New York after it had been done, initially) become *Hyundai*. Either way, he thought about all these things, and the further he got from California, the more he could feel *less* of an influence that was Catholic. He could nearly sense it when he was in Colorado, and he thought that the Mexicans (and the Catholic church, for that matter) never really gave up on the idea that they owned that land. He thought about all these corporations, and he talked to Bill about a funny idea that came to his mind.

"The war in Iraq costed eighty-seven billion dollars, initially, and they keep asking for more money."

"So?" he wanted to know. He thought Eddy was implying that they should be there.

"I'm saying that Bush asked for more money, not long after the initial plans were asked for, wanting money to go to Mars."

"What *are* you saying?"

"I'm saying we're a private country. Maybe the state *should* handle the military, and not much more."

"So?" Bill said again, but this time, he was less irritated.

"I'm saying that the Texas Rangers had paid—or *planned* to pay—Alex Rodriguez a hundred *mil*."

"So you're saying I'm not worth it as a *ball* player?"

"No. I'm saying LeBron James is being paid by Nike—or *Nee-kay*, whatever they're calling it nowadays—and he's going to get a hundred million. Tiger Woods is getting something like three *billion*!"

"What *are* you saying?"

Eddy changed his tone and then he said, "Would *you* like us to go to Mars on a manned trip?"

Bill had to think of it for a while, then he said, "*No!*" but the no was fake. Eddy *knew* that Bill would like to see a man—an *American*—go to Mars before anyone else.

"I remember reading about it in Popular Science. I had checked the magazine out at Chaffey College—sorry for mentioning that, because I keep *doing* it—and they said they had it all figured."

"Booster rockets from *space*, huh?" he said.

"Yep. You must have read my mind or heard the same *thing* as me."

"And the algae particles that are supposed to make *fuel* there while we travel the long journey, right?"

"No. It wasn't *algae*... I *think*, but it could get done if we sent a pioneer rocket to make liquid hydrogen and oxygen. That's the way I remember it."

"So you have it all worked *out*?" Bill wanted to know. By now, he was talking to Eddy as if he was in NASA, himself, and had all the plans written up.

"My specialty *isn't* in the technical merit. It's in the policy."

"So you're saying that Nike—*whatever* it is—Ford, maybe... could give money to NASA and we could have it independently done."

"*Think* about it. A rocket ship launching with a big *GM* logo on it. It'd be in the history books for years... and that's just the first phase of the *program*!"

"So. You're a *genius*." Bill wasn't interested in the conversation any longer. He reached into a lunch box—a plastic one with *Kiss* figures on it he had bought at a souvenir store—and he pulled out a sandwich with extra mayo. He bit into it, mayo splashed all over his mouth, and he said, "If it doesn't get all over the place, it doesn't belong in your *face*!"

Chapter 26

"Jesus died too soon. He would have repudiated his doctrine if he had lived to my age."

—Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

Eddy arrived in New York after two hundred years. He felt the tension that Bill had. Bill was a lonely guy just wanting to be known as a athletic hero. Eddy was a

lonely guy that no longer felt accepted by his hometown (because they were all trying to get money from him before he moved out), and he didn't feel accepted by the rich people he had mingled with. It was *hazing*, in Eddy's mind, even of the subconscious level. He figured that if he had five years to live as a rich person, friendships would *develop*. Sometimes it felt instant, but being that the society as a *whole* didn't accept him quit yet, it made the few relationships that he had doable. It made it impossible.

He had babbled about the corporate possibility of sending someone to Mars, and Bill started babbling the mid-west they had traveled through. He started saying that they had bunkers for the sake of hiding from tornadoes—something *everyone* knew about, at least in an artistic way from movies like "Twister"—but he went on to say that he believed they really weren't there. They were a *myth*.

Eddy said, in a joking way, *I think not only are they there! I think they have bunkers that they use still that are for the sake of hiding in the event of a nuclear holocaust.*

Bill was dumbfounded that he couldn't control the conversation. He thought he was being enlightening by bringing up the tornado bunkers.

Eddy had added (they were going through Indiana), *I bet that they have them still just in case there's an insurrection here, and they—* He pointed to the air planes that were flying overhead in a formation. *—are ready to drop "bunker busters" on them any time just in case they do.*

Bill got up to use the restroom. He didn't come back for another two hours.

When Eddy arrived in New York, there was a song blaring that was fitting to what was going on. It was "Nothing To Say" by Soundgarden. Chris Cornell had sold out to the MTV radicals, but that was okay by Eddy. He could sing about *Ford* commercials, and Eddy bet that there were people willing to go see him in concert because his fuckin' *voice*. He was that good.

Bill bid adieu to Eddy when they reached their final destination. Eddy hoped he would never see him again, but it was worth the company on a strange level for the few days that it took to get to the Big Apple.

Chapter 27

**"You can't expect a boy to be depraved until he has been to a good school." —
Saki, *A Baker's Dozen***

The first place that Eddy went when he got to New York was NYU. It was popular for its media studies, and Eddy remembered that the promoter—*what was his name?*—for Jell-o was giving a speech there long ago by Chaffey legend, and he was bitching at the kids to make sure they paid back their college loans. It was sad. You can't *do* that at a commencement speech. You *can't*. You've gotta tell the kids that they need to fuck the world... and then arrest them when they got out of line.

It was a paradox. Eddy hated it, but he was ready to enroll. He had nothing else to lose. The Jews owned the media in his town. In New York, it was impossible to have a monopoly, but he believed they existed places.

Eddy was scared, and genuinely. He had thought about religions or spiritual outlets he'd go through to help get through the new phase. He knew there were people that would lead him astray, and "living by your heart" was a map that could lead you *anywhere*.

After all the time in Malibu, all he knew was that he was bitter at the Catholic church. He knew what he *didn't* want to be. He planned to use his media studies to fight fire with fire. Was it *wrong*? He didn't know, but he felt consumed by all the people in the City. He watched a German guy get down on the guitar right there in the streets. That's who *he* wanted to be. It was right there off of twentieth, not far from Madison Square Garden.

He'd have fun. He could feel it. And he'd *live*. That's what was important.

Eddy called Jonathan Gelshire from New York on a payphone (he had yet to check into a hotel). He said, "You are a *bitch*!"

"I know," he could hear from Jonathan.

"What was your deal with that *Ruben* guy?!"

There was no sound on the other end of the phone, and Eddy sensed that he wasn't hung up on... but he *wanted* to be. He wanted to meet as many people in New York. He changed his tone then said, "Tell Tony he can fuck off for hanging up on me. I called him right before I called *you*!"

Jonathan Gelshire didn't say a word.

Chapter 28

"I've changed my hairstyle so many times, I don't know what I look like."

—The Talking Heads, "Life"

During

Wartime"

"I've lived in the ghetto and I've lived in the brownstone," a guy said on the street in front of a nightclub. Eddy was overwhelmed by the scene. "I've lived all over this town!"

"What? Are you *singing*?"

The guy took off, and Eddy didn't know what to think. He went to TGIF and he felt *safe* there. He had gone there many times with Tony and Jonathan after getting Hilary's number. *Now?* He was alone, and it didn't matter, because like the time that Tony had went to Hawaii, he was surrounded by people around a bar that were equally as lonely. They drank, and they spilled their guts.

Eddy was going on and on about what he experienced in California, with the priests raping people in their minds and in their jobs, and in their *homes*. The lady called Eddy a bullshitter, and that was fine by him. He said that aliens were going to take over the planet, and he said that she was attractive—she was black, and it was taboo to say such a thing most places. He was *drunk*, though, and he truly felt that he'd rather be with black ladies than Catholic perverts.

"What *are* you saying?" she asked. A man was near her that Eddy was sure was her pimp, but he was wrong. He got up and left the bar as soon as he said, "Is this guy *with* you?"

"You *don't* need to be so *honest*!" she said to Eddy.

"I *do*."

"No. You *don't*!"

She scooted near Eddy, and her leg was touching him for about five minutes. Eddy considered for a moment that she might not *know* it was touching him... but that was impossible. She had little boobies, and pretty little teeth. Her name was Christina—Eddy had asked her after his third shot of tequila. "I just need a *friend*!" Eddy said to her. "And these people *around* us?"

"What?" she asked him.

"They can't *matter*! I can't let them *matter*!"

A wigger came up and sat next to them. He was jealous of what was going on. She said, "You *really* have to keep it down about what you're really about *now*." The guy looked like a priest because he was done all in black. She flashed her tits at Eddy through the top of her shirt right before the guy got close enough to put in a word.

She started *talking* to him.

The guy stayed for five minutes. He didn't feel wanted, but that was the paradox of going to that bar to begin with. It was a society of people that were lonely. The priest was there—he probably thought it was enough to just take off his little white thing around his neck—and *he* was lonely. Eddy thought that *he* didn't tell anyone in his parish about what was going on. Eddy said, "I killed Bob *Marley*!"

"*What?*" the lady asked.

"I'm *sick* of not being able to say who I *am*! I am from California, I used to live with Al Capone, and I shot shit with Andrew Jackson for a while!"

"No. You're not gettin' it *done*," the lady said. She reached over and grabbed the Eddy by the balls. It felt *good*. It was brown sugar, and Eddy couldn't be happier.

Chapter 29

"We live in a fantasy world, a world of illusion. The great task is to find reality."

—Hilary Duff quoting Rachel Billington of Iris Murdoch

Eddy changed his name to *Butch*. And then he changed to it to Mitch. And then he changed it to *Bitch*. And then he changed to Bartholomew, but that didn't quite jibe with him. He thought about all the names he could be, and he thought about the Hollywood Wax Museum, and he thought about the religious figures that they had. They *had* the Beatles (and Cindi Lauper right next to them, of all people). They had Nicole Kidman and Tom Cruise from different movies but they were right *next* to each other and Eddy thought it was ironic. They had Catherine Zeta-Jones and her hair hanging over her boob, like in *Zorro*. They had a *lot* of things, and Eddy really liked it there.

Across the street was *Ripley's Believe It Or Not*. Though the place sucked, it had something that was interesting. It had all the names of former Hollywood stars. It had Norma Jean who everyone knew of, and it had he changed name to Marilyn Monroe. It had *others*, like Nicolas Cage who had formerly been Nicolas Copella. Stuff along *those* lines, and Eddy had a true crush on his cousin, or whatever she was: The Copella girl—*Sophia* was her name—and though she was older, Eddy figured they could cross paths if he was successful at NYU.

He thought about the Jews, and he thought about the Catholics. He thought about smoke and mirror, and he thought about how he resented it after reading *Mein Kampf*. He thought about all those things, but all truth was getting Eddy was *dead*. A Republican by the name of Abraham Lincoln—"Honest Abe," he was called—was *shot* for telling the truth the way he knew it. A Democrat by the name of Doctor Martin Luther King Junior was *shot* for telling the truth. *The truth shall set you free!* is what he was known to have said, and it set him *free!* It set him free of his body.

Eddy was getting tired of being picked on, and he was thinking that it was his *honesty* that was doing it. He had yet to master the "secret language"—the one where a person talks about oil slicks but they are really talking about Mexicans. The one where people talk about perverts—Michael *Jackson*, for example—and they are really talking about Catholic priests. It had a lot of ins and outs, and Eddy just wanted to have *fun!* (That's why he started thinking of the Wax Museum and Cindi Lauper, to begin with.) He thought about what he could be: Brick Dudely? He didn't know, but joke names didn't pass him by too easy. He was raised as a Christian, and they are *full* of jokes. They have "God be with us" (as a translation for Emmanuel, or something along those lines). They had "God fry us a cookie." They had "God is a pervert." They had so many *El-Whatever* names that it wasn't funny.

Eddy was sick of it all. He wanted to be Butch Doodswinger. He wanted to be Homely Disnopper. He wanted to be Gaudlas David Rockefeller, for that matter. He wanted to be Dax Robinson.

He thought about it. He picked out his nickname. It's be Richard Edwards, and it'd be a mere swap of what his name really was. He hoped to go by *Dick*. He liked that name, and he thought it'd get him far with the women... or the *men*, for that matter!

Chapter 30

"All you need in this life is ignorance and confidence, and then success is sure."

— Mark Twain

Ruben *chose* for Eddy poverty as his punishment for leaving Malibu behind. He thought Eddy should just stay there and soak in all the looks that he'd get. There was a camera in the store that took pictures of it... and the brown penis, and things

along those lines. Eddy didn't like it, and he *knew* the images would be coming to New York, and if they were big enough, he'd be ostracized by everybody—*nearly* everybody. He didn't care. As Dick Edwards, he was going to change the world.

He thought to write home to Ruben when he *got* to New York. He found out that Ruben had already had contact with the Germans, and he knew that Eddy had enrolled in New York University (he didn't know that Eddy was going by *Dick*, yet). Ruben sent his buddy, Jim Anthony, to check on him. He chose *poverty* for Eddy.

Amway—most the members that are in there—teaches that you're supposed to find out what people like. *Caviar? Women? Fast cars?* Et cetera, and when you go to one of their meetings with the erasable white boards that you write your ink pens on, and so forth, you *tell* them that you have a five-year plan. You tell them that in five years, you'd like to be in a mansion off the Mississippi River, if that's you're liking.

Amway does the *opposite*, though, and they do it to people that reject them, but Eddy was unaware of it when he was at Chaffey College, and he *should* have known that the day would come that Ruben would fuck his world. They check your *fears*. They ask you what you're afraid of. Eddy wasn't *afraid* of poverty, because he was raised in a Cucamonga ghetto, but as he got rich, he feared going *back*. He didn't want to deal with the truth, and the truth was that people saw him as a money bag; as a goose that laid the golden eggs. Eddy didn't want to *deal* with that.

Prior to coming to New York, Eddy feared—he was now going by *Dick*, but that didn't matter to him for fleeting moments when he reflected on things—that he wouldn't be liked by people that he *liked*. That was a driving force. Amway had a scout that figured it out. She was Korean, and as soon as Eddy won the lottery, she *asked* him, *What do you fear most?* Eddy said, *Nothing*, on the day that he met her. He had just won the lottery and there was nothing to *fear*. He thought because she was rather uncomfortable at the fact that he feared nothing that she'd go away. Eddy said, *I fear not being liked by people that I like*. The fear crept in him because he took a *liking* to her. He thought about the rock stars he may meet, and they didn't mean a shit. Before he was really becoming fluent in the secret language of innuendoes, he was talking about her. He didn't figure it out until he got to New York. He thought about it in reflection.

He *had* to leave her behind, and the thing was that there were so many *people*. Her dad was in the military—he was a *white* man—and Eddy feared that he would have problems with giving away his daughter, though she was technically a *step*-daughter to him.

Eddy didn't know what to do because the forces around him were too great. Not only that, the *fears* that he had shifted from minute to minute. He had feared going back to the old neighborhood—being *poor*, and living like one, in other words; a *poor* person, that is—and he feared other things, but Ruben had it wrong because poverty *itself* wasn't what Eddy feared. He feared going back to Malibu, and *they* weren't poor. He just wanted to be away from people that he didn't like. If Ruben didn't like him back, oh *well*.

Eddy thought about dogs that he had when he was younger. Lightning and Thunder were their names, and he used to *hit* Thunder all the time. It *may* have been Lightning that he hit, and his memory was failing him. He studied in school that negative reinforcement has bad long-term effects, and it should be used sparingly, if at *all*, if a relationship of long-term worth is going to be expected. He *hit* Thunder—it was probably Lightning, now that he thought of it—and he hit her a lot. He was trying to scare people in the house, actually, and it wasn't Thunder (or *Lightning*) that he was actually mad at when he did it. He didn't like *himself* when he was younger, and he was projecting the pain onto his dog and the people that would witness it. The *problem* was that it was a slippery slope. He didn't like them because they didn't like him because he was an angry man. He was an angry man because they didn't like him, and they treated him bad because he treated *them* bad because they didn't like him. So he beat the dogs, and in his ignorance as a young child, he didn't see that it only created hate, over and over and over again. He didn't see that you can't *beat* a person into liking you.

Eddy thought about the gardeners at his home in Malibu, and he thought about how *they* fucked with his head at times. Eddy was playing his bag pipes, and he was recording music to it. One of the gardeners was digging a hole in the backyard, and he felt left out of what was going on. It was uncharacteristic of anything he'd previously expected would happen in Malibu, but the guy came in—he knew Eddy was recording, and Eddy didn't have a lock for the back door because paranoia begets more paranoia—and he said, *I no whahnn my dot-oer to be listening to theezi kind of chit!* Eddy was surprised, and held back laughter. The motherfucker was *serious!* The feeling of humor quickly left him when he thought about the *weight* of the situation. A *gardener* was telling him what he could and could not record. It was the most ludicrous thing he could think of, and Eddy said, *Then don't let her listen to it! If it ever makes it to the stores, you stupid punk!*

The gardener got irate, and he wanted to fight. He said, that day, *There's the door!* All of a sudden, his accent wasn't so pronounced. Eddy suspected that he was

one of the many spies that was around him and he said, *Hey Big Brother. You are hideous to look at, and... you're fired!*

What *gall* that motherfucker had, at least to Eddy's imagination. For all he knew, there were electronic bugs that were in the house that the gardener knew about—Eddy was doing Irish renditions of Alice In Chains' music—and kids were committing suicide around the country because of his depressed music, and their ability to get it through *leaks*.

You one of the dream police? Eddy asked the jarnipio that thought he had the right to say what he could record and what he could *not* record.

Eddy left Malibu, and he was really not leaving poverty behind. He was *embracing* it. Ruben didn't know that. He'd fight his fight until Eddy loved him. That was his plan. Eddy thought about Lightning and Thunder, quite often. They *never* liked Eddy. They never *would*.

Chapter 31

"Sometimes I wish that I could *change!* I can't save you from my poor *brain!*

Eddy! Eddy! Eddy!" —The Foo Fighters, "My Poor Brain" (as interpreted by Eddy Richards)

The Beatles had a manager by the name of Brian Epstein, when they first started out. Otherwise, there would have *been* no Beatles. Sure. Some local people in Germany where they supposedly got their chops from would have known about them. But the *rest*? No. Brian Epstein was a Jew, and some suspected him of killing himself.

Frankenstein was a monster—*Franky*, Eddy thought of him as—and he was created by Jews. When Brain Epstein passed away, the Beatles did their best work. It was argued that the guy kept them together—he had a knack for booking gigs, and so forth—but their best stuff, at least in most minds that *Eddy* hand around, came *after* the fuckin' Jew went to Never Never Land, or wherever he went.

He learned a lot at New York University, and he learned that Dave Growler, or whatever his name was, from the Foo Fighters once had a secret crush on Eddie Vedder, and he feared the same thing would happen to him as happened to Cobain—the CIA would *off* him, in other words. Whether or not it was true really didn't matter to him. The music world is littered with secret messages, and those on the Mexican

radio know that there's a wall of voodoo that goes around when music can't be controlled. They are swift in their bullshit about the way they do things, in other words, and Eddy had heard about it from his gardener—the same one he fired, but he kept coming around the house *anyway*, unpaid though, and he'd clip the azaleas as they made their ways into the air—that the United Farm Workers had something called Radio Campesina, or something along those lines. He said that it was a swift way of keeping Whitey in order. He said that their teatros were made to be humorous, but deep inside, they wanted to destroy *all* white people. There were lawyers that were lulled in during the seventies... and *they* lived to regret their association to the UFW. There were people like Jerry Brown—former governor of California—and he was called "Typhoid Mary" after passing legislation known as the Agricultural Labor Relations Act, or something along those lines. He knew—Eddy did—that politics don't *work*, but maybe the United Farm Workers *didn't*... or maybe they just didn't *care* about Whitey.

Either way, that's the way things went, and people *outside* of that wall of voodoo—Dave *Grohl* was one of them; *that* was his name, and his recent conversation with a fellow student was coming back to him—had to *suffer* because life was set up like that. It was painful to think about. If you weren't part of the United Farm Workers and their wall of voodoo, you had to be part of Dave Growler's program (that's the way the former student *pronounced* it to Eddy). You had to be part of the Jewish-controlled conspiracy to take over the airwaves, ala Adolf Hitler in *Mein Kampf*. It was weird. There was a saying in *Earth First!* that said, "No compromise." The thing was that it was led by white, middle-class girls, for the most part, and *they* didn't want Eddy to be part of the New York University thing. They knew he already had relations with Hilary Duff (they had their *spies*), and they knew he planned to fight fire with fire. He planned to take down the Jews with their own *means*. He wouldn't advocate holocaust. He would advocate simple education, and when two percent of the population controls *way* more than fifty percent of the media airwaves, something is wrong.

"Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" was an album that was made by the Beatles after a trip to India. It was highly acclaimed, and there was something interesting about it. John Lennon, after he *retired* from the Beatles (the way the mystery person put it), tried to *join* the United Farm Workers. They wouldn't have him. For some reason, they wouldn't have him. Maybe it was the Jew manager that he once had. He wasn't sure, but they wouldn't have him.

Eddy thought about Dave Grohl, and in his mind, he was singing to Eddie

Vedder. In the official lyrics, he didn't sing, "Eddie! Eddie! *Eddie!*" but it sure sounded like he did. When Eddy started listening to the music more and more, he thought it was Dave Grohl that was talking to *him*: "Eddy! Eddy! *Eddy!*" Either way, it didn't matter. Eddy had a mission, and that was to break from California. He'd go through his paranoid trips and ask what art *might* be. He'd do art of his own, if he was given the chance. He brought along the bag pipes, and now he was going to buy a guitar: A *Les Paul!*

Chapter 32

"You don't get a chance to hang a sign on me." —George Harrison of the Beatles in

"Love You To"

Eddy ran from the labels, but he found that when you *do* so, you run from the fact that you have positive connotations that are attached to them as well. He didn't know *what* was positive about being a Mexican or being a Catholic because he had *forgotten*. He was in New York City long enough that he forgot the gardener he had, and he forgot the Catholics that tried to rough him up in the Beverly Hills Hotel. One of the things he learned at NYU was that labels limit you. It went *further* than that, though, and it stemmed from a Rush song—a band that had played in Canada was his ultimate savior, at times—called "Freewill." It said that those who choose not to decide still have made a choice. Geddy Lee could suck Eddy's dick, for all that mattered, and he probably *would* if he ever met them. He whined in a song about admiring people on the big screen, and so forth, and Eddy knew that *he* would operate the things that went *behind* the scenes, if he *worked* hard enough. But he was also figuring the opposite. He figured that people that try too hard... *flounder*. The Catholics that wanted Eddy's money (or his new *power*) got off on the wrong foot. Instead of inspiring them to join their click, they made him feel *desperate* to say that he was one of them. It didn't work. It *backfired*. He learned in his studies that first impressions and last impressions matter most in all things. Everything else was the cream filling of the Oreo cookie. Everything else was the hours of prayers that people did to their rosary beads. Everything else was the gauds that people bought to make them happy.

The Catholic church was strong, being a billion people wide. They had connections, and everything else was nearly like Babel. The Protestants had as many

people, but there beliefs were so widespread that they couldn't ever unite under one thing for any given period of time. There were Baptists, and there were Methodists, and there were Universalists (though that was arguable because they had Hindu-like concepts of Christianity that people were quite attracted to), there were Seventh Day Adventists, there were Christian Scientists, and so forth. There were *many*. The Catholic church was like the Titanic or the Queen Mary. It was like that because it took so long to *steer*... and you had to please/ control so many people. The *Protestants* were like the same number of people, but they were on separate speedboats instead of on a huge one that may or may not hit an ice berg (Eddy heard that German U-Boats really sunk the Titanic when he first got to New York, and it stuck with him).

Reagan had once did something that was interesting. Bruce Sprinsteen had a song called "Johnny 69," and it was about a guy that got irate because he was laid off of work. Bruce, in a an interview, said that he stood *against* everything that Reagan stood for... but that didn't stop Reagan from referring to him in his speeches, because it happened around the time that "Born In the USA" was popular. The Catholics didn't have anyone *like* Bruce. They were morons that were more like crabs than anything else. If a crab is about to escape his death by getting out of a pot that is full of other crabs, it is typical of the crab nature for *another* crab to pull him down. Eddy didn't want to be surrounded by crabs, but because of what happened in California, he knew it was happening. Ruben Mater splashed the blood on him for a *reason*. It was because he knew Eddy was *going* places, and even though Ruben wasn't the guy that *literally* splashed the blood on him (because it was *Lard Tits*), it was him that kept Eddy from ever wanting to come back to California again. Ruben wanted to *limit* Eddy, and he figured that by publicly embarrassing him, he wouldn't ever *go* anywhere—not out of Ruben's *reach*, at the very least.

Eddy had *will*, though, and he had a lot of smarts. He felt like he was in high school, all over again, and he was coming in from Bakersfield (that's where he spent a few years in junior high before finishing education in Rancho Cucamonga). At the time, it was impossible to please people. Some people were already established. They *resented* him. Some people were desperate. Eddy tried to avoid them like the plague. He wound up befriending a guy by the name of Vincent Edwards, and Eddy thought it was ironic that that's what he finally settled on for his own self-picked name: Dick Edwards.

There were taboo things to talk about, at NYU, and one of them was Bill Cosby. He sold *out*, but the opposite happened to Bruce Springsteen, or so it was reported. He was *co-opted*. That meant that when an organization is big enough, they try to

make you look like they're on your side no matter what. When Eddy thought of it, it made perfect sense that that was why everyone was hounding him in California. Maybe they thought he was *cool* because he now had money... but it made him resent people. They came out of the woodwork, and being that first impressions mattered *most* (like the "Secret" commercial, Eddy supposed) and that they had been *nowhere* prior to his success, he resented them and didn't want a thing to *do* with them.

Tony was a dick, and so was Jonathan Gelshire... but they *did* have good times together, and it was before Eddy was dating Hilary Duff. Things go like that in concentric circles, though, and Ruben Mater smelled an opportunity. Dave Johnston was the same way when he was at Chaffey. He *sensed* these kind of people at New York University, and he didn't *like* them. He thought it'd go away. It didn't. They tried to co-opt him, and when they couldn't, they used their media techniques on him. "Fuckin' shame," Eddy said at a McDonald's. He was eating a Big Mac, and that was the only enjoyable thing about the situation. "They should have loved me *before* all this shit... I guess."

Chapter 33

"He who stands for nothing, falls for anything." —Eddie Corona, during a speech at Pitzer College

Gary Larson was a faggot that had Eddy had once been a fan of, prior to meeting him. Eddy got out of the city of New York, and he met Larson in a pub in Jersey. The guy had *pull* there, and Eddy thought he'd be flattered when approached and told how much he loved his cartoons. He used to read them all the time in his class in high school in which biology was taught. There was one that Eddy had in mind—it was of porcupines and punkers, and it was dubbed "the way that nature says to keep away" the way that Eddy remembered it. He told Gary Larson about the Catholics and how they were trying to control his life, even sending operatives to New York in the guise of Ruben Mater (who didn't even *support* the Catholic church, but was in it for their mafia ties). Gary Larson must have been a person that was like Eddy, at a time. He must have been seeking society's approval, and when he got it, he *overshot*. That's what Eddie figured because Gary Larson was *very* much like the porcupine—an animal that had barbs to keep people away. Eddy thought he was fag because, when Eddy approached him, he grabbed him by the dick and said, "You like *this*?"

Eddy said no, but he knew what was up. Eddy was in a desperate situation to get away from the no-names of California. Gary Larson had escaped Seattle, and he

thought that going to Jersey would give him a semblance of normal life, again. That's what Eddy was figuring.

Eddy looked around at the pub for someone else to talk to. There was no one that was interested in talking to him, at least not *directly*, so he went back to New York to give it a second shot. When he was there, he met Christina Aguilera. He was flattered beyond belief to meet her, but he knew they had things in common. He had listened to her album, and he knew she was a lonely girl searching for normalcy *herself*. She didn't know him well, but she said she knew *of* him. She said, "They're calling you a sellout, you know?"

"I don't care *what* they call me, and if they call me the next-coming of Hitler, I really don't *care*!"

"*Why?*" she asked, a little intrigued, and she smoked a cigarette when she said it.

"I need to get them *away*!" He pointed to Catholics that were coming in the room. Christina's presence was so strong that it made him nervous to talk. "I have to speak in *code* to even be *around* people like you."

"I *get* you now," she said, and Eddy believed that she *did* get what he was saying.

Eddy left Christina an hour later. The reason was that there were other people to meet. He didn't believe for the *life* of him that he could ever be together with her for any extended period of time. When he first won the lottery, he was naïve. The money was there all along—it was in the circulation of society's pockets—but he didn't *know* that this could happen.

"I'm *sorry*, Christina," Eddy said. She was hurt, and Eddy could tell. He asked her, "Do you *know* me, or are you just *feeling* me?"

She nodded her head that she *did* know him, and it made Eddy feel good.

"I can't *be* with you." He paused then said, "I don't know if you'd want to be with me, *either*. I bring baggage, and you're looking at it." He pointed to the people that were around in the room that kept coming. He was at a place near NYU, and he planned to leave soon. He wanted to get out of that college and take a try somewhere else. "We can be *friends*, right?" Eddy asked.

"You're just a broken person. I *know* that's what you want me to say."

"Or *society* is. I hope we meet each other when I'm forty, or something. Maybe they'll lay off *me*, by then. Maybe they'll lay off you as *well*. I guess I have to be a gigolo for a while... or stroke my meat every night to relieve my libido."

"Go with *that*," she said.

"I can't. I really can't. I have endorphins that are released when I *talk* to you, but these Catholics don't have lives of their own. They *pretend* to be in it for the masses. They are in it for themselves. *You* are in it for yourself. I'm in it for myself as well, but now my scope extends to people beyond myself."

He thought she knew what he was saying, and was *sure* of it.

"Is this a secret message?"

"Yeah. I guess. But I talked to Britney Spears in a dream before meeting you. She says they're brain farts."

Chapter 34

"Sick of this life. Not that you'd care. I'm not the only one with whom these feelings I share."

—Axl Rose singing for Guns 'n' Roses

Eddy started ranting and raving at a bar—it was TGIF near Madison Square Garden—that Elvis was still alive. He had dropped all his courses at NYU, but he was told something before he left. He said, "The CIA *did* it to him! He was too big, and it's going to happen to *you*!"

Eddy was planning on spending his millions to produce a movie. He was going to get Christina Applegate to play the lead role, and he was going to make it about the future. Polygamy was going to be real again. It was going to happen because of fulfillment of scripture in Mormon texts. In the end, it was covert racism that he was trying to spread. The *Mormons* were going to rule the world. *Why?* The Catholics and the Mexicans were fucking things up. He couldn't *stand* it.

A girl said, "With thirty million dollars, you could easily do that... but trust me when I say that Mel Gibson is never going to be the same again. They don't *like* that, the Pharisees don't, and neither do the Sadducees. They never *left*, you know? Those ideas always persisted."

"You know a *lot*, lady," Eddy said to her after drinking from his Sam Adams beer. "You know a *lot*, and I'd like to have you in the film."

Eddy was going to make a movie about the future. Brown people would be

turning white, and would be an exaggeration of what was really taught overtly in the Mormon temples. They would turn white before people's eyes. Instead of building dirt pyramids, they would start doing *real* things... like writing books, producing music, and other stuff that the old world had left behind. It would be 2111 when the film was to take place, and he'd mock Rush for being assholes.

"Elvis was sent to mental *health* when he started to plan to break out of *Vegas*, you know? It was escape from *Vegas*!" The girl was in one of Eddy's classes, and she sympathized with what he was going through. The irony was that he regretted dropping the classes after meeting her. *Why couldn't things always have been like that?* he wondered.

There was an insincerity in what she was *saying*, but Eddy sensed her jew-like ways and he said, "You're on *their* side, aren't you?"

She didn't say a thing. Rather, she repeated the question to a girl that was near her—*German*, from the appearance of her bangs and her wooden shoes.

Eddy didn't care but he *thought* it was possible that Elvis had been sent to mental health and the CIA got look-a-like Elvises to go around the Strip saying they were him. Then, when Elvis was released, one of *them* was killed by overdose and sent to the grave in Graceland that legend had it he wasn't buried at to *begin* with.

"The CIA could *do* that, huh?" he asked the little German girl with the shoes that appeared to be wooden. He asked her, "Where *did* you get those *shoes*?"

"Never." She said. She said they'd never get together. That's the way he took it.

Eddy finished his Sam Adams beer and didn't think *twice* about making his movie when it was all done. He wouldn't even leave the United States, as Mel did. He'd do it in the good, old, U-S-of-A, and if anyone tried to stop him, they could fuck off. He had freedom of speech. He was going to take it as far as he could go.

Eddy learned that Jews weren't the only ones that were co-opting him with the Catholics. The CIA *itself* was co-opting him, and they sent agents around him, not to *arrest*, but rather to make it look like *he* was the spy. When he finished his beer of Sam Adams, a guy walked up to Eddy and said, "You ever solve that case about the would-be assassin? Oh. I see you have *company*."

The girl that he was talking to with the wooden shoes was weirded out. She took them off, and nearly started to cry.

"I have no *freedom*! You know *what*, people?" Eddy said aloud drunkenly. "I have all the freedom in the *world* because I have no freedom! It's like starting *over*! You go to the top and you get to the top of the *sliiiide*! You get to the bottom and you

go for a *ride*! You get to the top and you're there *again*! Yeah, yeah, yeaaaah!" He was happy. He was drunk, but he was happy (it was a rare combination for him).

Chapter 35

"The desire for fame tempts even noble minds." —Augustine, *City of Gaud*

The first thing that Eddy had deal with in New York that was an *ongoing* problem was that he smoked Marlboro Lights. Back in California, he had all kinds of people after him for his money. In New York, he decided to take on a new image—he *was* a nerd when he hung out with Tony in Cucamonga—and no one in New York *knew* him before. He didn't believe that the internet could touch a city so big, and he figured even if it *could*, there were lottery winners all over the world. Why should he be so special to single out?

He started smoking *Kools*, but was told they were for niggers (Eddy didn't like the term when he was younger, but he was finding that spics, niggers, whitetrash, and everything in between really *existed* in the world). He switched to Marlboro regulars in the red box but he coughed too much when he did it. He figured that Hilary Duff must have caught on, because there was a rumor that she started smoking a lot back home. He settled on Marlboro Lights, and he did it out of advice from Bill (from the train). Bill had told him that if he was leaving the Catholic church—their *grip* in California and all the former Spanish lands—he had to start behaving like an *American*. Americans affirmed their cash crops. It made *sense* to Eddy, and quite frankly, he just wanted to get the stink of the softball player away from him so he agreed.

Eddy felt that nothing was working in California. He could not *believe* the mad rush of people that went to see him. Mike Tyson had said that if you really want to fuck someone up, take a guy from the ghetto and give him a million dollars overnight. Essentially, that's what happened with Eddy, and he heard that Hilary Duff was now smoking on the west coast. That was not his *fault*! He did not mean for

that to *happen*! He didn't know he'd have an impact on her like that.

When Eddy was a kid, he used to have a mom that smoked. There were layers of clouds in his living room every time that they watched TV. Eddy *swore* he wouldn't smoke, and it was because the stuff that he saw in his room as a kid, and it was because the things that they taught in school when he was growing up.

There was a girl by the name of Stacey Dinner that looked like a troll to Eddy (she had dreadlocks, and claimed to be from some rich school that Eddy never heard of). *She* smoked, and Eddy wondered why. The *thing* was that when she smoked, she would always make sure to pull out her pack of cigarettes with the label outward. In other words, it was nearly that she was *promoting* smoking... in a Truman kind of way.

The bitch *irritated* Eddy, and he couldn't forget her. He couldn't forget how phony she was, but it was more desperation that he saw in her than anything else. She had bags under her eyes, and Eddy suspected her of doing heroine because of the people that she associated with and the tracks on her arms. He couldn't get the images out of his mind of what she tried to push, and Eddy swore that he wouldn't be like that. *If* he smoked, it was because he was trying to leave something behind—maybe his nerd ways of the past. *If* he smoked, he didn't want to *promote* it. His mother never did, and she was even *against* it, if anything. He had heard Robin Williams say, one time, that if you were a smoker, *stay* a smoker. It was a character he played in a movie, but it made sense. If you weren't, then don't *be* a smoker.

Eddy loved Hilary with all his heart. If he could decide, she would *not* smoke. She would not be suicidal, *either*. That was a component of why Eddy smoked. He knew that society was fucking him in ways he never thought he'd be fucked before. A comedian once said, "They say that cigarette smoking knocks off ten years of your life. It's the last ten years! What am I going to *miss*? *Drooling*!?"

In the end, it wasn't only that Eddy didn't want to be a nerd, anymore. He didn't want to live his life the way it was going. He didn't *care* if he lived ten years less than he otherwise would have without smoking. He sensed that the powers, whoever they were, wouldn't have it any other way. He sensed that they were going to be on his shit *forever*. Further, he sensed that because he was a lottery winner (and because word got out that he wanted to do a movie), that the powers-that-be didn't want to promote him as suicidal, and smoking was merely a *symbol* of it. It was a symbol of rebellion, and if he ever got his *freedom*—if he was allowed to marry Hilary Duff, Lindsay Lohan, or Christina Aguilera—he *would* quit... if it was their wish as well, a mutual one at that.

The powers-that-be, whether they were the Illuminati or not, or just *Illuminoids*,

wanted to portray having money as being *fun*... and enjoyable... and if you had money, you wouldn't smoke because you wouldn't want to *kill* yourself so young. Either way, it *didn't* matter to Eddy anymore, but he *did* have to pick a path. He would not quit smoking—that much he was sure of, at least not without Christina, Lindsay, or Hilary in his life—and he'd rebel. It was as simple as that, but the powers-that-be *fucked* with him when he did. They sent people to mess with his periphery vision. Stuff like that. They'd send kids jumping up and down in front of him. It made him mad, and he felt he couldn't *escape* sometimes. He was in New York, and that was the perfect place to be. It was a land of ten million people, if not more (Eddy couldn't remember the census numbers), and he'd be *damned* if the Catholic church was going to tell him what he could smoke... or drink... or what music to listen to, or what women to hit on. *Fuck* that! He had to choose between freedom with torture, or slavery with docile limitations. He lit up at a park—*Battery* park, it was—and he could tell that the shit wanted to start. It *didn't* start. Not until he was on his way home to California. On a Greyhound on the way back, he stopped at Pilot—a gas station that is littered throughout the south—and he saw a Catholic girl (from the looks of her because she had on a plaid skirt, and she prayed a rosary through part of her trip). Eddy got off the bus, and he lit up. The girl passed by and said, "*Torch it!*" It was a code for the rest of the group to start fucking with his head, and sounded like "torture" to them. Eddy wasn't smoking, any longer, to be cool. He didn't like the society he lived in, and he cursed whatever powers there were out there that were fucking him. In the end, his "fuck you" attitude was reciprocated by people around him. They fucked with his head all the way to the California border.

Chapter 36

"An apology for the Devil. It must be remembered that we have heard only one side of the case. Gaud has written all the books." —Samuel Butler, "Higgledy-Piggledy"

Eddy got to his Malibu home, and he was surprised by what he saw. Brian Wilson had been a guy that played with the Beach Boys, and even though he wasn't there, a *lot* of people were at Eddy's pad, nearly having a party, and Eddie Vedder was one of them. That made Eddy feel *good*, actually, but he had thought about Charlie Manson and *him* taking over Brian's home during the sixties. He *lost* it to

them.

Hilary Duff was at Eddy's pad, as was Gregory Tigris, and Daryl Hall and John Oates. Paul McCartney came, and he *couldn't* believe the company that was there. They were listening to his albums that he had on vinyl, and he didn't know what to do. He didn't know how they got in, and he would have been *ecstatic* if it had been that way all along, but the fact was that he was going through psychological torture. The torture started at Pilot, and it continued *most* the way to California in Malibu.

Eddy wondered to himself why he didn't take the Lamborghini—the *Diablo*—all the way across the country, but that reminded him too much of the cannonball runs that were made popular because of movies of the same name.

Eddy wanted out, but he wanted in. He wanted *peace*. He didn't know if he'd get it.

Eddy took up cliff diving on the day after he came home with all the company that was waiting for him. He let his doors open—in the past, it was only the *back* door that he left open, but he left the front door unlocked from that point forward, as well (Tony, of all people, had busted in his pad and welcomed everyone to have their ways with whatever was inside; that's what Eddy figured).

Eddy cliff dove from ten feet, before anything else. He knew there was places up and down the Pacific that he could go higher and higher, if he wanted to. He could feel the jealousy on his *skin*, though. He knew that people from his old neighborhood, when they knew that he not only had money but the ability to dive from high cliffs, would be jealous. With all that went on, he *welcomed* it. There was nothing else he could do.

Ten feet turned to fifteen, and fifteen turned to twenty... and twenty evolved into thirty.

Eddie Vedder was there with him to help along in the social aspect. Eddy was glad. They barbequed on the beach, and they left their problems behind... at least for temporary times.

Chapter 37

"The electric age... establishes a global network that has much the character of our central nervous system." —Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*

Eddy brought back his beliefs of what happened to him New York with him back to California. He had been taught that Brian Epstein was the only reason the Beatles ever made it successfully. Without that Jew, the Beatles would have been no one, and there would have been *another* band that some Jew would have promoted to make them the center of the universe.

John Kilgore was a guy that Eddie Corona had known from Pitzer College. He was a black guy with a white mom (it *has* to be emphasized that he was black, though, because the white community doesn't accept people, by and large, unless they are pure... or they adhere to their beliefs). Either way, John said that having Doctor Martin Luther King was a *drag* for what was going on because they couldn't even live up to him... and his movement was killed on the day that he was assassinated. The Jews played him up like he was some god, but in reality, he jerked off or he had women on the side, but he had a *libido*! Either way, that didn't really matter.

Eddy Richards was listening to the Scorpions, and he was thinking about how things evolved in the world. Eddie Corona had met him in passing, and it seemed that all the Eddies were together, again. There was Eddie Vedder, and Eddie Van Halen that rounded things out (there were about fifteen other people at a party that was being thrown in Malibu). The Eddies compare stories, and Eddy Richards said to Eddie Van Halen, "What *were* you thinking what you let a Jew front your *band*?"

Eddie looked embarrassed, and said, "Daddy-longlegs" That's all he said. He had shaken his head when he said it.

Kiss had discovered Van Halen in Los Angeles. What were *they* thinking? No one knew, but being that Jimi Hendrix was the best guy going in the guitar field as far as legend, it was *good* for the Jews to have Eddie Van Halen—the next best thing—with a front man that was Jewish.

"Does he really light the *menorah*?" Eddy asked. He was referring to the Adam Sandler song that said that David Lee Roth lights the menorah every Christmas time.

Eddy felt embarrassed, for a while, and sensed that David Lee Roth was probably one of the *self-hating* Jews—the same ones that sympathize with Jesus Christ.

"Send a message to *David*, okay?"

"You got it," Eddie Van Halen said to Eddy Richards.

"Tell him I *like* him... and I'll destroy the Catholics if they find *out* about this."

He waited for things to get good. Stacey Dinner had found her way to Eddy's place—Eddy was drunk and barely remembered where he had met her from—and she

was Jewish, as well. She *liked* Eddy, and that was the problem. She had *power*. Another girl—Erin Skitt was her name—was German, from the looks of things, but she *wasn't* as powerful as Stacey. Eddy had an interest in her, but Stacey got in a bitch fight with her before he could even tell if they were good for one another.

Eddy asked Stacey, "What *was* that fight all *about*?"

"*You* don't know!" Stacey told Foul Ugly (it was a nickname that was given to an environmental professor from Stanford). Eddy didn't know why she didn't address *him*, though. "You're *giving* it to Tony," she said to Eddy.

Tony was nearby. "What *does* it *matter*?" he asked her. "You think I like being under *your* web?"

He didn't expect a response from her, but got one from Foul Ugly. "You think I want to be under *your* web!" and Eddy didn't get it because he barely wanted Foul there to begin with. He was too controlling.

"I *hate* this party!" Eddy said. Secretly, he thought it was descent.

Chapter 38

"The car has become the carapace, the protective and aggressive shell, of urban and suburban man."

— Marshall McLuhan

Understanding

Media

Eddy drove up in his Lamborghini and Tony Simpson and Ruben Mater were already waiting for him at his house in Malibu. Tony was saying something about only a nobody walking in LA, and Eddy supposed he was talking about the Missing Persons. Eddy didn't like it. He couldn't get away from his old life—the memories were with him—and he said, "You can take a nigger out of the ghetto, but you can't take the ghetto out of the nigger."

"Are you *saying*...?"

"Yep. I'm a *nigger*, Tony," he said. He looked down at his skin and noticed that he only had a mild tan. "'Nigger' is a state of mind, now, and it's *not* the race of people that were bred in the South."

"I *know*," Tony said. He looked at *his* skin, and noticed his tan had come in

quite fine.

"I'm *trying* to save you from jail, believe it or not."

"Why do you say that?" he asked Eddy.

"Well. Over these past few months, I've been learning things that I shouldn't know."

"Like?"

"I won't even tell you, but if you go back to the neighborhood and start spreading it, *cops* will be on you in heartbeat."

"Why?" Tony asked, but he was asking the security guy that walked up (he was part of a neighborhood watch program that Eddy didn't approve of).

"It's because of *him*!" he pointed to the black guy in the security uniform. "He is *not* the nigger, believe it or not. He is the Uncle *Tom*!"

"What?" Tony asked again, but this time he addressed Eddy directly with some confusion.

"And *Ruben*?" Eddy talked about Ruben, who was in the kitchen, and Eddy was helpless to get him out of the neighborhood. "*He* says that Jews are the lowest form of life on the planet... and that's why God chose Jesus to come as."

Eddy wanted to laugh, but he couldn't.

Ruben had told Eddy that was the only way it'd work. If God truly loved mankind, he'd come as their lowest race.

"Do you *buy* this stuff?" Tony asked him.

"I *have* to." Ruben came back, and gave a drink to a cable guy that was working on the television set.

"I *hate* you... *Ruben*!" Tony told Ruben.

Eddy didn't care. He yelled for the bartender—*Brad* was his name—and he said to make some martinis. Brad did, but he was reluctant. He didn't like the things Eddy had to say. *Eddy* didn't like the things that he had to say... and they were coming from his very *mouth*!

Chapter 39

"Consider the pebble." —*Buddhist fuckin' shit*

"Listen, Lard Tits," Eddy said, and he had to laugh. They were outside around a campfire, and Eddy had surprisingly forgiven him for throwing the pig's blood on

him.

"Ooooooh!" Hilary Duff said. She was mad. Eddy did *not* want Lard Tits at his place, but he was somehow wanted by the rest of crowd. One might say he was *voted* in.

Lard Tits grabbed at Hilary's boobs, and Eddy got mad. He was *mad*!

"Fuckin' *Lard* Tits! Can't you ever *behave*!?"

Lard Tits grabbed at Eddy's dick instead of answering. Eddy didn't know what to make of it, but he was very uncomfortable.

Nicole Kidman and Sandra Bullock made their way around the campfire. Nicole was roasting marsh mellows, she *said* something (friendly) to Lard Tits, and Eddy looked at her with scorn so Eddy shook it off the best he could, and so did Nicole. She didn't want to suffer his wrath. Axl Rose was a buddy of Eddy's and he was known to start *WHISTLING*! if things got really stupid.

Eddy wanted to continue the conversation with Lard Tits, so he did. "I don't *like* you. What can we do?"

"I *know*! Let's play some volley ball!" Axl said. He got a ball, and Eddy could tell that *he* was friends with Lard Tits as well. It *sickened* Eddy. He had thrown blood in him—Lard Tits did this of Eddy—and people were *liking* him for it.

"What do *you* see in the guy?" Jeff Chapman asked Catherine Zeta-Jones about Lard Tits.

"Yeah. I want to *know*!" Eddy said in sincerity, though he was put off that he didn't have any marsh mellows.

"Yeah. I want to know," Axl said, in near unison.

"It is *ON*!" Jeff said about Axl. He was mad.

Eddy asked him, "What's the *deal*?"

"You know what's up." Eddy *liked* Guns 'n' Roses before meeting Lard Tits, and even before meeting Axl Rose, for that matter. Lard Tits had gone to a couple of their concerts, but he was more of a Metallica fan. Jeff didn't say anymore. He was rather put off that *he* didn't have any marsh mellows, as *well*... but there was more to it.

Eddy laughed. "Every time I call him Lard Tits, it makes me feel better," he told Jeff.

"I know. You're a *rebel*." Jeff said this, and the second part was almost sarcastic.

"I don't *care*!" Eddy said. "Hey Lard *Tits*!" he said to the big, bowling-ball-shaped guy. "Can I call you *Lewis*? Your friends here tell me that's your real name!"

Lard Tits tried to say something to Hilary Duff, and Eddy was surprised that

she had something going with Lard Tits, though at least on a friendship level.

"Come *here*," Jeff said to Hilary, but it was Christina Applegate that came around instead. Jeff took her to one of Eddy's room and they made out (Christina took off her top, and her husband macked all over Hilary Duff, later).

Eddy didn't care. By the end of the night, he went to a party where Paula Abdul was. He had made *love* to a girl that looked very much like her, many years back, and when he saw her, he gave her a kiss on the cheek.

They were there to discuss the movie that Eddy was trying to finance (he didn't want to break into his own account, if possible). They liked their dreams.

Though Eddy liked Hilary, and they had kissed on a few occasions (and even made love, once), he found himself getting jealous of Jeff... but he brushed it off. "So be it!" Eddy said when he talked to Jeff, later.

"C'est la vie," Jeff said. He drank the rest of his Miller, then threw it into the ocean.

Chapter 40

"He who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or god." —*Politics*, from Aristotle

"I think she wants my head in a *jar*, Tony," Eddy said.

"I *know*," Tony said. He was now going by "Butch," but no one was calling him it (he got the idea from Eddy when he had gone to New York and started going by Dick).

"I don't know what I'm going to do about *Franky*—Frankenstein, I mean," Eddy said. He looked at the gardener that was around him, and wished he'd fall off the nearby cliff.

Tony didn't say a thing, and Eddy had a dream that he *did* go to jail, the prior night. He had snapped. It was as simple as that.

Hilary Duff was the beauty of the world, but she was hard to deal with. In the news, it was reported that she was back with Nick Carter. That didn't make Eddy mad at all, and that was how the press dealt with its *own* feelings about Hilary and Eddy being together: They *lied*.

It didn't matter. Eddy *liked* Nick, as a person, and was even in the Backstreet

Boys for one day during his parties (he really wasn't, but he got up and started dancing with them to a Scorpions song).

Part II: Forty Asses

"What did the Mexican get for Christmas?

"I don't know. *What?*

"My bike!"

—from *Truly Tasteless Jokes*

Chapter 41

"If I said that you're my friend, and our love would never end,

How long before I had your trust again?" —Guns 'n' Roses, "Locomotive"

(called "*Crazymotive*" by Eddy Richards)

"Tony?"

"What?"

"I finally figured out the meaning of *Daniel*."

"The book in the Bible, right?"

"No." Eddy was surprised by the insight, but he kept on anyway, "I *guess* that could be it, but it'd be a hidden message by Elton John."

"Because Daniel went in the lion's den, huh?"

"You bet your ass!" Eddy said.

Eddy went on to talk about Hilary Duff. She was living in a large Spanish villa, and a friend of Eddy's—Nancy was her name—told him that she was taking a liking to her *gardener*, of all things!"

I think this is the end of it, Nancy had told him.

Either way, it didn't matter to Eddy much. It didn't matter at *all*. He was losing his freedoms in *some* regards, but in others, he was being liberated. When one door closes, another one opens. He was told that. He always believed it.

"Daniel is traveling tonight on a plane, Elton John says," Eddy said to Tony aloud, and he didn't bother singing it in the Elton John voice.

"I *know*," Tony said.

"I can see the *red* tail lights... heading for *Spaaaaain!*" Eddy sang this time.

"So you're saying that she's *dead* to you? Hilary is.," Tony said and noted.

"No. Not dead, but I *fear* it. I can see Daniel waving good-bye. I think *she* is Daniel, and going into the Hispanic villa of hers is the *lion's* den! I don't think she'll ever come *back!*"

Nancy came up to the door. She was long and slender, and Eddy didn't know that she had a TV show that aired locally (it was the rumor that he was told, anyway).

Tony said to her, "What do you want me to *do?*"

Nancy didn't say a thing. She let Eddy know things because she wanted to be with him. They had made love a few times. She was married, but she didn't care.

"I *love* Hilary, " Eddy said to Nancy.

"You think that she's *doing* this to you—she's putting on these jealousy trips because you *slept* with me, huh?"

"Yep. You bet your ass," Eddy said.

He didn't feel good about things. He *loved* Nancy, but there was a pecking order. He had something going good with Hilary, and he'd fight to the *death* for her. He didn't want to give her away. He didn't want Nancy to move too close, *either*.

"I don't want to live a boring life, Nancy," Eddy said.

"I know," she said.

"I don't even think you're Christian, but you say you're Christian." Eddy waited for a response from her, but she was reading him for his reaction about the Hilary conversation. "I'm going to keep sleeping with you whether Hilary likes it or *not*, Nancy."

"You're not just saying that," Nancy said. She realized it was the truth, but Eddy hoped it would end. He realized that if you were going to make it in their world, you had to play by different rules. You had to trick people on the outside... and you had to be careful about coping with your own emotions.

"Pride ruined the angels." —Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Sphinx*

Dave Johnston was a guy that had tried to get Eddy into Amway a long time ago. He got a hold of Eddy through the internet—it was actually that opposite, because Eddy called him up on the phone and left his email address (he had gotten his number because he was listed in electronic Yellow Pages). Dave came to Malibu, and he was surprisingly okay with all that happened. In the time that he had last seen Eddy, he actually *did* climb the ladder of Amway, and he became a millionaire (almost, because he was at eight hundred thousand in the bank). It didn't matter to Dave. He had tried to take Eddy down for not joining Amway, but now that Eddy was rich, he said to him on email that they had to stick together... and it *didn't* matter if he was in Amway... yet.

Dave went to Malibu, and he told him all the things that he went through. He said there're *codes*. He said that you had to pretend that you're Christian... and when someone at one of your meetings asked why it was that Jesus said that it's harder for a rich man to enter the "kingdom of God" than it is for a camel to make it's way through the head of a pin... you had to refer to Solomon. He was a king in the Old Testament, and he was rich with many wives... and he had all the splendor that a person could imagine. Dave explained that there's enough contradictions in the Bible that no one could really pin you on anything. It's a self-negating thing, and if you knew it well enough, it has zero effect in your life. That's the way he explained it to Eddy.

"If you really want to know what to do in life, listen to Christian radio," Dave said. "That's what *not* to do... but you have all those people that nag you about joining Amway—the people that nag you about becoming *rich*, in other words—and you have to tell *those* people what Christian radio says."

Eddy didn't know if he was being tested. His girlfriend was Hilary Duff, and she had a song on her album—*Metamorphosis* was the name of it, and it was named after a poem that Eddy's sister had written—and the song was called "Sweet Sixteen." Of course, Hilary was going to be sixteen the year that it was made... But... She said that it had coded meanings. At the time, she had been in the Casper movie, and her TV dad had been into making gnomes. She was horded by a lot of people that wanted to have sex with her. She couldn't stand it, and she made the song, that when listened to and ignoring the lyrics (and *title*, for that matter), it sounded like "THREE SIXTEEN," a reference to the most popular quote in the Bible from *John*, chapter three, verse sixteen.

Eddy said, "'For God so loved the world that he gave his only son so that sins can be forgiven, and shit along those lines,' it says." Eddy was serious, but that popping noise started in his house again, and for the first time, it happened when company was around. "Ignore that popping sound. You *have* to." The popping went on Eddy was a little embarrassed, and he said, "In that song, by the way... Oh. I'm moving to the *desert*! I can't stand the shit that goes *on* around here! Either way, in that song, she says something about her sister... and 'daddy.' The 'daddy' sounds just like 'Eddy.' She says it was for me."

Dave didn't look surprised.

"I'm sure you know that things go *on* like this, and that song 'Why Not?'..." Eddy waited for Dave to comment, but he listened patiently, and Eddy was surprised by it because he was *not* patient all those years back when he didn't join Amway with him. "That song 'Why Not?'—I swear to *God* that she took one of my journals, and on the first night that I met her, I wrote 'WHY NOT?' in large capitals. I *know* that's where she got it from, because I said, 'She's sixteen... *almost*... WHY NOT go out with her?'" Eddy felt a little embarrassed because she was using his life in her movies, but it was okay. He felt flattered, and *if* he was going to be used, why *not* be used by a sixteen-year-old that's finding her way in life. The *problem* was that she was starting to sleep with her band mates. She was getting in the Jacuzzi naked with them, and it made Eddy jealous because he felt he was losing her. He *knew* he'd lose her, and maybe he never had her to begin with. "I'm not ashamed of being with her, but I *do* feel had."

"Because you felt up her tits," Dave observed.

"No. Not because I felt up her tits, but thank you for the observation. It's because she has all her corporate sponsors to please, and let's face it... They don't *like* me."

"Why?"

"They need her to be promiscuous if they're going to make money. I *don't* care if I look like Brad Pitt! Even if I *did* have good looks, the rest of the world has to believe they have a *shot* with her!"

"It's a joke," Dave said.

"It's a joke, and it's taken me a year and a half to *realize* that it's a joke."

"So that *gardener* guy...?" Dave started to ask.

"That gardener guy is the one she has interest now... and part of me is *happy*. I'm a pagan, for all practical reasons, but you're not going to tell the rest of the world, *are* you?"

Dave shook his head no, but he blushed, and Eddy could tell that he was

going to have to watch himself.

"I'm a pagan cuz I *have* to be. I *tried* to settle with people—Christina Applegate was one of them... No. It was Aguilera... But the *pope*, of all people! The *pope* got involved and said that she was one of *his* people!" Eddy added, "I don't know that from first hand information, obviously, because I think the pope's a prick as *well*, like so many of these guys trying to control my *life*!"

"I *don't* see!" Dave said, but he was saying it in mild frustration into the air.

"I'm *moving* to the desert, and for a while, I'm getting away from all this *shit*!"

"It's better than Cucamonga, though." Dave said, but he was halfway asking it as well.

"Yeah. It *is*... but I can't stand the tests, I can't stand these *authority* figures that want to tell me how to spend my *money*!" Eddy thought for a bit then said, "I don't think they're going to leave me alone in the desert, but I'm going to buy five or ten acres, put a *trailer* on it... then live like Charlie Sheen did in *Hot Shots*."

"You are a *nut*!"

"No. Just fighting for my freedom."

Chapter 43

"Ads push the principle of noise all the way to the plateau of persuasion. They are quite in accord with the procedures of brainwashing." —Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*

Eddy moved to the desert. He wasn't wrong that people would follow him, but they were *different* people than he had expected *would* follow him. Axl Rose, for example, was one of the people that went to the desert, where Eddy put up a fifty-foot-long trailer on a near plateau of a moving river. Eddy was inspired by what was going on. Being away from the beach had its down side—the waves were good to hear, but they knocked you down too, if you were a kid (he heard a lot of complaints about it and could never figure it out).

Stephen *King* made visits to the desert, and it was seen that he indeed *did* talk to him early on when he won his lottery money. Eddy had fantasized that he'd get to

be around a campfire with King, and he was. Jonathan Gelshire came along, and it was a lot of fun.

Eddy found that a lot of his talents were diminishing. He *had* played the bag pipes, and he played them well. He *found* that he could only play when he was depressed (and he was depressed for most the time that he first got his money). He wrote about things, in his bag pipe songs, that no one would do. He wrote about donkeys riding on jockeys, and those kinds of things. The rat race, though, in Malibu was too much for him. He knew it was a phasing... and it was a *hazing*, but he believed he might not ever be accepted. It was easier for him to off and run.

The *primary* reason that he wasn't accepted—this is what it came to in retrospect when he *thought* about things—was that his mind was too much on Cucamonga, his home town. He wasn't inspired to give them money—after all, if he shared his fortune with everyone in town, they'd be about three hundred dollars richer *each*, or so he figured—and they'd blow it in a second.

He was *afraid* of them. They had internet, they *knew* he won the money, and if he started living well, they'd *do* something to him. He couldn't tell that straight out, but there was a song by Nirvana that said that just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they're not after you.

Eddy settled into the place in the desert—it was about five or ten miles away from Barstow, and Eddy never wanted to measure it in his Humvee because it was too much to think of—and he stopped thinking of Hilary. No. That wasn't right. He started thinking of her all the time, but his memory of her was tainted with all that she had to go through as an entertainer. She wore skimpy suits. Things like that. She had to whore herself off to the world if she was to make money, and if she was to have financial freedom. It made Eddy sad to think that he was a stepping stone, but he found out through the internet that people from Cucamonga were *threatening* her to be with him. Yeah. There was that element. There were people that were jealous of his wealth... and they tried to destroy him. And there were people that *revered* that someone from Cucamonga made it into the big time... and they made sure that things stayed that way.

The problem with the people that tried to make it happen was that it backfired. The more Hilary felt pressured to be with Eddy... the more she resisted. The more Eddy felt he was doing it for a "cause"... he said, *Fuck THIS shit!*

It didn't matter to Eddy. He was casual in his new environment, and he was glad to be away from the Catholics that tried to control his life (Mel Gibson was one of them). He was bitter... and he was glad to get away.

Eddy read books by Stephen King that he wrote that were never published. That was a great joy of his. He read *Time Barks On Your Nobility*, and it was a story about a beat writer from a metropolis (Stephen King had written it when he was in high school) and he was fighting his tendencies not to be a transvestite. The book was littered with errors—in one scene, the protagonist by the name of Hoopy Doopla was racing to the scene of a crime, dropped his only pen on the way, and it mysteriously appeared in his hands when he had to interview a cop—and it made Eddy feel good that he had something *real*. Stephen King said he was paranoid when he wrote the book. His parents had been harassing him, and *they* were the cops. They were reading through his shit—his real life *journals*—and they started to mock his life. The only way he knew out was to *disguise* it all.

Eddy put up only pictures on his wall that reminded him of good times. There were those from Cucamonga, but they were few, and far in between. *It's funny how you can look at a picture and remember that you were having such a good time... and then hate the son-of-a-bitch when it comes back to haunt you later because the person you were photoed with wound up being a gold digger!* Eddy thought.

He threw a lot of his photos away, but he didn't want to be rash. He wanted to do things little by little. He got rid of the worse—and the most *blatant*. He did that. He did the best he could do, and it put up pictures of inspiration. He was a millionaire that decided to live in the desert in isolation from everyone else. He couldn't get certain bad images out of his mind, but he figured that by putting things in *replacement* of them, he'd be fine in time. He put up a picture of Ansel Adams in place of one he had of Hilary Duff (the one from Duff had been put up over his bed for the first two weeks that he lived at his new place). He put up a swastika, but he did it for a reason. He was reminded of the bad stuff that was going on in Malibu, and though he wasn't for genocide, he wanted to be *proud* that he was white. He didn't want to be associated with racists, but more than that, he didn't want to be associated with *niggers*.

The photos remained for weeks at a time, and his house slowly evolved. He had a picture of Cucamonga on the wall that was hung with a pin tack. It was one of those cartoon photos where the Ford dealership and the Wendy's and the Seventy-six station, and so forth, were located. It was funny, because he could never locate his house on the map. When he moved to the desert, he thought he saw it for a little while.

All of that came down. He had a habit of writing down what he was going through... and throwing it into a fire incinerator a few days later. The writing helped

him sort through his emotions. The incinerator made sure that bad memories didn't remain with him.

Eddy didn't know what Amway had planned for him. They were going to help him, they were going to try to destroy him, or they were going to ignore him like a pebble. He hoped he'd be ignored, but he knew what they were about. They were for promoting American pride, and Eddy started to feel it. When he was in Cucamonga, he had a friend that worked at a Pepsi warehouse. He was mistreated, and Eddy couldn't drink a Pepsi *after* that.

When Eddy got to the desert—he nicknamed the place Dick Heaven—he bought a two liter bottle of Pepsi and he drank without stopping. Hilary was fucking with him by leaving messages on the phone's answering machine (Eddy got rid of his cell phone the very first day that he moved to the desert), and Eddy wished she would quit. It turned out that the Screen Actors' Guild was paying her thirty-five thousand dollars every time that Eddy would call back all irate from what he was going through.

Eddy drank his Pepsi, and he regretted being with Hilary. More than that, he regretted being born because being with Hilary was not wrong—it was the society *around* them that was fucked up. Hilary wouldn't be doing her shit unless she wasn't being paid by the Screen Actors' Guild, and Eddy knew it (they were resentful of the fact that he moved away from one of their havens, and they thought it might set a precedence for the other people they lived around).

Eddy *tried* to be good, but he was finding it was impossible to do so.

He was given a Bible when he was nine-year-old. It was by an aunt, and she was a *dream* aunt. Eddy later turned Buddhist because he couldn't deal with the pressures of Christianity, but he still hung on to that Bible. He hung onto it, not because of the stories of Jesus within it. He hung on to it because he had dear memories of the person that gave it to him.

Eddy was shunned by his family because he didn't give them more money. He had given them a million dollars to share, and he planned to give them more if they behaved, and if he kept the ball rolling by parlaying his wealth into something more... but they *didn't* behave. It was like the Coke bottle from "The Gods Must Be Crazy." They saw the million dollars, and they started to fight. They previously had nothing (or very *little*), and they were fine. They got new cars, and a couple of down payments on homes were made. They thought it was like *Sim City*, though. They thought that they erase things whenever they wanted. They thought that rebuilding was as simple as clicking a mouse button. It *wasn't* that simple.

Eddy decided to live in seclusion for six months—that was his initial plan—and when he came out of it, he wanted to contact the people that *he* wanted to contact. He didn't want a mad rush of people, any longer, to mob him when he saw them. It was a sad sight.

In place of the Bible that his aunt had given him, he bought a pagan book by the name of *Wilt Quilter*. It was written by Spenser Jok, and Eddy figured it must have been a pseudonym because of how funny it sounded. The book wound up being good, but it was disturbing. That didn't bother Eddy. He had watched an episode of *Seinfeld* ("Fuckin Jew!" Eddy said aloud when he saw it for the first time) and George Kastanzer (Eddy was always calling the characters on TV by their wrong names) stopped having sex. No. That wasn't the episode. The episode eluded him—he tried not to watch *too* much TV, but found that *Seinfeld* was welcoming in his small trailer—but George wound up being the *Antichrist*! That was it. He wasn't having much luck with women so he decided to do everything opposite of what he had been doing. He ate certain things—that's the way Eddy remembered things—and he ate the *opposite* of what he previously wanted. It went on like that, George found out that he had *luck* with the women! And then it followed that he started asking questions of the devine. If he started doing everything opposite, and he was having luck with women... it ultimately followed that he was no longer a *Christian*! He was an antichrist, in other words, and he couldn't handle it so he went back to his old ways, and he didn't care that he no longer got the women that he was getting.

Eddy didn't believe in things that way. That was a *sitcom*, after all. He was starting to do things opposite of what was going on in Malibu. They told him that oil slicks are really Mexicans—a *code* word, in other words—and he went along with it for a while... until he started learning a little more about the *oil* slicks. He was on the beach and saw birds that were layered with guck. They were suffering, and Eddy could *feel* them suffering. It went beyond code words, for him, and he started to actually save the damn birds. He went to city hall, and so forth, and demanded that people not sit on their asses about things they could do things about.

In Dick Heaven, Eddy forgot about it all. He had a picture of a refinery on fire when he was in Malibu. That's why he got the Ansel Adams photo. It still reminded him that nature was a good thing... and he didn't have to be connected with the radicalness of it all. The picture of refiner was dubbed "Another One Bites the Dust," and it went in personal incinerator as soon as he came across it from his packing boxes. He couldn't get the disturbing images out of his head, though, and that was the problem.

Eddy knew in time that his *Hustler* photos would take the place of the one of the burning incinerator. Eddy believed the whole world was going to hell in a hand basket anyway, so why not live it *up*?

Eddy put on the stereo... and he started to put photos of himself up. They were photos of when he was a kid. He couldn't betray himself, could he? The photos of people from Cucamonga tied him to a time that he needed to forget.

Eddy drank from his Pepsi. He thought about the friend that was mistreated there. He hoped she was doing fine. Or was it a "he"? He couldn't remember anymore because he really didn't *care*.

Chapter 44

"I was angry with my friend: I told my wrath, my wrath did end.

**I was angry with my foe: I told it not, my wrath did grow." —Will Blake, A
*Poison Tree***

Will Blake came around Eddy's trailer. He was one of the first people that Eddy *had* come around (he had met him on internet, and he was interested in finding out who rode ATCs—the ones with *three* wheels that were still outlawed—and he was glad to have met him). Will was named after the poet from the nineteenth century, and it made Eddy a bit nervous to recite his poetry. It was great though.

On Memorial Day in 2004, Eddy married Hilary. That was the best thing he could have done, but it wasn't a marriage by conventional standards. Eddy was in the desert, Hilary was somewhere far away and *said* that she was on tour (Eddy didn't know and didn't care though he *could* have checked her schedule on internet). They saw each other through video conferencing and had eight witnesses. It was a brown lady—Eddy couldn't remember the next day because he was drinking Miller Genuine Draft for most of the day before he decided to hook up with her—that performed the services. Was it Nancy O' Dell? Eddy couldn't remember. Was it the girl from "Gotta Kick it Up"? Eddy didn't know, but he *knew* that he married Hilary. She wore a wedding dress—it was still in of his mail boxes with his internet service hookup—and she looked beautiful. Eddy feared that *other* people would see the photo. He printed it up, and he erased the original file from his computer. He feared that if too many people saw the photo—she looked better than a lady in red he had seen the day before—they would want her for herself. She said she wore the skimpy clothing to

fend people off. People don't *want* sluts, she had explained to him, and if she looked like a slut, that would fend off the people that say they want marriage but really just want sex... and to leave.

Eddy had witnesses for the ceremony, though, and Will Blake was one of them. They went outside and lit a big tire fire. Jonathan Gelshire came over afterwards, and so did Jeff Chapman. It was a hilarious sight, and Eddy was in joy... until...

Hillary Rodham Clinton came over, and Eddy didn't want to see her. She heard that he was a decent person, and she wanted him for herself... or for Chelsea... or for Bill... It didn't really matter, but when she heard that Eddy had married Hilary (he didn't specify which Hilary it was when he told news to people that were *semi*-close to him out of fear that people would twist the truth... or want her for themselves). Hillary, though, and came around and said, "I am a *rocker*!"

Eddy said, "That's nice," and he kissed her on the cheek because he had heard that she was decent. It didn't really matter to him.

To Eddy's surprise, Chelsea showed up, and Eddy started to get a little scared. He sensed a depression in her.

Eddy said, "I have so much *money* now—I know you guys have more because your book tours and all—but I deal with this all the time."

"Join the crowd," Hillary said.

Chelsea didn't say a thing.

"How did you *get* here?" Eddy asked Hillary, but he wouldn't have minded if Chelsea spoke up. "Don't the secret service guys keep you from wondering into the *desert*? They're not *here*, are they?" Eddy really wanted to know.

"You're *one* of them, son," Hillary said to him.

"This is for posterity," Eddy started to say, "But does a lottery winner necessarily have to have reverence for the first family, and things along that nature?"

Hillary wanted to nod her head yes, but found herself unable to do so.

"I see," Chelsea said. Eddy didn't know what she meant, but he envisioned her in prison clothes in a month or two.

Eddy said, "Listen." He was rude when he said it, but he carried on anyway, "I..." He couldn't think. All of a sudden, Hilary Duff popped into his head, and he said to Chelsea, "You *know* I got married, right?"

"A publicity stunt?" she asked him, and her mood became brighter.

"I don't *know*," Eddy said to her. He really didn't know. He had talked to existential philosophers in Malibu. Some of them said that marriage didn't exist—it

was an abstraction of the mind—but some of them said that *reality* didn't matter, and so long as people believed, it was *Absolutely* true. Eddy said, "For fleeing moments, I *know* we're married. If you exist—if you're *here*—I'm married to her. That's the way I feel."

"But you..." Chelsea started to wonder. She wasn't talking to Eddy. She was talking to a picture of Hilary Duff that Eddy had on his counter.

"Let's go," Hillary Clinton said to her daughter, and she grabbed her by the and to pull her away.

"Come *on*!" Chelsea said, but she wasn't mad. "You said he was the mad genius *that*..." She couldn't finish what she was saying. She realized that Eddy was overhearing what she was thinking aloud, and she stopped.

"I have this fat fuck friend—I don't know if he's a friend because I don't think he's a friend to himself. You *remind* me of him, Chelsea," Eddy said to her. "You're *depressed*... and you come out of it in an *instant*." Eddy looked at the picture of Hilary Duff that was on the table and said, "I *married* that girl! I don't know that it's true but..."

Eddy fainted. He just realized that his life had changed in proportions that were different than anything he could have imagined. He knew Axl Rose. He knew Hilary Duff. He *married* Hilary Duff, and now the former first family was in his living room, save Bill.

Eddy regained his consciousness then said, "I hope she's going by Hilary Richards, now. I really do. Did I *faint*?"

Chapter 45

"Sometimes, assholes just shouldn't win the lottery." —Eddie Vedder to Ralph Nader during the

campaign of 2000

Inevitably, the thing that broke Eddy and Hilary up was the fact that he wouldn't shut up about their relationship. Eddy had started doing a lot of LSD when he was in the desert—he figured it was the Way, since it was set in precedence by Jim Morrison—and he started getting new revelations. One of his revelation—one of the *visions* that came to him—was that his biology professor in high school had done the drug quite often. Otherwise, why do you cut up *frogs*? He really didn't know... but he thought about it for five thousand years (it *seemed* like five thousand years to him).

The thing that he knew he had to do when he stopped doing the LSD was to throw away anything that had a cross. That meant his *Peter Dinklage* CD. That meant his crucifix that he was given by Mel Gibson. That meant he had to destroy the Enigma CD that he bought at a record store that still sold vinyl (and Enigma on *vinyl* was a fuckin' trip to him).

The things started to change. He could *feel* it. He joined the Flat Earth Society, and they kicked him out. He didn't care. He didn't believe the Earth was flat, but he wanted to join to fend off the crazy nuts that were after his money. In other words, if he was crazy enough, people wouldn't approach him. That's what he figured. If they started talking about money, he would say to them, *Well, did you know Copernicus this, that, and the other?* He didn't have it figured out, but he started a cult of his own: It was the *Earth Is Center* cult, and they had the basic hypothesis that infinity is equal in all directions, so Earth is center, no matter what. Either way, that didn't *matter* to Eddy. He could *give* a shit if the Earth was center or not. He had heard about wormholes, and the fact that space is curved (he wasn't sure if he could believe that, but he *tried*). He didn't *care*. He wanted people just like himself, and that was the bottom line. He wanted people that were trying to escape society.

Hilary came back from the tour that she said she was on. Eddy said to her, "I love you Hilary."

"It was *real*. Okay?" She was serious, but Eddy shuddered a little.

"I don't want people to *KNOW*!"

He waited for a response. He got none.

Eddy didn't want people to know that he really married Hilary Duff. It would be the end of the way they were able to communicate with each other. In his mind, she would lose her money, but that was not most important of all. She would lose the opportunity to connect with fans, and he couldn't bring himself to deal with the guilt of taking her away from possibility.

"Do you see what he's *doing*?" a guy said when he approached Eddy's trailer.

Hilary got mad at Eddy because Eddy said, "What's *up*, Bandini *Dude*?!" and he

was mad when he said it. The guy worked at a bullshit farm not far from where Eddy was at.

Bandini Dude didn't say a thing, but Eddy could tell he was waiting for his opportunity to put in his two cents about the whole situation. It's what Eddy feared—that he'd get a barrage of people trying to tell him what marriage... and *life*, for that matter, was all about... and it was all unsolicited! It made Eddy furious.

"They know you're mad at *Paul*," Hilary said, and she gestured to Bandini Dude.

"Of *course* I'm mad at Paul. That's why I'm *pagan* now!"

Hilary got mad and shook her head.

Eddy yelled, "Paul of Tarsus fucked our whole *world*!"

"You don't need to say a *thing*," Hilary said in mad frustration to Bandini Dude.

Eddy had a friend that came up to the trailer. Her name was Missy Sylvania, and she looked gorgeous. She was friends with Eddie Macral, the guy who played in *Freight Train*.

"I see!" Hilary said to Eddy, and she was a bit jealous of the fact that Eddy had reverence for Missy.

"I knew he was *coming*!" Eddy said about Bandini Dude, and I told Missy to come up if she caught word of it. Eddy asked Missy—not *Hilary*, "Are you okay with this?"

She nodded her head yes, and didn't really look uncomfortable.

Eddy said, "I'm going to *use* you, Missy!"

"I *know* already."

"I'm glad you can handle it."

The four of them had a barbeque that day. It wasn't perfect, but it was comfortable. Eddy had taken a liking for tofu when he got to Malibu. In Dick Heaven, he did anything *but* eat meat—porter house steaks, and the like. New York Something was his favorite. He had come from a ghetto in Cucamonga, and he was learning to eat well. It didn't happen in Malibu. It happened in a trailer far away... unless a person was to ask *Earth Is Center* true believers. They believed *everything* on Earth was in close proximity.

Chapter 46

"I hate quotations. Tell me what you know." —Ralph Waldo Emerson, in a journal

"We don't *want* your type in our society," Hilary Duff said to Missy Sylvania.

"I have fifty million dollars," Missy said.

Eddy misunderstood. He thought she was saying that by not allowing her in that they would miss her money. He said, "We don't *need* your money."

"I can destroy you. That's all I'm saying," Missy said.

Hilary got emotional. She was jealous of Missy, and she understood what was going on. Missy was a daughter of an executive at Hollywood Records, and Hollywood records was the label that *paid* Hilary.

"I'll *tell* you something, Missy," Eddy said. He was mad. He started wearing an eye patch because it reminded him of the Blue Beard character that he had seen in Beverly Hills. What was that? Ten thousand years ago? "I am *full* of myself!" Eddy said, and he slammed down the eye patch. "I *use* this thing because..." He looked up, because they *all* were looking up. They could *feel* something, and Eddy was almost sure that the CIA had fucked his shit up again. He was trying to get a cult going, but it was a cult that was of the atypical sense. In the end, he wanted to marry Hilary. He wanted to be with her whenever he wanted. Missy figured that if Hilary was good enough for Eddy, she *sure* the shit would be since she basically paid her paychecks! "I don't know what to do, Missy," Eddy said, and he held her in front of Hilary.

Hilary put on the eye patch. She looked like she was having fun.

Missy made an observation of Eddy's demeanor, and she noticed that he was irritated whenever he looked away from her. He didn't want to *be* irritated.

"The Flat Earth Society—we are a *part* of it, don't you see?" Eddy said to Hilary. "We are an *offshoot* of it, and it's a schism to some, but *some* in the Society know what we're doing... and what we're talking about."

Hilary said that she knew, and it pleased Eddy.

Missy got sick. She literally got sick and threw up on the rug in front of Eddy.

"Do you want to marry me?" Eddy asked her, but he was asking in curiosity more than he was asking in a pleading way.

Missy said that she would.

"You're going to have to clear it with Hilary, because one of the reasons I came to the desert was to get away from the *rules*. They are full of *rules* where I was at."

"I know," Missy said.

Eddy thought about the cults he learned about when he was a kid. He thought about how *sick* he thought of them. He thought that the Jim Jones people were *wackos*...but he could feel something brewing in the desert, and maybe it had

been there all along. It made him fearful to think about it, but then he thought about how *alive* he felt for the few moments that he was enjoying his freedom.

Eddy went outside and put up an American flag. He hadn't liked the thing too much with what was going on in Iraq, and how he thought it was an embarrassment. He learned that life is not always as it seemed, and the *alternative* to having an American government was more scary than anything he could think of.

Eddy said to Hilary, "*That* is our secret code. It's the center of the universe, okay?"

Hilary nodded, and said, "Freedom. I get *you*."

Eddy was happy, but he was *unhappy*. He felt that the best thing that money could buy was the roller coaster. In Cucamonga, he was nearly flat-lining. He was nearly believing that life wasn't worth living. In Malibu, he went through a hell that was worse than anything he could imagine. You can't appreciate the good without the bad, and he told Hilary about it that night after Missy left.

In bed Eddy asked Hilary, "I *need* to marry you."

"I know," she said. Then she threw a pitcher of water on him. Eddy felt refreshed. Hilary felt relieved. Eddy wound up not sleeping in the same bed with her that night. He stoked off on the couch, and he couldn't get a full erection. He thought of her too much.

Chapter 47

"All alone is all we are." —Kurt Cobain

"This is getting way to *real* for me," Eddy said to Hilary. She told him that internet marriages don't matter.

"I'm just *kidding*!" she said.

Government officials came up to the door, and the lead one in a uniform was black... and looked a little tired. Eddy wondered why they were there, and he never saw Hilary so confused (and *scared*) in his whole life.

"I just got rid of the fuckin' *Catholics*!" he yelled. He said to the lead official, "If you're here because of *cults*..." Eddy started to say, but the lead official whisked Hilary away... and it looked like she wanted to *go*. Eddy asked, "What kind of shit is *THIS*?" He didn't know what to do, he turned to Hilary and said, "Are you in—?"

He couldn't finish his question. She interrupted him and said, "—in the *mafia*?" but there was an insincerity about her he had never seen before.

His heart dropped a bit and he said, "This isn't about *Amway*, is it?"

"Indirectly, it is," she said, and she was solemn.

"Go, Hilary! I feel like the *Fly*!"

"What are you talking about?" she asked.

"The Fly" was a movie that Eddy had watched with Jeff Goldblum. In the movie, the *Fly* (played by Jeff) mutates from what had been a combination of human and fly products. Jeff was a *freak*. In the movie, he wanted to die. In the end, he said to a lady that he had fallen in love with to *crush* him. He was under a compacting machine.

"I *get* what you're saying," Hilary said to Eddy, after Eddy explained what "The Fly" was all about.

Eddy couldn't think for a little while, then he said, "I don't *trust* you. I fear I never will again." He waited, not for anything in particular, and not for things to change, and then he said, "It's better off if you go. I *loved* you, Hilary. As much as I could love a person, I *loved* you."

She said, "I *know*," and she cried a bit.

"I *loved* you, and if love doesn't die, then I don't know what it is." Eddy thought about first Corinthians, chapter thirteen and verses... He couldn't remember the verses. In that, love doesn't die. It endures forever. Eddy started thinking it was horseshit that religious people put into people's minds so that they can't live up to expectations, hence they are in *need* of the church. Eddy said, "I'll see you around." He knew he *would* see her around. He knew love didn't just die overnight, but he was willing to take his risks. He let her go with the government agents, and he wished for a better life.

Before Hilary called the government agents, Eddy said that he was going to hit her. Eddy feared he would. The rage was growing in him. The Screen Actors' Guild was paying her big money to mess with his head. He didn't like it. He *warned* her that if it went on too far, he'd do something about it. He said, *Pow! To the MOON!* He *meant* it, though, even though he was making fun of a Honeymooners mainstay.

Chapter 48

**"Trust is like a fine ceramic plate. It ain't no good anymore once broken." —
attributed**

to the front man of the

Foo Fighters

Eddy listened to his goddamn radio... and he was a mess. He didn't know what to do. He had ripped a picture of Hilary Duff, and he nearly cried. He was on the verge of crying, both in sorrow and joy, and he couldn't understand the combination. He felt liberated, but he felt alone. He wanted her around, but he wanted her ghost to leave his mind. He had never had anything better, and he feared he would never have anything as good again. She was his first virgin. That's the way things went, and he'd doubt for the rest of his life if she really *was* his first virgin... or if she really had sex with other people.

The sex they had was something that was vague, to Eddy. She rode him. She *grinded* him. Did it *count* as sex? When Eddy thought of it, it *didn't* count. He didn't penetrate her, and that was fine with him. She was still a young teen, and he was going to relieve her depression any way that he knew how.

In the end, Eddy crashed in burned. He never believed in himself in Cucamonga—not in the sense of getting women and keeping them. There were *cock-blockers* there, and you could be assured that if you got a good thing, a hundred people were going to be out trying to swoop on your find. Money provided Eddy with security. It provided himself a *place* that he could be. It was controlled chaos, in his mind. It was like a concert. He couldn't forget about it.

Eddy wondered where Hilary would be. She stopped believing in him... or she just had enough of him that she was ready to move on. She was a teen, and Eddy was in his mid-twenties. He had had *women* before. He knew they'd come back. Being someone's first love is different, though, and Eddy wondered if he was even her first love. She said she was dating a guy named Zotar, and it made Eddy jealous that there was someone else (he wasn't sure that there *was* a Zotar, and never checked the internet because he knew he'd get false information *anyway*). That was all. Life was *all*.

The experience of New York City came back to Eddy. He thought to try to get a hold Tina Fey. He thought to move to Seattle. He was big fans of the grunge scene, when it was alive and well in the nineties. The nineties would always *live* with Eddy. There was no such thing as time, any longer, and just because some dumb fuck says that it's a new millennium doesn't mean that emotion is no longer relevant. The modern bands weren't hitting Eddy's bone. They were good... for the *younger* people, and Eddy was quite a *fan* of Hilary's music, in all actuality (she said she wrote all the music to get *over* him).

Eddy didn't care. He wanted to move on. That was all.
For fleeting moments, Eddy wanted Hilary more than anything in life.

Chapter 49

"Here we stand, hearts broken in three... six... nine..."

—Journey, "Separate Ways"... live in Philadelphia

Eddy was inside watching old episodes of Beavis and Buttthead that he had on videotape. There was *one* episode that a crazy-looking Steve Perry was singing like he wanted to give someone a blowjob. It was funny. Beavis and Buttthead made fun of him. It brought joy to Eddy, if even for a short period of time.

Eddy got a hold of Tina Fey by getting her number from the internet. He said to her when he called on his telephone (he had a *telephone* in his trailer that was an old GTE payphone; it made him feel good... and it made him think of *pussy*), "Tina?"

"What?" she asked.

"I want to meet you."

"I'm already here."

Eddy hung up. He didn't say "bye." He didn't say anything. A depression swept through him, and he knew part of it had to do with Hilary. *Part* of it. He tried to trace the feeling. He knew she had something to do with it. He yelled into the air, "I love you, Hilary! Don't *kill* yourself! Don't you realize that you're not going to *live* without *me*!!!"

Hilary had threatened to burn Eddy's trailer to the ground before the government agents took her away. It made Eddy laugh. He *loved* her. He didn't know what to do.

Eddy called Tina back. He said, "Eric Clapton *sucks*, huh?"

"Of *course* he sucks," Tina said. "Is this the 'Eddy' I keep *hearing* about?"

"You must have caller *ID*!"

"Don't *fuck* with me!" Tina said. Eddy didn't believe she was talking him. She must have been talking to company in the room she was in.

There was a long silence. Eddy thought she must have been in conversation that he couldn't hear. "*This* is the deal!" Tina said. She sounded drunk. "I *woooooont*," Eddy heard Tina say to whatever mystery company that she had over at her pad.

Eddy said, "It's good to hear from you. It really *is*."

"You called!" Tina said.

"I love you, by the way," Eddy said.

"What is this? Cat in the *Hat*?"

"No. You're just good to talk to." Eddy changed his mood—it was something that came from within, and he *knew* it was sparked by a memory from Hilary. He said, "You know me and *Hilary*..."

"Through Lindsay Lohan. I *know*."

"Okay. I need to get back on my feet," Eddy said.

"The Russian *mob*," Tina said to mystery person in her place. It was in bemusement.

"I don't *care* if she's in the Russian *mob*!" Eddy said, and he was surprised that he was talking to chatter that he overheard from Tina while she talked to her guest.

The phone clicked. This time, it was *Eddy* that was hung up on.

Eddy wanted to cry. He played his bag pipes, and he felt better.

Chapter 50

"The guilty think all talk is of themselves." —Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*

Eddy felt extreme guilt when Hilary didn't return calls. She broke his heart. Axl Rose came by and brought Izzy Stradlin'. Eddy said what a big fan he was of the Ju Ju Hounds, and thanked him for making good music. He was surprised to see that Axl and Izzy were getting along, because he had heard through the media that they didn't get along any longer. It was good to see.

Axl explained that their concerts sucked, near the end, because he was performing for the history books and the media more than he was performing for his *fans*. He was talking about the shows he had with Metallica, and Izzy wasn't part of it any longer because he wanted to play small clubs instead of the big arenas.

Eddy didn't care to hear the talk. He knew it helped. Izzy started crying when he heard Eddy's sob story, but they were fake tears. Eddy couldn't fathom that he'd care.

When they left, Eddy thought about shooting himself... but that was for a *split* second.

He had a vision in his head. He was going to take Hilary's purple lingerie and put it on. He was going to send it all around the internet. He didn't have a large penis—not in the photo, cuz it was tucked underneath his leg, a bit (he allowed for

shadows for the sake mystery)—and he didn't care that the world knew who he was. He figured it was art. He figured that someday... *somewhere*, he was going to get attraction. He was right. The night he did it, it came to him in a dream... *and* on internet that everyone knew what he was doing.

They approved

Eddy was surprised.

In the photo that he chose, he wore a crocheted cap that his mother had made. He didn't know what to do. He was swimming in a swell of emotions, and he wanted to deal with them instead of letting them burn him like a cancer.

Izzy called the next day. He was *pissed* at Eddy. Eddy couldn't believe it. The day before, he had been so good.

"Did you get the *photo*?" Eddy asked.

Eddy could hear the rage on the other end of the phone. He didn't know if Eddy was trying to get back together with Hilary or... It *crossed* his mind that Izzy may have taken it as a homosexual come on.

Eddy couldn't think. Whitesnake blared in the background, and Eddy had to turn it down. He thought about Hilary. He thought how disgusted she'd be when she saw the pictures. Eddy had her personal web site address (and not the one given to the *public*) and he sent her *two* photos (to everyone else, he had only sent the one of the purple lingerie). Eddy sent an additional photo of complete nudity. If she took, she *took*. If she didn't, it was going to be easier and faster to move on.

I have to think of this, Eddy said when he contemplated what was going on. He said to Izzy on the other side of the line, "I need to *go*."

"I *hear* you!" Izzy said, but he was no longer mad. He could hear *laughter*, though. That felt good to him. He was a hero of his when he was younger.

Chapter 51

"In my father's house are many mansions." —Eddy quoting scripture, but a lady took it wrong

"I'm going to call her *up*, Axl, just to prove a point."

"A point that *what*?" Axl asked Eddy Richards.

"A point that I can't *WIN*!" Eddy yelled, and surprised that it was leaving his lungs the way it did. He added, a little more calmly, "You're going to have to go."

"I *know*," Axl said, and Eddy was surprised that he was near tears.

Peter Cetera had come by before Axl. Apparently, Hilary had become friends with the surviving members of *Chicago*. It made it really ironic because it's what Eddy wanted *for* Hilary. The worse was trying to separate the two, and Eddy figured that if enough people—enough *cool* people—would support the two, everything would fall in line.

Hilary called up Eddy, and she was drunk. She was at Peter Cetera's party and she said that she wasn't calling for money from the Screen Actors' Guild. It made Eddy feel something that he couldn't put a finger on. He felt depressed for Hilary, he felt upset and useless that he couldn't do anything to stop an inevitable end, he felt mad at society for not letting them be together on their *own* terms... and he felt made a at *gaud* that he had bought. He had bought Hilary a plastic ring that he got a Staters. It was good. It was symbolic. It meant that the material things weren't going to matter, but he wondered if it was more than a joke to her. He wondered if the sacrifice wasn't great enough. He wondered if she thought he was cheap... and if that was the reason—a reason, at the very least—why it seemed that she wanted to get out of the relationship.

Eddy blamed society, though. She didn't take his nude photos too well. She didn't do that at all, and Eddy thought many times that if he lived in world in which he and Hilary were the only two people, they could live *greatly*. They *could have* lived greatly... before the breakup, and all. He blamed society for putting pressure on her that was undue. She was *trying*, and Eddy could tell that she was trying. She tried to please her corporate sponsors... but they wanted *controversy* from her, and they never fully supported her relationship to Eddy once it got rolling. Eddy blamed a lot of things, then he drifted off.

He said to Axl, "I'll prove my *point*."

"Go *ahead*," Axl said, and he pushed the speaker phone that Eddy had bought for the occasion (the payphone was still on the wall nearby).

The phone rang, Eddy looked up at the GTE pay phone, and he shook his head because of all that was going on. The Catholics were *good* about keeping corporate labels out of their house. The *Americans*? No. They weren't *good*, and it drove people *mad* sometimes.

Axl left before the phone stopped ringing on the other end. Hilary didn't answer, either (Eddy had let the phone ring twenty times).

Eddy enjoyed himself, for a while. He felt good, but he still felt *Hilary*. All her pictures were now gone, but she was burned in his head. He *wanted* it that way. It

was sick, but he *wanted* it that way. *Why?* He had been festered by so much shit since he won the lottery that Hilary's worse day was better than most people's *best* day.

Eddy cracked open a Miller Genuine Draft when everyone was done. He didn't feel like calling Hilary, any longer. He didn't want to be controlled by her ghost. He couldn't get her out of his mind. He didn't *want* her out of his mind.

Chapter 52

"Speak when you are angry and you will make the best speech you will ever regret."

—Ambrose Bierce, *The Devil's*

Dictionary

"I had a dream that you were a lizard, Lizzie." Eddy started calling her by her TV name when she came over.

"You are *not* the man I want." She was serious, and Eddy was having a hard time getting over her.

"Okay. *Fine*," Eddy said. He started playing his bag pipes, and when he did, he pictured all the photos that he had burned. He started thinking of his parents. He started think of *her* parents, and how they had religious differences. Eddy said he'd be willing to marry her, even if they were different religions, denominations, spiritualities—it didn't *matter*. She remembered all the dates that were special to her... and Eddy remembered none. She was a rock star, and it wasn't supposed to happen that way. The *other* guy—the lowly man who just ran into *money* was supposed to remember everything.

"I *know* you now," she said. She looked good. She looked really good, and Eddy knew something clever was going to come out of her mouth. "You want to *marry* me!"

"You bet your ASS!" Eddy had thought the internet marriage was good enough. He *thought* that... but in the end, he wanted something public.

"I'm *betting* my ass."

With that, Eddy took her in his arms... and they made love.

Chapter 53

"If everything on Earth were rational, nothing would happen." —Feodor Dostovski,

Karmazov Brothers

Eddy Richards called up Dave Johnston and told him the good news that he planned to marry Hilary in a *church*. It set Dave off. He didn't *want* Eddy to marry. Dave held certain feelings toward him that he could not shake. He wanted to ride ATCs. He wanted to do *those* kinds of things, and he saw it coming to an end if it would happen.

Word got out because Dave was a master of the internet (he had two thousand people that he talked to on a regular basis, and he did it in the form of sending out group photos of women that he had been with; a ploy to cover up his "male bonding" kind of habits). He told all *men* he knew that a marriage was going to take place. It set a *gender* war into existence. The filthy Mexicans that had been trying to fuck Eddy since he left Beverly Hills divided. The *women* figured that they could wrestle Eddy away from Hilary before she could marry him. The *men* didn't want it to happen out of jealousy or homosexual tendencies. It set a alliances into existed that hadn't happened since Eddy had won his money. White trash men were hanging out with *beaner* men, and nigger dudes started talking to *Asian* dudes, and so forth. The *women*, on the other hand... They *already* had their connections, but they couldn't use them before. They were masters of communication, and in the transition periods, it's a *perfect* time to retake your power. The *reason* is that the men were divided, and they didn't get full on board. Some were still racists, and they could give a shit. *Others* though... They'd try to stop it at all costs.

Eddy made a bag pipe song about what was going on. *Before* this, he did a remake of "Mexican Radio," and he thought of the United Farm Workers and their undermining tactics when he did it. He did all *this*.

Hilary told him that she noticed changes when she went into society. It was a blessing and a curse. The bag pipe songs fended people off, effectively... but it left her lonely because they were *too* effective. They put her in a bubble.

Eddy called up Britney Spears to take the tension off the situation. She brought Christina Aguilera, and both took their tops off as soon as they saw Eddy.

"He's a great *man*!" Christina said. She was talking about Blue Beard. He was

the only guy that Eddy trusted. (Eddy had his photo that he had gotten from the internet.)

"You don't *know* me!" Britney said. She was talking to the photo. Eddy registered it, let things be, then drifted off into his bag pipe world. Christina and Britney made out for three hours while Eddy talked to Hilary on the phone.

Chapter 54

"One friend in a life is much, two are many, three hardly possible." —Henry Brooks Adams

The Education of Henry

Adams

Eddy lived in a trailer, and he lived there for six months... while he planned the arrangement for a public wedding to Hilary Duff that would *not* be on the internet (unless there was a camera that was snuck in to *record* the whole thing). He put on Buddhist chants from the background to clear his mind. He had a stereo nearby that could knock the socks off anyone that was too close to it... when it was set to *eleven* on the dial. He could do that... but instead, he chose to listen to his music on a little Walkman. He did this to concentrate.

While he planned to marry Hilary, he grew his beard so that he could look like the Blue Beard guy that he had met in Beverly Hills. He looked good, and he even painted his beard with blue shit so that he could be just *like* him. He wanted his spirit. That guy was *free*!

Dianna Richards was a lady that was five years older than Eddy. She was his sister, she was jealous of his sudden fame... but Eddy didn't know about it. He called her over, one day, to photograph him. Eddy was preparing the wedding—the parts that *Hilary* had given him to prepare for—he had doubts, but he knew they would work through things. They *had* to work through things.

Deedee showed up with a Canon Rebel. Deedee—it was a name given to her by Princess Dianna because Dianna had said there was already one too many Dianna's in the world—photographed Eddy, but there were always subtle things that

she would include. In the background, for example, there was a picture of the United States flag. She purposely butchered it—it's called "cropping" in the photographers' lingo—and she made it to look like Eddy was a radical.

Eddy sent these photos to Hilary. She called him on the day that she received them. She said, "I don't know *who* you are!" She didn't say much more. "I'm *crying*! I'm literally *crying*!"

"It shows you love me. It really does."

Eddy hung up the phone, and he knew he did his job.

He cut his beard—it served its purpose—and he started to grow stubble. He'd go clean-shaven when they married... if Hilary *wanted* him to.

Chapter 55

"It is not often that someone comes along who is a true friend and a good writer."

—E. B. White, *Charlotte's Web*

Stephen King was a man that was photoed as being bearded (sometimes) and *not* bearded (other times). When he came to visit Eddy in the desert, he wore a goatee. "It's for *image*," Stephen said.

"I understand," Eddy said.

An agent from the CIA had been over, and he told Eddy that he was *now* in the CIA. Eddy didn't know, and wasn't *trying* to be in the CIA. The agent explained that there was an eternal struggle between good and bad, in the world. He said that people have to make choices. He said that it was kill or be killed. He said that *Romans* had been ruling the world for a long time. Their empire didn't come to an end when Martin Luther began the Protestant reformation. People were still *Catholic*. People still referred to the pope as the leader of the *world*. There were people, the CIA agent had said, that have *maps* in their home in which the globe of the world has Rome as its capital, signified by a cross instead of a star... and the map has the United States... "But it's *not* the United States," the CIA agent had said. His name was "Euler"—that much Eddy could remember. Eddy was afraid for his life so he gave the man all the information that he wanted. Secretly, Eddy was still trying to

figure out his own inner allegiances. He didn't know if Rome, Washington D.C., or something *else* was supposed to be where he centered his thoughts. It occurred to him that it might be Mecca or Medina, but not for much time. He thought about Cucamonga, and for fleeting moments, *that* was the center of the world because it's where he was born and raised. He considered *Jerusalem* as the center of things, but it was hypocritical. "Jerusalem," when translated, meant "City of Peace." It was *anything* but the City of Peace, as it was portrayed in the *media*.

Eddy finally figured out what his allegiance would be. It'd be Dick Heaven—he called it that because he bought *Dick*, the movie, and he watched it over and over (he had a crush on Kirsten Dundst, but it wasn't greater than his feeling for Hilary).

Eddy thought about all these things. He thought about perception, and the fact that birds don't think about nations (that's what he figured until he talked to a bird in a dream... and the bird said they *do* recognize the differences in quality of life between the United States and Mexico). He thought about a lot of things.

When Hilary was away, he tried to keep his mind off of her. He didn't want to stroke off (she had hidden cameras in his trailer that would let her know when he was doing something "very wrong"). He wanted *Hilary*. That was the bottom line, and the fact that she was not eighteen yet didn't matter to her... or the *rich* people that wanted it to happen. They'd keep it a secret.

Eddy was taken into mental health one day when he was preparing a collage (there were photos of Hilary that he wanted to remember her by). "Heard your voice through a photograph..." he was singing. It was a song by the Red Hot Chili Peppers, and he kept on. It was a song about slitting his throat, but he felt like doing anything *but...*

When he was in the middle of the collage, he got knocks on the door. He was scared because it was the cops. "We have a message from Hilary that you were stroking off too much."

"Fuck *you*!" Eddy said to the cop. He could sense that it was a joke, but it turned real in a *second*.

The cop was sent with orders to take Eddy into mental health. Most people believe that mental health is a place for crazy people to go. It's *true*, for the most part, Eddy found out. There were lost souls. There were people that believed they were God. There were people that thought they were the sons or daughters of *stars*. There were a *lot* of people.

Eddy was a special circumstance. He went there, and he went to meet Bill Clinton. They took him—they made sure that all the neighbors knew what was going

on—and he was air-lifted to Arkansas when it happened.

"What the fuck do you *want!*?" Eddy wanted to know of Bill Clinton. He had been around the celebrities enough that this didn't taunt him. It didn't *phase* him. He was in the presence of a world leader (at least in *his* mind, though it was questionable because he was no longer president).

Bill didn't say a thing. Rather, he looked around for help. Certain people came in that Eddy wouldn't identify to his friends later on. "I hope you're *happy!*" Bill said to Eddy. He was confused, and he was mad at times in his demeanor.

"You wanted me to marry *Chelsea!* *Didn't* you!"

It was a revelation to Eddy, but he knew—he just *knew*—that Hilary was behind it as well.

"Listen..." Bill said. He went on to say that thing with Hilary was a farce. Eddy pulled out a photo of the two (it was one that he had downloaded from the internet when they tied the knot electronically). Bill looked at it when it was given to him, and Eddy was surprised when Bill said, "It looks *good*. It looks *real!*"

Eddy was impressed. He said, "*Give* me Chelsea." He looked at the doorway—it was a big place where Eddy was at, and he didn't know *exactly* where he was because he had been blindfolded when he got off the helicopter (one had been ready for him when the private jet touched down). When he saw that Chelsea was close enough, he said to her, "I don't know what to *do!*"

"I *do!*" she said.

"*What?*"

"I don't know, yet. Give me time."

Eddy was happy. He felt loved. He felt looked out for, but he sensed something that was less than pure compared to the thing he had with Hilary Duff. He said, "This is a political arrangement, isn't it?"

"Nope," Chelsea said, but Eddy could tell she wasn't being completely forthcoming with her answer.

"The *Hilary* thing is... *political?*" Eddy wanted to know.

That was it. *That* was it. Eddy could tell.

Eddy spent a few days in a mental health facility in Little Rock. It was called "Living Hope." He *loved* the place, and he went by a name called "Max Dugan." He was great. He did arts, he loved people, and then he was put on a Greyhound to go home (for the public's sake, it had to be known that Eddy was a million things to a million people). Some people thought Eddy was one of them... and the lottery thing was made into a joke. Some people thought he was a rich knight of British royalty.

Some thought he was in the CIA, some thought he was in the mafia... and some thought he was "Eddy from the old neighborhood." No one *knew*, though, and it drove Hilary mad at times. She didn't know if he loved her. She didn't know if she loved *him*... because she didn't know who "him" was!

There were things that Eddy had to work through. When Eddy got back to the desert in California, he tried to sleep in his place. He loved it there, but he could feel the ghosts of his parents. He had things of theirs—*heirlooms*, they were—and their memory stayed in his head like a cancer or a tumor. He *knew* he'd have to break from them if the "in-laws" thing wasn't going to happen. It was common knowledge to a lot of people that it is typical that the wife doesn't get along with her mother-in-law, and the husband doesn't get along with *anyone* from the other side of the family.

Eddy found out from Charlie Sheen—he had been invited to the desert because Eddy remembered him from the "Dances With Bikers" thing in the *Hot Shots* movie. It was awkward. They had a nine hundred dollar Mustang that they made into a thing of beauty. Eddy felt weird, and the thing that stuck out in Eddy's mind when Charlie left was that the *rest* of the world had to believe that the Mustang is all it's about. They had to believe that you build cars... and the relationship doesn't matter at all. Not one bit.

Chapter 56

**"You're so vane, you probably think this song is about you." —Carly Simon,
"You're So Vane"**

The CIA did such a good job at distorting Eddy's image that he was able to go into mainstream America again. Actually, they weren't *trying* to distort his image. They were trying to figure out who he was. They wanted him to marry Chelsea, and they made him into a great guy... in people's minds... and it *nearly* became like the Frankenstein monster that everyone hated. Frankenstein was a green guy that was a *freak*! Nonetheless, he had power. He had a *lot* of power.

Bill Clinton still roamed in Eddy's memory. He thought about all that was going on, and when it felt safe, he moved to San Bernardino, California (it was a place that wasn't far from Cucamonga). He got a job at Leslie's Pool Supplies, and pretended he wasn't a millionaire. The people that *worked* with him knew that he wasn't a millionaire, but Eddy knew it was all about perception because he had read *1984*. If you wiped out all the people that believed they were millionaires, things would start over again. Eddy knew this because people gambled with literal hundred

dollar bills when they had previously been stone-cold *broke*. It happened in *The Stand*, and it happened because all the people had died—new rules were *made*.

It happened in *Lord of the Flies*. When the kids were shipwrecked on the island, the people that were powerful took over, and it didn't matter if it was cunning or strength that *brought* them to power.

The CIA made Eddy to be a hero because they had plans for him. Chelsea had come to Eddy's trailer before *real* wedding plans were put into place, and he met her in Little Rock. He *liked* her. He went to Stanford to visit her when she was hashing over old times. He *did* that stuff, and he hoped he'd have a fondness for her forever.

The CIA built Eddy up to be someone more than a millionaire that just got lucky by hitting right numbers. They made it out to be, at least in close circles, that it was set *up*—that the computers that pick the numbers in "random selection" really "know" what they're doing. In other words, it's all *fake*, and they *knew* that Eddy would be on his way because he passed certain tests at Chaffey College. It wasn't even a *rich* school where he was going to—it was *community* college, of all things—but they knew they had potential.

The thing soured between Eddy and Chelsea, and the CIA portrayed him as a radical beast, and they portrayed his *Earth Is Center* thing as something that was covertly operated by Bill Clinton, himself.

All this made Hilary mad when she thought of it. Eddy was looking for his true love, and he became oblivious to all the perceptions around him because there were too many. The niggers were portraying him as a genius, the Mexicans were portraying him as a loser, the Hollywood crowd said that he was the top dog of celebrity entertainment, and the kikes said he was a guy that *pretended* to be racist to suit his own means—his own *goals*—anything it would *take*.

Eddy was driven by Hilary. It made him mad that she was on the road touring. He heard that she had taken a liking to the hot tub, so instead of letting it burn him night in and night out, he faced the beast. He went to a *place* that sold hot tubs... and pretended like he was like everyone else.

Chapter 57

"Any man might want to do a girl in; Any man has to, needs to wants to; Once in a lifetime, do a girl in." —T.S. Elliot, *Sweeney Agonistes*

Eddy's manager was a guy that was named Erik Brown. He put Eddy to work, and he enjoyed seeing him do his thing. He *knew* that Eddy was a lottery winner (it wasn't in vogue to say so publicly) because he was Republican and he had privileged information. The rest of the store was to believe that he was no more than a terrorist. He had been living out in the desert—that much was *known*—but not many people watched the news enough to see who wins the lottery. In San Bernardino, *they* had a lottery winner—a guy that won fifty million bucks—and they knew him well. In Cucamonga, they followed Eddy; they were oblivious to the guy in the town that was not far from him.

Eddy did his work, and he hoped that things would end. He wanted to have sex with all the people on his TV screen when he went home and watched his pirated cable box. He was *privileged* in that regard, that he could alter people's perceptions. He had his money... and he could tell people that he was *sleeping* with half the people that he watched. He paid people fifty bucks a shot to go along with plan. He paid them to spread rumors. He did it so that Hilary would get tough enough for him.

Eddy was a vanishing soul, at least to Erik Brown, the guy that had hired him. Erik Brown had plans of his own. They were of world domination, and nothing short of doing it would be good enough for him. He felt like Pinky, from *Pinky and the Brain*. He felt he didn't know *what* to do, but he had been around power... so he figured it would trickle to him, eventually.

Eddy *died* at Leslie's. It wasn't a physical death. It was one of perception. He went away from the experience with one of regard for Ron, a coworker whom had hair down to his ankles before joining the company, because Ron stuck up to Stephen King (Stephen King was one of the few people from the Illuminati crowd that wouldn't expect that Eddy *should* have to work, but Eddy cited *Red Azalea* and the fact that Illuminati people *need* their own kind intermingled with the rest of society).

Eddy stole a Jacuzzi on his last day there. It was to prove a point. He *showed* people that he could get away with anything.

He *did*. It was a perfect crime.

Chapter 58

"Extraordinary how potent cheap music can be." —Noël Coward, *Private Lives*

After Eddy quit Leslie's, he moved back to Cucamonga. People stopped paying attention to him. He was a *dick*, and that was all there was to it.

Eddy had a surprise on the day that he was to marry Hilary: She left him at the *alter*!

It wasn't a total surprise, and something Eddy had almost expected would happen. In place of Hilary was LaLaine—her co-star from her Lizzie McGuire show. It surprised Eddy when she walked down the aisle to marry him. He *nearly* thought it was a joke, but he could see on LaLaine's face that it *wasn't* a joke. She intended to marry him, and Hilary was nowhere to be found.

Eddy kept a photo of Hilary in his pocket—the *inside* one where you're supposed to hide your wallet and spare handkerchief—and he pulled it out and *looked* at it. He *wanted* to marry Hilary, but he knew he already did. He thought about Hollywood and all their trickery with smoke and mirrors. This *could* be a joke. This *could* be a publicity stunt. This *could* be test, but he knew that it wasn't. The test had already long-since *gone*.

LaLaine got to the alter, and Eddy decided to marry her. He was marrying *Hilary*, in his mind, though. He was doing that, and if everyone else needed to see that he was marrying her co-star, then so be it.

There was a strong intuition that Eddy had that Hilary didn't share. He believed they *had* to deceive people or they'd be torn up by the rest of the world. He *married* LaLaine, and he was happy with it. He even took her back to Fontana and rented a Motel 6 so they could have their honeymoon. Everything went fine, and they were made out well.

Eddy got up to use the restroom. He had a boner that was poking the shorts that he was wearing. The shorts were tight, and they hid the fact that his penis was really bigger. LaLaine snuck up on him and she said, "I see things are popping *up* around her." Eddy loved her. He forgot about Hilary, and they slept with each other without regret.

There were birds in that air, and they didn't sleep at all. They were in love, and they had eggs.

Chapter 59

"All's fair in love and war." —Francis Edward Smedley, *Frank Fairleigh*

"So you're a *terrorist*, huh?" Ron Oaks said to Eddy when Eddy returned from his Fontana honeymoon.

"Yeah. I *am*. But it shouldn't be *illegal*."

"*Why*?" Ron wanted to know. It had been Nine-Eleven since the terrorists attacks in 2001. Eddy said that in the future, according to George Orwell, there would be a perpetual war, and Big Brother would have everyone at his mercy by making sure that it didn't end. Eddy told Ron Oaks about this, and Ron responded by saying, "Stephen *King* was a terrorist. That's what you're *saying*, right?"

"I'm saying that people that crash into buildings—they are a terrorist of a different kind than my friend, Stephen King. Someone could choose to *read* his stuff. Someone could read it, feel terrorized—his reviews are *full* of things telling how *good* it is that he strikes horror into people—and then walk away with the feeling that nothing's different in the world: Terror had always been there, will *always* be there, and is there at any given time if you really *look* for it."

"So this Illuminati crowd that he's part of? What *is* it?" Ron asked.

Eddy said, "It's a figment of your imagination, just like that paper that you're holding. I could poof it away. I already *did*. I could see it in your eyes!"

"I know what you're saying."

Eddy became a master of mind over matter. He could convince people of things, if even for a few moments.

"I've never *seen* an Illuminati," Eddy said. "I've never seen the number *two*, but I know what the *symbol* for it looks like."

"What about two *oranges*?"

"You're starting to get the picture. Plato—no, it was *Aristotle*—said that you could argue things into infinite regression. As a matter of definition, we *don't* know what an orange is. Where does an orange stop and a tambourine *start*?"

"You mean the *other* thing. I know. A tambourine is a... You *meant* to say tangerine."

"No. I *meant* tambourine, and if I said it enough with that association, in your *mind*... you would start calling it the same."

"Okay. I see. You're *crazy*," Ron observed.

"Not crazy. Just rich... and define RICH however you *want*!"

Eddy went home that night and boned Christina Kelly in the ass. She was a new girl that he had met.

Chapter 60

"Despise not the discoveries of the wise, but acquaint thyself with their proverbs."

—*Ecclesiasticus* 8: 8

Eddy lived a crazy life, and he put up a plaque of a quote from some who he respected very much. The quote said:

**Fear is the main source of superstition, and one of the main sources of cruelty.
To conquer fear is the beginning of wisdom.**

It was by Bertrand Russell, and it was something Eddy *wanted* to believe. It was something that if he looked at it often enough, he knew his life would change. He knew he would break old habits that were haunting his mind. He knew it would *manifest* itself into his subconscious. That's what he wanted. He had LaLaine as a wife, now, and if Hilary ever came back, that would be no problem. He had the picture of her in his wallet, and it reminded him that they married—they really *married*—on the internet. It reminded him of that, but it was superstition. If LaLaine felt good to Eddy, and he felt good to her, there was nothing anybody could do or say. Eddy would be pouring the drinks all night long. Yeah?

Eddy thought about these things, and he thought about how things would get burned in one's memory.

He threw away a cigar case when he saw it. It was of a baby that had been born in Cucamonga, but the father of the baby never returned his phone calls when he would call him. He sent a picture of the cigar case to him through internet, and he didn't have a problem with throwing it away when he did. In a way, that's what those cigar cases were for. They were there to remind you that you had obligation... but obligation is something that is only good so long as you *feel* obligated.

Eddy looked at the cigar case one last time, and he hoped it'd be burned in *everyone's* head what happened: He was no longer a person that didn't breathe oxygen and bleed red blood. No, he was a person with *memories*, and the cigar case was one of them.

Eddy thought about his *Sims* game. Even though he had the money to go out and decorate his new place in Cucamonga however he wanted, he chose to do it electronically. He met a lady—Debbie was her name, and she worked up the hill at Chaffey—and she said that she loved Eddy on the first day that they met. He returned home. She was proud of him. She didn't know, but Eddy believed those things were mutual. He was proud of her, but he had no *time* for her.

Eddy played *Escape* on his turntable when she left. He had a fondness for antiques, and he planned to buy an old *Pong* video game if he could ever get a hold of one.

Chapter 61

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword."

—Jesus, *Matthew 10: 34*

Gauntlet was the only video game that Eddy could find. It would suffice. It was made by Atari, and Eddy remembered playing it at Taos with Mitch and Allen, two of his friends. It was great. It was fuckin' *great*. They went to a restaurant—they were in Santa Fe when they were skiing—and it had phones at all tables. It was a thing of beauty, but Eddy found out that *someone* had told everyone what there experience was all about. He found out that *gardeners*—the ones he had in Malibu when he was there—knew that he went to Utah. It *bothered* Eddy at the time, and it kind of tainted his memory of the experience. Their car had broke down—Mitch had a Ford Ranger at the time—and they *should* have been depressed by that. They *weren't*.

The thing that depressed Eddy about the experience was that people found out. Little did he know that Malice, a competitor with Amway, *wanted* him to have a good experience. They sent women, and they tested him in regards that he didn't want to be tested. He was *oblivious* to what was going on because his mind was on skiing: That was the "here and now" to him. He *loved* it. He didn't care about having a condo right there on the front of the slopes. He didn't *care*. He wanted the women, but he didn't want commitments—not that would tie his *hands*.

Eddy bought *Gauntlet* because it reminded him of New Mexico. It reminded

him of Melanie Smythe, a girl who he loved with all his heart, but he knew things couldn't work out because he was committed elsewhere. He loved *life*. He really did.

Eddy played Gauntlet, and he hoped he'd get his Pong game sometime. Atari was a good part of Eddy's life when he was younger. Mitchell had the nickname of "Atari Mitch," and some fuckin' Mexican would learn about that in Malibu. Eddy was bitter at their techniques. Hilary told Eddy that things like that happened all the time. That's why he liked to play his *Sims* game. It had a robot that did your cleaning. You didn't *need* a human from south of the border to be in your house. You could get by just fine *without* them.

Chapter 62

"So that when at length she arrived to her fourteenth year as the wicked could not lay anything to her charge worthy of reproof so all good persons who were acquainted with her admired her life and conversation. At that time the high priest made a public order... all virgins... endeavour to be married." —*The Gospel of Mary (from The Lost Books of the Bible and the Forgotten Books of Eden)*

The marriage between LaLaine and Eddy was made out to be a spoof for a TV movie (conservatives around the country were going *mad!*). Deep inside, Eddy knew he had *two* wives, now, and there was nothing the people in society could do to change his mind. That was *fine*. That was the way it had to be.

Eddy had a theory that two "hundreds" couldn't be together. Hilary Duff and LaLaine were among the most coveted people in the world. They had physical beauty, and they had success. Eddy, on the other hand, had money... and now that Chelsea was interested in him, he had a *draw*. He could provide security.

The *problem* was that society often got jealous of those kinds of situations. Jennifer Aniston and Brad Pitt were an exception. They were *consecrated*. They were allowed to be successful because America had to have *one* exception to the rule. Nonetheless, Jennifer *did* get jealous, and when she heard that Hilary was happy with Eddy, she sent LaLaine his way... and she said bad things to the *press* about the arrangement—that they were too *young*.

Eddy believed that tens go with nineties, thirties go with seventies, and so forth. The only way things could work between Hilary and Eddy was if people

thought he was a loser. The only way they would allow *her*—she was a ninety-eight when she was insecure—to be with Eddy was if they portrayed him to be a *two*. That's the only way that society would allow harmony, and the pope must have been a *hundred* because he was in isolation by himself! Eddy had these ideas, and didn't care who knew about them... so he started writing his own book (he was inspired by Stephen King).

Eddy's book was a relative flop. It got laughed at in certain places—*most* places, actually—but it was spoofed. It was spoofed on "King of the Hill," and it was spoofed other places. Eddy had made twenty copies to give to people, and he suggested that *they* make twenty copies if they thought it was good enough. Being that it was his first work, he didn't want to go straight to a publisher. With his money, he could have *bought* a Kinko's, or something, and he could have had it massed produced. He didn't do that. He wanted close people to review it, then he'd take it to Penguin or Viking.

Eddy believed it was selling out, to a degree, but that was okay with him. His plans to make a movie didn't materialize, and he figured that the only way he'd have commercial success was if he *wrote*. He was right. The twenty copies that he sent out got read only by three people... but the three people made a total of a *thousand* copies, in return. It made a splash success. He was overwhelmed by what happened, but he was made fun of.

When his ideas were made fun of on "King of the Hill," he didn't think much of it. They were making fun of the fact that he was interested in selling propane (the pool business didn't suit him). They were making fun of a lot of things, and it didn't occur to Eddy that deep-down, the *producers* of the show hated him. He got in their minds, that was a given, but they didn't *want* him in their minds.

Eddy continued to write—he knew of no other way. He prayed for Hilary to be with him. More than that, he prayed for society that they would let go of their envy.

Chapter 63

"Love is a temporary insanity curable by marriage or by removal of the patient from the influences under which he incurred the disorder. This disease, like caries and many other ailments, is prevalent only among the civilized races

living under artificial conditions." — Ambrose Bierce

The Devil's Dictionary

The Teamsters took Eddy in with open arms. He didn't take *them* in. He wanted a normal life. He wanted Hilary to keep doing self-deprecating humor on the big screen. He figured that if she made fun of herself enough, people would *believe* she was a loser. If they could eventually believe that she was a fifty, and Eddy could lose some of his money (or the money society believed he had), then they *both* could be together. Two fifties could *make* it!

The Teamsters were a group that hated the United Farm Workers. The United Farm Workers had started fucking with Eddy when he lived in Malibu and didn't suck the dicks of the gardeners that were around his house. Eddy joined the Teamsters because they were racists... and they had the image of being blue collar.

Eddy wasn't racist. The racists declared war on *him*. He had no choice but to fight back.

Eddy drove a large rig for a year. During that time, he and LaLaine got along really well. They lived together, and being that it was a spoof in most people's minds, they didn't have to worry about what people thought. Hilary would come around, but she wasn't aloud to stay. She had entourages with her, both that were selected and *non*-selected. The non-selected ones were groupies that Eddy couldn't really figure out. It didn't matter to Eddy. At LaLaine's place—he always referred to it as her place—he let her decorate. She put up pastels and fancy doilies everywhere. The apartment where they lived wasn't big, but it suited it's purpose. It was full of other people that respected her, and if Eddy respected her as well, then they were okay with *him*.

Eddy had a picture of Hilary that he kept in the place. It was the only thing that he asked LaLaine that he could keep. She got frustrated with her association to her, but it *had* to be that way. It was a bizarre love triangle, and it didn't matter how things turned out. LaLaine was married to Hilary, but not in the traditional way. She was married to her because she was her best friend on a TV show. Eddy was married to Hilary, but because of internet. Eddy was married to LaLaine, but it was through the church (even though no one outside of a small group recognized it as anything that mattered).

Eddy *had* to keep it that way for his own sanity. He starting sending out doctored photographs of himself with Toni Braxton... and he sent them of being with J-Lo... and he sent them with *other* people that he had remote dealings with. He sent

a *lot* of photos, and in the end, it was to get people off his back. If he was married to a thousand people, then *no one* could believe it.

When Eddy started driving his rig, rumors started out in Cucamonga that Eddy never won the lottery. They saw him around town, he started wearing ripped Levis when he went to AM/ PM, and he *looked* like a working class guy.

When Eddy was at LaLaine's, he walked around in drag. He liked to wear bras that were laced with flowery designs. It was like a crucifix, but it was the opposite of what Catholics intended. He wanted to come across as evil or liberal... and inside, he wasn't. The *Catholics*, he came to find, used their crucifixes so that people could think they were good, but Eddy's dealings with them led him to believe they were rotten inside.

Eddy went to Hilary's a few times a month—she lived up north in Santa Cruz, and they'd go to the boardwalk whenever they were up there—and they said that they were *vampires*. They weren't believed by many people, but *enough* people believed them that they left them alone.

Eddy was getting used to the fact that no one would know him in a singular way. It suited him well, and he bought a suit and a tie to prove it.

Chapter 64

"Will you still need me? Will you still feed me? When I'm *sixty-four*...?"

—the Beatles, from *Sergeant Pepper's*

Nothing can mess up a relationship faster than vanity and mistrust. Eddy was a big fan of Beatles' music, and he let it be known. He had a picture of himself that he took with them (it was with their wax figures, actually) and he was *proud* of the picture. He wanted to *be* a Beatle one day.

Eddy had pictures of Hilary that he sent out on the internet. They were of the two having a great time. He wanted to brag to the world that he had someone worthy. The problem is that it creates jealousy, and jealousy creates mistrust when it's put in the wrong hands.

Lard Tits got a hold of some pictures that Eddy had sent on the internet. For once, Lard Tits wasn't genuinely filled with anger toward Eddy, but it didn't do Eddy any good. He was more abusive as a "friend" than he was as an *enemy*. He tried to make up to Eddy by taking the photos that he got (they were given by second-hand web accounts because Lard Tits was friends with Jonathan Gelshire) and sending them to the rest of the world. Being that Lard Tits was in Amway, he had a lot of

connections. He knew that he could convince people that Eddy was really decent. Eddy thought he was really decent, but everybody else thinks of himself this way when things are going good. Lard Tits said that Eddy really wasn't a Teamster—that he was just *spying* on them—and his communication was so effective that it put a *label* on Eddy. Labels limited people in times of lore, and they limited Eddy as he moved to Malibu. He knew it since the early days, and he was bound to fight it. If you can label someone, you know how to control him. That's what Eddy believed.

Eddy was perceived as being *happy* with Hilary... and the relationship with LaLaine was exposed to be something that it really wasn't. Lard Tits, with his connections to Amway and their cop buddies, bugged LaLaine's apartment and recorded Eddy saying that he walked in drag to suit the public. Lard Tits thought he was doing a service to the world (and Eddy, for that matter) by busting up the relationship between Eddy and LaLaine.

Lard Tits was around his pool, one day, and he was proud of all he had done. Dave Johnston recommended that Eddy go and confront him about all that had gone on. "They say to keep your friends close and your enemies *closer*," Eddy said to Lard Tits. "That's why I'm *here*!"

Lard Tits looked nervous, and Eddy knew that if he was going to win—if he was even going to get Hilary back of her own will, and not feeling *pressured* to be with Eddy—he was going to have to confront things as soon as possible. Eddy wanted to know what was *up* with Lard Tits, and waited for a response.

Nothing came from Lard Tits. Eddy felt sorry for him, and he knew that that *sympathy* would get him all the attention that he would need in the future. He was losing Hilary, Eddy was, and he *knew* it. He knew it was coming by the day.

The surprising thing that Lard Tits did was to drop his shorts. He didn't say a word, but he thought that if Eddy saw his pecker, things would change. Maybe Eddy was in drag because he was queer. Yeah, Eddy was *queer*, but not in the homosexual kind of way. He was queer in that he didn't *fit* anywhere.

If Eddy had homosexual relations, it wouldn't be with Lard Tits. That bugged him... and it bugged all the people in Amway that supported him.

Deep down, Eddy was *afraid* of all that was going on. In Malibu, there were religious freaks that were trying to get you every which direction. In Amway, you had to be "below" people that you hated. Eddy wasn't going to do it. He'd go to jail, mental health, or die with a rosy palm, but he would *not* be below Lard Tits. That's something he swore to himself from day one.

Eddy went to McDonald's after Lard Tits refused to explain himself. He was

surprised to see that Lard Tits up and *followed* him (he was driving a Ford Explorer; a *green* one!). Lard Tits said to a lady that was taking Eddy's order inside of McDonald's, "See! He's a *sellout*!" Lard Tits was talking about Eddy.

"I'm *not* a sellout. I'm *Republican*! It's built into the fuckin' *definition*!" Eddy was disappointed that he was even *talking* to Lard Tits. He lived in Cucamonga, again, and he was thinking that maybe it wasn't so bad in Malibu *after* all... but he could be wrong.

Chapter 65

"You are old, Father William," the young man said,

And your hair has become very white,

And yet you incessantly stand on your head,

Do you think, at your age, it is *right*?" —Lewis Carrol, *Alice's*

Adventures in Wonderland

Lard Tits had special connections in the government because he was a *higher* level Republican than Eddy claimed to be (in actuality, Eddy was an anarchist/ socialist/ libertarian/ peace and freedom kind of guy). Lard Tits narced on Eddy and it sent Eddy to a mental health facility in Alaska. It sucked. It really *sucked*. Eddy didn't like it at all.

In the mental health facility, they gave him Ocean Spray cranberry juice, and they gave him little packs of Cherrios, and so forth, to eat and drink. They had cameras that kept track of *how* you looked at certain products. They had art pieces here and there. They deal with sensuality, and they deal with "the *BEYOND*!" (in its many forms). They *didn't* rely on psychiatrists, but they *claimed* to. There were moles there, and they wanted *Eddy* to be a mole someday (they liked the way he behaved after only two days).

Eddy stayed there, and this time he did *not* get to meet Chelsea Clinton. Al Gore made it, of all people... but it was in a dream (they put Eddy on drugs—Supranom being one of them—and it made things so lucid that he couldn't tell reality from fantasy land).

Eddy was taken to a disco that wasn't far from the mental health facility. Al

Gore was there, and so was James Carville, a strong Democratic supporter of Bill Clinton's in the past. The disco had a twenty-one table in the middle of it, and there were fourteen-year-old girls pouring drinks that were purple that had the magic foam coming from the center of it.

The music that they played ranged from yodeling to heavy metal to Elvis' original music... and there was stuff that Eddy never heard. With each song, different lights would shine in the air. Yellow would turn to red. Red would turn to a rainbow sprite... and the rainbow would turn to magenta. Magenta to cyan and then to green. Then, green to blue, and so forth, and so on until it felt like foam was coming out of your *asshole*.

Eddy looked at Al, and he realized that he was the *wizard*! That's what was going on.

Hilary Duff came into the club, and she brought eleven kids, no more than sixteen years in age. She started dancing and she was taking off her clothes. Eddy took a sip of his drink—it was red—and he woke up in the hospital the next day.

The man that woke Eddy looked remarkably like David Letterman. Eddy said, "Is this *real*?"

"Shut up," the man said.

"Am I in *Hollywood*?"

"Yeah. For all practical reasons, you are in *Hollywood*."

"Okay," Eddy said. Dave checked his temperature, and by that time, Eddy was sure that it was *really* Dave... or it was a dream, and David Letterman found his way in.

The CIA kept Eddy for four months, they told LaLaine nothing of it, and they drugged Eddy and dumped him in the LA River ten days after a transitional period in a local hospital.

Eddy went to an ATM machine as soon as he got his consciousness. There was graffiti all around him, and he feared that *Mexicans* may attack him any time.

He *got* to the ATM and was surprised to see that there was only forty dollars in his account (Eddy had ten different accounts with all his money, but the one he tried to draw from should have *easily* had tens of thousands of dollars in it). Eddy went inside and complained, thinking it was a conspiracy to jack up his world. "I want my *money*!"

"Sir. We *have* no money," the teller told him. There was no one in the bank, and she was at liberty to lie or talk in code.

"You have no..." Eddy started to say. "I *know* what money is... *now*. I am

money. *HUH!!*"

The teller looked down, a little ashamed.

"This *paper*! It is *not* money! *IS IT!?*"

"You got it. Here's some *paper*, now." She shoved a hundred thousand dollars in his direction. "Take it how you will, but you will *not* be able to freely spend like you used to."

"*WHY???*" Eddy wanted to know, and was near tears.

"We *own* everything," the teller said. It was a whisper in her voice that led Eddy to madness.

Eddy went to a local pawn shop and bought the cheapest drum set that he could buy. After that, he got another apartment, and he made sure to go for a ghetto—a *bad* ghetto that was worse than the one he lived in Cucamonga—and he felt tension on his skin like he had never felt before.

Eddy drummed... and he drummed... and he drummed some more.

Hilary came back into Eddy's life, but every time she was there, she was escorted by people from the Hoochers Cootcherz of Smoothie's Party. It made Eddy hesitant every time it happened, but it would have to do.

"I thought I *lost* you," Eddy said to her. Deep down, he *knew* he lost her. She lost *herself*, for that matter. She was growing up, and Eddy was learning what it was like to have money. *Hilary* was money, now. She was *his* money. Eddy didn't like it, but it was the best thing going. Fuck it all, right?

Epilogue

"You go your way, I'll go mine, now and forever 'til the end of time..."

—Buddy Holly, "You Won't Matter Anymore"

There was tremendous pressure on Eddy from the CIA, the mafia, the Catholic church, and all *kinds* of people to live the way they wanted him to live. Eddy wanted to live with Hilary Duff, but in the end, it wasn't possible. There were too much people on the outside, and he wanted to be a loser. More than anything else, he wanted to be a *loser*. He didn't want to be the *Beck* kind of loser. He didn't want to be the John *Lennon* kind of loser when he sang the song "I'm a Loser." He didn't want *that*. He didn't want fame, more than he wanted Hilary, he didn't want the outside pressure.

Hilary Duff got together with Eddy on false pretenses. She was told he was someone that he didn't turn out to be. In the end, it was that he didn't want the outside pressure *more* than he wanted to be with Hilary Duff. It wasn't *worth* it, in other words, and if he could be alone, he *would* be alone.

There was a song that eluded him that said exactly what he was going through. "You and I could *NEVER* be alone..." It was by Joe Jackson, or something along those lines. Maybe it was Joe Cocker, or something like that, but in the end, it was that *fame* killed Eddy.

Eddy changed his name to Ethan. He did it because he knew he'd never be alone with Hilary. It was a final cut, and Pink Floyd knew well of final cuts after they made *The Wall*. They cut Roger Watters after he was a main driving force in the band, though a lot would say that it was Syd Beret that caused all the things that resulted in their success as commercial artists.

Eddy had plastic surgery after he changed his name to Ethan. As Ethan Xanadu, he was able to go back into society. He was able to travel around the world, and even though he'd be out of the Malibu scene forever, he'd have his *freedom*.

Eddy thought of Hilary a lot for the rest of his life. He thought of Lindsay Lohan, and all the *other* stars that came up through the Disney program. Being that he was in his mid-twenties, he *knew* that he had a whole life to live.

Ethan Xanadu went to places—TGIF was still one of his favorite, but El Torito took over because he reconciled himself with his feelings toward the Hispanics—and he'd have fun. "One night stands" was one of this favorite things, and he never regretted the empty feelings he had when the women he was with would leave him. One time, he said, "By the *way* girl... *what's* you name again?" He got slapped, but that was okay. He was a bachelor. He was ready to live the life of emptiness... but he already had the other sides.

Good ending.