

Baby Boom Morticians

A Novel

by T.L. Winslow

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Preface and Acknowledgements

As the year 2000 rolled around America was home to over 80 million graying baby boomers in their 40s and 50s, at the height of their power but obsessed with staying young. Forty years later they were dropping like flies. In the meantime, the Hispanic underclass had swelled to a majority of the population. These two forces collided in the booming funeral business, controlled by a gringo-owned monopoly, but the work done by workers who were overwhelmingly Hispanic.

Baby boomers. Born in 1946-1964. The biggest, richest, most spoiled generation in history. They distorted the economy to their needs, all the way to the end. Consequently the funeral industry was energized like the baby product industry, the toy industry, the adolescent industry, the young adult industry, the yuppie industry, the middle age

industry, the senior industry before them.

This story is about an incident that occurred during a moon run, where over a hundred thousand cryogenically frozen baby boomer "experiments" were being shipped to Moonstock, a grotesque above-ground cemetery on the dark side of the moon, where, for a price, each hideous experiment would be dolled-up to look young again, and positioned in a hideous eternal re-creation of Woodstock, in a deep permanently shadowed crater, which was artificially lit and put on the Internet. In the perfect vacuum of space the Baby Jane-like experiments awaited reanimation and rejuvenation while listening to a robotic Jimi Hendrix.

The morticians were low-paid workers of the great American underclass. By the year 2040 America was over fifty percent Hispanic, and they were beginning to dominate the politics and workforce, but still an underclass. The baby boom morticians were overwhelmingly Hispanic, and employed by a big corporation owned by non-Hispanics. Pay was low, working conditions rough, and the workers lived in a world that was alien from the hideous old gringos they were working to preserve for future life in a world that would be even less gringo than the one they were leaving.

Then the accident occurred, in 2040. As the experiments were being transferred from the space hearse to the funeral parlor on the dark moon surface, a crash caused a hundred thousand frozen experiments to break into pieces. The company ordered a coverup, and the experiments had to be reassembled with glue and made up for their assigned cemetery positions, even though the hope of reanimation was lost. Some experiments were misassembled with the wrong parts, and some had to have fake parts added, but the children and families of the experiments would have no way to know, and would keep buying service options.

Enter one Lulu Trancia and her husband George, a married couple of lowly workers, the kind nobody writes about. Attempts to blow the whistle on the company lead them into an adventure full of personal danger and a revelation about American politics.

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Chapter 1.

* * *

The last thing she remembered was a smiling fearless good crime fighting superheroine named Chillbaby Blain that she had been inventing in her dreams for perhaps years, when the dark side of her mind was in charge. She always wore a Mod Squad cap, dressed in open crotch fashions. She was a super Hispanic like Raquel Welch. She kicked gringo's asses. And they liked it. Never ran away. But she had always stopped playing for her when she awoke. The memory was not erased, nor stopped, but overwritten by her waking mind, waiting for the dream break to end.

* * *

If I die, I want to make a young-looking corpse.

Only the good die young.

I felt like I could truly give my children more if I had them in my forties rather than my twenties.

In vitro fertilization. Egg donation.

Laugh-In.

Route Sixty-Six.

The Great Garloo.

The Howdy-Doody Show.

The Rifleman.

Maverick.

The Lone Ranger.

I Love Lucy.

Lulu Trancia was watching the eternal living funeral service on the Net absent-mindedly while eating some beans with corn and flour tortillas. Just a pinch of hot pepper. If a gringo were with her, she'd offer them a pinch of hot pepper to watch them sweat and have her little giggle and joke.

Gringos. A dying breed. But it was a living. She was in her forties herself, and still wore retro glasses for looks. People told her she looked like Yoko Ono with those glasses. Not too Hispanic. Her voice had only a trace of a Spanish accent. It was sweet and high, and could have been Yoko's.

Her husband George was a steady, dependable man. A good solid worker, five days a week. On the weekends though, watch out. He loved his beer. Would go through a case in two days. With her own habit, they went through two. The

shitty apartment they lived in in Denver had two big trash barrels in back, choked to the top with beer cans. If you can call them beer cans.

Her whole family had a problem with alcoholism. When the cure to alcohol was discovered by the gringo scientists, they would only pretend to take it, since they needed drunkenness. It wasn't an option in this shitty world. What else was there to live for? They could hold their liquor on working days, like most good Hispanics. Only got totally smashed on off days. An occasional cloned liver transplant and they were fine. Family members that is. George had had one, but her liver was still bitchin'.

They had been married since the age of sixteen. George was totally faithful, totally dependable. She kept him happy. He didn't want her to work. It was against his principles. But in this day and age, with the old gringo welfare state on the skids, their combined wages barely paid for the rent, food, and beer.

The gringo experiment she was working on was hideous. She could smell the hideous stench on her clothes. The yellow tar-stained teeth were horrible. Ninety years old at least. Their living funeral service was a hot air balloon that was tethered to their hideous experiment forever, playing on the Net.

Her lunch over, Lulu wiped her hands on her white apron and then resumed working on the cleanup for her little ole corpse, a woman. She was still chewing a well-greased corn tortilla, with plenty of lime, and a little coke powder in her nose, which they looked the other way about as long as she used it only when doing the stench work.

She soon tuned into some Mexican marimba music to work by, loud enough to drown out the eternal funeral service, which the bosses insisted on for some company reason, perhaps to impress VIP visitors. The gay cries were comforting to her, brought her down to earth.

George's parents were from southern Colorado, hers from the state of Jalisco in Mexico. When her father moved from his

family farm to Denver to get a graveyard shift job at a package handling plant, using forged identity papers, in the year 2025, the cops burst into their apartment in the middle of the day, while he was sleeping, on a no-knock warrant, and killed him as he tried to get out of bed. It was a mistake. Wrong apartment. The cops tried to cover it up, but failed, as this was the zillionth such incident, and several legal firms specialized in suing and winning.

The award of twenty thousand a year for twenty years went to his wife and ten other kids back in Jalisco. Counting herself and an older sister, Carmen, that made twelve. Six boys and six girls. She got nothing, except his collection of Mexican folk music, which he left in the apartment when he died. They were raised on this music, even if they both went gringo after getting married and got into gringo culture, even old sixties gringo rock. Even if she could hardly speak Spanish, and didn't want to. She was American, not Mexican. Still, the folk music brought her down to earth. Kept her from going crazy thinking of those eyes. Her dad's eyes, there in her apartment, dead. They had to break a lease but they couldn't stay there anymore.

George came in, wheeling a train of five more gringo experiments. He was his usual joking self. But short on the jokes, as the bosses were watching. He kept his head down like she did, and prepped the experiments for her makeup work.

This was Star Trek and Star Wars? She thought it would be glamorous, but it was just the same old shit as on earth. The spaceport on the high plains east of Denver was a giant funeral parlor, receiving thousands of experiments a day for prepping. She handled her quota of twenty with grace, with never a minute to spare since that might get her an extra experiment she didn't want. When the quitting time came, she was always just finishing her last one. Mandatory overtime came only a few months each year, thankfully.

Just to the north of the spaceport was Little Mexico City, her home. Two million mainly Hispanic people crowded into enough housing for about half that many, by gringo standards. The unholy smell of the slaughterhouses of north

Denver wafted in regularly over the old buffalo prairie, still known for its occasional gopher hole, the occasional beaver on the ancient and uncolorful Platte river that the gringos still tried to preserve for green space. The gringos lived in the nice suburbs. But then they could afford it. Without public transportation, she couldn't even afford commuting to work every day. But them Broncos. Loved 'em. Watching them was still free. The Rockies. Still could afford an occasional ticket with her husband, in the cheap seats of the homey if aging stadium. The sky was still big and blue, the air still mainly clean and breathable. The cops were as corrupt as ever, but she didn't mess with them and they didn't mess with her. She was an employee of the company, and had a badge and uniforms and other symbols of status. She was one of the beautiful people in LMC. She helped many relatives with loans, food and stuff.

She shuttled on a tram to the spaceport every day. Every day a space shuttle took off for the orbiting funeral parlor over the earth. Every few months a space ship took off from the orbiting station for the dark side of the moon with a hundred thousand experiments. She and George always accompanied it, along with a thousand other workers, since the prepping, makeup and staging of the experiments in Moonstock was done mostly there, not earthside. The catch was having to stay on the moon a full month or more until all the work was done. The quarters were cramped, the food hideous, in pouches with straws. There were tortillas, and plenty of lard, and lime-flavored salt, and beer. The gringos gave them food they wouldn't touch themselves, such as lard, and pig-swill colored yellow and injected with alcohol. But did she want to live past fifty anyway? A corn tortilla not cooked in lard to make it soft and tasty wasn't food. Beer cleaned out the old arteries well enough for them.

The weightlessness weakened them for weeks after they returned. It was like being dead yourself. The living dead. The rich gringos could get something to help the weight sickness. Too expensive for them, mere menials.

There was no view of the earth either. That was on the

other side of the moon, where they had the moon city. Not really a city. Just a big camp of mainly scientists. Their living rooms must have had quite a nice earthview. The naked gringos couldn't be left in the bright sun. Would cause sun damage. That's why the cemetery was at the bottom of a deep crater, in permanent shadow. The dark side of the moon was a misnomer. The moon rotated just like the earth, but its rotation was synched to the earth's, so that it always displayed the same face to earth observers. When the sun was out, the moon got real hot. When it was not, it got real cold. Always there were the stars. Beautiful yes, dazzlingly bright compared to on earth, but it soon got boring, lonely, even scary.

Those loco gringos. They all wanted to look young again, like they were in the 1960s. No respect for age. This was hideous work, but she needed a job or else she and George would be out in the streets, maybe doing far more menial and dirty work, living in a home for street people like millions. Her job was actually highly desired by Hispanics, and she was lucky to have it. She was selected out of 2000 candidates after job interviews and screening. Having a husband who was her loyal trustworthy partner, and accepting one and a half times a single worker's wages for them both, added to their selection. Two can live cheaper than one, and can afford a shitty apartment with a gringo landlord.

Their wayward son and daughter were on the streets. Neither could work, or wanted to. When they hit eighteen their briefs and panties dropped and they started going wild and fucking like rabbits, getting drunk and in trouble with the police all the time. It wasn't their fault. They had raised them different. But they couldn't control them now. They were adults now. She loved them both. Too bad they fought all the time and couldn't live together.

Their conversations ran in circles. For example, the running joke about space sex.

"How does it feel to go into space?" Junior, her son, would ask.

"It feels bitchin' good, like sex," she would answer.

"Did you two ever do it in space?" he would ask, grinning.

"None of your business, and wash your mouth out with soap," she would snap. "You came out of my pussy, not the other way around, so show some respect to your mother, hijo."

She always talked like that with her family. Plain and raw, down and dirty. At work, however, she had a very meek and polite and proper vocabulary. That's how they kept their jobs, both of them. Kept their heads down.

Junior tried to move in a couple of years ago, and she ended up calling the police to remove him. When he hit eighteen it was her policy for her kids to have to leave the nest and go out on their own, and there were no exceptions. That's the way her parents raised her. George's parents too. Not, that is, until they got old. Then they wanted to move in with a prosperous son or daughter. The way things were going, she wondered if they ever could. She would be glad to die at fifty, yes.

It didn't feel good to go into space. She just said that. It was terrible, a real strain. No fun. She usually took knockout pills first, slept through it as well as she could. So did George. They had to fast first. Had to have an empty stomach for the takeoff, else they might drown in their own puke. It was worse than a religious fast. No purpose to it. No indulgences granted for it. No priests came along.

The hideous work clothes they had to wear. The hideous undersuits that acted like recirculating toilets. Made her wince even to think about it. Even seafood made her wince, those crabs with the eyes still on them at the table for instance. Hideous. She'd rather die than eat eyeballs looking at her. How some of her relatives ate sheep heads with eyeballs still in them she didn't know, but they did. Not her though. She had principles.

There was no work to do in the orbiting parlor. She liked to just stay doped up with tranqs while they finished loading the space hearse for the quarter million mile

journey to the moon. The journey itself was another sleepy time. Took less oxygen and food that way they told her. Mandatory. When they were in lunar orbit, they woke them up. Then they got into the lunar shuttle that took them to the moon parlor, as the giant cargo of frozen experiments was rocketed down separately. Then her work really began.

Eyes. She had to face the eyes every working day. Hideous dead old gringo eyes. They were looking at her as she made them up. Did they register what she was doing, and remember?

Those eyes were alive. They were all supposed to be reanimated one day, when science permitted it, could make them young again. Most of them weren't frozen dead, but alive. That's why they called them experiments. For legal reasons. Ever since the turn of the century, when she was just a little girl, when the gringo Doctor Death was railroaded into prison for murder by the authorities, euthanasia was hard to legalize, and was still illegal in many states, just like abortion. The Catholic Church was dead set against it, as it was abortion or even birth control. She never touched any forbidden art herself. Had four kids before she was told she couldn't have any more. Two of them dead, two left. Not that she was religious. But she agreed with the Church about the sanctity of life.

Welcome to the future. It's a wonderful techno world where everybody is promised a brand new body, every boy and girl. That was one of the company's many ad lines, in all the languages.

The company had its spokespersons to answer objections. Freezing a person alive wasn't considered euthanasia they said, only a form of sedation, since experiments could be medically revived. It had been done several times in government-monitored tests. She saw the process a thousand times, something about injection of nanobots followed by slow decompression under cooling to solve the body-damage problem, then decompression to the 10,000 meter level to put the mind to sleep, then slow cooling of the body to 10 degrees C, followed by decompression to the 20,000 meter level to stop vital signs, then more cooling, and a bunch of

other steps she couldn't remember, until the solid-ice body was completely decompressed and the corpsey, as she called it, was in eternal living dreamless slumber.

After years of company ads, rich gringos all wanted to be frozen alive and then kept in storage permanently, waiting for the day when they could be made young and healthy again, their riches being thrown into the bargain with the devil. Yes, the devil. It didn't seem pious to try and cheat God like this. If God had wanted people to live twice he'd have given them two lives in the first place. But then she wasn't a gringo and she didn't see many experiments in her work who weren't. It was their folly, their money. It paid her wages, and she couldn't, wouldn't criticize it publicly. She showed the proper respect to her bosses.

If it weren't for them damned eyes, she could take it.

The Moonstock moonpark was beyond imagination. If she were left alone in it she would crack up. She didn't care what anybody said, she believed in spirits, even in space. It was a ghoulish parlor encased in a clear plastic dome. All the experiments were staged on the crater floor, without space suits, many of them nude or near-nude, pretending they were teenagers again jumping in the mud. Not that each experiment wasn't well-encased in protective chemicals and makeup, injected with those nanobot things. Some couples wanted the woman to be mounted on the man's neck, with her breasts bobbing out. Some wanted to be mounted in a pup tent, fucking. Some wanted to be mounted in sleeping bags, fucking. Some wanted to be left sitting on the ground, fucking. It wasn't really fucking. The penises weren't erect. Just simulated fucking. The hideous old penises and vaginas were way past their fucking years anyway usually. Old enough to be her parents, grandparents even.

But it was their money. Even some devout Catholics, gringo ones, wanted to be interred here, and there was a Catholic chapel here, with a crew of priests. That was where the real fucking was going on, George would joke with her. She would pretend to not get the joke. She couldn't understand what made queers tick. She was a one-man woman. Old fashioned, maybe. But she showed them the proper respect in

person. Two of her brothers, one sister and one aunt were gay. Funny how when she saw footage of the real Woodstock back in 1969 she didn't see any gays. Now about ten percent of the old gringo couples were same-sex, wanting to be mounted in 69, beejay, and bee-ef positions. Those hideous old bodies wanting to eat each other was hideous, but she didn't mention it. It would not be PC.

Fucking on the moon. Yes, she and George did, every time they got their sleep time. It was one of the only good things about the moon. The light gravity made them like bucking goats again, took years off, made the orgasms more intense. Not that they ever talked about their love life. But she kept her man happy.

What really spooked her was them damn spooky robots on stage. They seemed alive. The stage had robot performers, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, the Rolling Stones, Santana, Los Lobos, more than she could name. All from the nineteen sixties and seventies, seventy and eighty years ago. Ancient history. They performed an endless Woodstock concert for the captive audience in the vacuum of space, talking to each other, the audience, if you could call it that, as if it were just another day on a farm on earth. The music could be heard on the Net though, as if it were live. She liked rock music as much as anybody, when she was stoned or drunk. But there were no drugs allowed on the moon, so it was just plain hideous to have to take it sober.

This moon trip started out like all the others, routine. But this trip was different. It was March 24, 2040. A day she never forgot. The day of the big accident. The day her life took a new turn. The day she found God.

Eat it, bitch, or I'll break your arms!

She woke up from her reverie, pinned down in her prison cell by a 300-pound fat mama Hispanic bull dyke with tattoos everywhere, sitting on her face. The weight was crushing. She didn't want to look. But there it was, spread right in front of her.

In her tears she did what she was told. Eyes. Her eyes were

hideous now. They had seen so much. Too much. What was her dear George suffering on his side of the joint she wondered? It was too much. Their homey little Denver apartment was in her mind.

Chapter 2.

* * *

The last thing she remembered was the jetcar suit ride, being towed by a robotic bungee cord at 600 mph as the chief raced along the old Indian plains. The spacesuit made the air shock negligible, and indeed had its own entertainment center geared to the landscape through AI. She could feel like Supergirl, extend her arms in front of her, feel in command of the entire earth.

* * *

I got Lulu Trancia eyes.

Ah, but who am I? You see me huddled in the corners on cold rainy days. You smell the pungent stench on my clothes. You can't help but notice the yellow tar on my teeth. Got a cigarette? It sure is nice in paradise.

Back to the accident.

It is the year 2040. Here is the ultimate life science come true, 80 years after R.C.W. Ettinger's Prospect of Immortality (1962). The many formidable problems of the science of Cryonics have been solved. The freezer burn problem. The reanimation problem. The radiation problem. The ethical, legal, and moral problems for the consenting, in most states. The dark side of the moon was out of American, even world legal jurisdiction, was owned by the company, and made its own laws. But one problem America could never solve, and that was corporate bungling.

The company. General Earth-Moon Management Services Inc. GEMMS. In only thirty years it had grown from a small cryonics lab to one of the Fortune 50. The funeral boom, as Wall Street Analysts called it, had created the biggest market for cryonics in history. It was not cheap, but the dying baby boomers of America could afford it. Even when they left children and grandchildren less affluent behind, they had the funds allocated in their living wills. The trend to be cryofrozen after a doctor had indicated they had less than a day left to live was well established by the early thirties. The concern for the ability of earthside facilities to safely house the experiments in the face of world uncertainties, war for instance, had made relocation to the moon necessary and sufficient, the cost amortized over the huge number of experiments and the savings in refrigeration costs for the one, two or more centuries that would be needed before reanimation would be feasible in a peaceful, scientific new world that could give them their youth and vigor back -- that is, if their Pascalian wagers paid off.

The relatives back on earth were constantly pressured for "services" such as reanimation insurance, moonside flowers, upgrading of placement and position in the Moonstock arena, recoating, new makeup, special requests for the band, ad infinitum. Some people were coaxed into an addition for their dear departed similar to that which girls have for their dollhouses, one which, as time proved, no amount of PC upbringing could break. A gigabuck enterprise.

Around the turn of the millennium the baby boomers were making their money in computers, software, and the Internet, as they called it then. Now, forty years later, that industry was bankrupt, kaput, dominated by third world low-wage grunts in giant efactories and eoffice farms. The unlucky geeks, as they used to be called, who weren't affluent by old age, found themselves unemployable, and either ended up in the streets, or, if they had some luck and vigor, working for the company. This included their children, the generation Xers and Yers. Just about anybody born before the millennium who had been sold on a career with computers was either living on investments and savings,

or doing menial work now.

About a hundred thousand experiments were being readied for soft landing on the moon's surface when the pilots of the space hearse lost it. They had taken illegal drugs with them, and were higher than kites. The cargo doors were mistakenly opened, and all the experiments, each in its own neat plastic canister, were spilled on the surface from an altitude of 25 miles. Luckily it was lunar night, or else there might have been a real barbecue. Given the lower gravity of the moon, the canister rigidity and other factors, the experiments weren't completely destroyed. No, far from it. Being cryofrozen they were very brittle, and as the canisters broke open, the bodies were sliced and diced like frozen veggies, in large bite-size chunks. And what's more, there was a great deal of mixing of experiments, like frozen mixed veggies, Green Giant, Bird's Eye, or some other well-known brand.

Ettinger's sanguine words play over the disaster:

"After awakening, he may already be again young and virile, having been rejuvenated while unconscious; or he may be gradually renovated through treatment after awakening. In any case, he will have the physique of a Charles Atlas if he wants it, and his weary and faded wife, if she chooses, may rival Miss Universe. Much more important, they will be gradually improved in mentality and personality. They will not find themselves idiot strangers in a lonely and baffling world, but will be made fully educable and integrable.

"If civilization endures, if the Golden Age materializes, the future will reveal a wonderful world indeed, a vista to excite the mind and thrill the heart. It will be bigger and better than the present -- but not only that. It will not be just the present, king-sized and chocolate covered; it will be different. The key difference will be in people; we will remold, nearer to the heart's desire, not just the world, but ourselves as well. And 'ourselves' refers to people, not just posterity. You and I, the frozen, the resuscitees, will be not merely revived and cured, but enlarged and improved, made fit to work, play, and perhaps fight, on a grand scale and in a grand style.

"Clearly, the freezer is more attractive than the grave, even if one has doubts about the future capabilities of science. With had luck, the frozen people will simply remain dead, as they would have in the grave. But with good luck, the manifest destiny of science will be realized, and the resuscitees will drink the wine of centuries unborn. The likely prize is so enormous that even slender odds would be worth embracing."

Your ears may bleed, but at least you survived the baby boom-boom. That's because you are alive, warm, throbbing. Perhaps your momma would enjoy some boogie-oogie-oogie in her casket, but now she is a three-dee jigsaw puzzle of pizza parts, looking for a delivery boy who is also one hell of a chef. The world is spinning round, the sun is feeling bright, and all I ever wanted was to live my own life. Now I see the light.

No way. The company would never let them know about the accident, never let them come to terms with it. Corpseys don't talk. Live people have money. Money feeds companies. The company is alive, is real, does exist. Takes care of its own business. Is big, huge, gargantuan. Anybody that gets in its way is expendable. The stock must be protected. What's best for the many, the stockholders, is best for all.

And the company has eyes. A jillion eyes.

Chapter 3.

* * *

She could see her own pussy. She was looking up her own legs. She could see only that. Her pussy hole, the inner lips, spurting out like a flower. The flower was flapping, dancing, vibrating like a curtain of silk. It was intelligent! It was talking! Talking pussy! The ultimate superheroine! It talked and it thought and it came to the

rescue and saved the day. It was Talking Pussy. No man could have it.

* * *

Eat it, bitch.

It tasted like stale perfumed raw chicken, but she ate it. Her tongue was doing the flicking thing. The fat bitch was moaning. Lulu's mind was unaccepting of the reality. She, just a farm girl that came to the big city to have a nice life with her husband.

Where did she make her wrong choice? Where?

George? Is that you? Come to me. I love you.

His lips tasted like sweet roasted corn nuts, like when you over-roast corn kernels until they get dark and nutty.

The accident, which she hadn't seen happen, at first meant only unscheduled work. In a large cryoassembly room heaped with experimental pieces, they and a thousand other workers in full spacesuits aided by robots labored in 10-hour shifts, with 4-hour breaks, continuously, week after week. It was officially listed as extended overtime. Lulu and George labored piecing experiments back together, using nanobots for glue when possible, fabricating fake plastic parts when necessary, redoing the cosmetics to cover up seams. Many times pieces just didn't fit, but they were told to make them fit.

You make believe that there's nothing wrong until you're dying on me. Then you go to sleep and wake up in two or three hundred years.

This was shocking at first, totally new, no training for it. But they were given training, told they were never to divulge what they were doing to anybody, any more than any of the other trade secrets they had been taught, such as the procedure for making a frozen experiment bend to any desired posture (the media guessed it was done with nanobots that nanomelted nanobits of the experiment at a time in a

synchronized sequence and pattern). They were prohibited all outside contact. Hormones in their food adjusted their bioclocks and biorhythms.

You think that everybody's the same? I don't think that anybody's like you. That's the sacred secret of marriage. To become one flesh.

The bosses were out in force, watching them closely, listening for murmuring and chit-chat, monitoring their body functions, their breathing, heart rate, EKGs. Workers who murmured would be relieved, led away by security down the white hall. Lucky none of them were his relatives George would cluck. His family tree weren't talkers, didn't rock the boat. Big jokers, that's all. But never about anything that was serious. Now they kept their heads down, said nothing, worked hard.

George, you and I are one. We have done what no one else can ever take away. What I do now I know you are watching my eyes and working my salvation with compassion.

Eyes again. Now Lulu was having to handle loose eyeballs. Match them into eye sockets. It was all she could do to keep from laughing when she mismatched a pair. Again, all she could do to keep from cutting up when she was mixing and matching penises and scrotums. She couldn't help giving a few monkey glances at her understanding husband. They never talked about the sex organs of their experiments anyway.

What does it mean to me? Me? It's just something I do. I feel the meanness in you. You feel the meanness in me.

Working hard, eating a lot, eating good. Everything was okay. They would have some good laughs when they got back to earth, but it wouldn't be about their work. They could laugh about other things. Life was good for their kind, the kind that didn't expect too much of it. It was the gringos who were unhappy, expecting life to give them everything, always have the latest gizmo or treatment. They were glad not to be gringos.

Eat it harder or I'll break your arms.

One old gringo they worked with, a former computer geek, was caught stealing a body part, a gringo crotch with the vagina intact. It was hardly middle-aged looking, he said. He would have brought it back, he added. They took him down the white hallway, bawling like a kid.

That's it, bitch. Now it's my turn to snack on your crack.

Back in their sleeping quarters, they stopped their usual fucking and bucking. Something was on their minds. They took to whispering in the tiniest of voices. This wasn't right. This was a company coverup. They were becoming accomplices to a crime. But they had no power. And besides, who was hurt? And who would do anything? Who would listen? Who?

Keep your head down there. You don't have to break my arms. Just don't stop now.

Keep your head down. This is their country still. That's what George concluded to Lulu in his tiniest voice. She nodded agreement, but there would be no fucking and bucking for a long time.

The next morning at roll call they heard their names called.

Ranger Abeyta, Magdalena Aguayo, Simone Arguello, Rafael DeBaca, Honoree Espinoza, Ephedra Ruiz, Crestina Sedillo, Elian Solis, Celina Sternad, George Trancia, Lulu Trancia.

The shift supervisor read out the list of names, waited for them to assemble in front of him, then two more bosses appeared and led them off to the white hall, the long white hall that went nobody knew where, for it was off-limits to cosmetic and mounting workers like them.

Wanna smoke?

Lulu and George did not hold hands as they walked. They never showed affection in public anyplace, on the job or

elsewhere. They weren't raised that way. George had the look of a Nicaraguan mountain man, an Indian look to him, mestizo, dark sunburned skin, jet black hair, those ears. She was more Spanish, although unfortunately of that strain of incredibly plug-ugly Spanish that originated in the heart of Spain and which seemingly is totally unrelated to the beautiful Spanish strains that are always combined with haughtiness and pride as if by a genetic bridge. She was lucky to not be plug ugly, or haughty and prideful either.

Who needs men? This is going to be easy time, a cute bitch like you to fuck.

No, she was too dainty to be really plug ugly, although she wore glasses because it covered up some of the more ungainly facial features and left the rest of her face flattered with that Yoko look. Not that Yoko was any beauty, but she had bagged John Lennon hadn't she? Long dead, she was still an icon of sorts to any American over forty, and Lulu liked to cultivate her Yoko look. But not from haughtiness. From simple self respect, a desire to look good. Some of her sisters and cousins were so plug ugly they would cause paint to peel. She never confronted them with it because she loved them, but all had had their egos bruised by outsiders. Her daughter Debbie, now there was a lucky exception. Tall. Taller than George. Thin, trim, beautiful. She would carry on the family in a beautiful way. My how everyone was proud of her looks. Too bad she drank like a fish and was partial to drunken boys who beat her up after sex. If she made it to 35 or 40 she would settle down hopefully. John Lennon settled down, but was gunned down before he got to 40.

Her George was no John Lennon, nor did she want him to be. He was of the earth, a worker, a man satisfied with hard work as long as he got to eat good and have his beer and his woman. Neither of them had graduated from high school, or could read very well without effort. Saving for a rainy day was beyond their comprehension, as much as the language of a mortgage, or the arithmetic. They had seen gringos buy fix-er-upper houses and turn around and sell them for large profits, but nobody in her family had ever purchased a house in America, all preferring the easy way of renting. With a call to relatives they could up and move in a single day.

The jobs that required fluent literacy were not for them. Lulu had a certain artistic talent, however, as did George, and he had in addition a great ability to fix things, things with nuts and bolts, and a professional gardener's knowledge. And rote work didn't bore them. And they both did careful, precise work. The company had given them six months training in experiment cosmetics and makeup, and layout and mounting, the latter being not that much different than gardening, when you got down to it. So together they made a complete team, and the bosses gave them high marks and little in the way of negative discipline.

I'm your broken horse, all right? Take it. Just don't break my arms or slit my throat.

But now they were going down the white hallway. The last thing she remembered was his slightly salty corn-nutty lips against hers at night.

Chapter 4.

* * *

Talking Pussy meets Chillbaby Blain. The crime duo of all time. Can solve any crime. Can protect against any bad guys. Terrorists. Killer robots. Evil hooded monks. Genetically altered soldiers. Spanish Conquistadors. Spies and secret agents. Gangsters. Serial murderers who looked normal. Big dicks. Mobs of ferrets and geckos in hoods with human dicks.

* * *

The return voyage was uneventful. She couldn't even remember it.

Back earthside, things got back to normal. George was his

usual joking self. Had to get two instead of one off on April Fool's Day. Miguel, Lulu's cousin and perpetual bum, who couldn't keep a job without getting fired in weeks from sheer laziness, was starting to visit them too often. It soon became evident he was trying to hit on them to sleep in their living room or kitchen permanently since he had lost his apartment. They rebuffed him, and he took it in stride, saying he loved them anyway.

Lulu's sister Carmen visited from Aurora, Colorado for the day, and they spent hours just talking.

"You should go the park with us and look at all those hot guys, get yourself a man," Lulu told her in a calculated way, but trying to make it seem like a lark. She was worried that her sister was still single. At 26, she was a spinster.

George took over, laughing loudly in his peculiar horselike way.

"Yes, let's go the park. Lulu will cook up a picnic. What do you got in the fridge, baby?"

"A picnic! Bitchin'! I got some green chile in the fridge, and fresh tortillas. And we can sit and smoke and drink while you check out the butts, and they get a look at you."

Carmen began laughing.

"Yes, butts. You like a good male butt as well as the next girl, don't you Carmen dear? Let's go scope some butts, okay?"

Carmen was ruby cheeked, speechless.

"What about it, Carmen dear?"

"Yes."

"Hurray! We're going to picnic and scope out butts at the park! George is a genius. Thinks of the bitchinest ideas. Which side of the family did you get your genius brains

from, George? Your mother's or your father's?"

"Eh, it has to be my mother's, because she was smart enough to rope my father in even though he had a half dozen novias and several more waiting in the wings. Eh, Lulu?" George was exaggerating, but clearly trying to play to Carmen, get her in the mood for flirting.

"Right George. Those women in Pueblo really came on to your father, didn't he? Nothing shy about women down there."

"Nothing shy about the ones around here either. If the man doesn't come up to the woman and start talking with her, she'll come up to him."

Carmen was watching wise to the suggestions. Her eyes went off to the side as she fell into self-reflection, probably searching for the needed courage.

They walked two miles together to the park in the late afternoon, which was crowded with people of all kinds, mostly Hispanic. Music was blaring from a dozen different places, all loud. Tamale and burrito and roasted corn vendors, the latter serving the corn ears with red chile powder and mayo instead of gringo-style butter. Plenty of children, playing as children have always played. Generation Xers, with the baggy clothes and skinhead hairdos, now getting a little long in the tooth, in their fifties and sixties, but most still holding on to youth. It was almost painful to watch one of these old guys try to break dance.

Some teens in zoot suits, which were making a comeback for the umpteenth time in a century, with or without open crotch. The new open crotch fashions popular with the gringos were not as popular here, and often the Catholic upbringing caused scruples, such as colorful designer underwear covering up the private parts in the open crotches, some almost see-through in itself, some even having fake plastic private parts, vulvas complete with clitorises. Gringo fashion shows in Paris introduced them way back in the 2020s. Pant suits, skirts and dresses that seemed quite conservative and modest until you looked at the crotch and there was a full shaved vulva, or designer-do vulva visible

through see-through material, later video-enlarged on flexible wearable videoscreens. The men passed on this fashion for a season, finally coming out with rearview see-through crotches that showed the dick and balls from behind, but couldn't be seen from the front. This got around PC sex harassment and rape laws it was found, and didn't create anti-female penis envy, since the organs kept from getting hard by willpower and/or drugs to satisfy PC conventions looked not too different from female ones from behind really. Gringos even wore them at work now.

PSPs, personal smell patches were another rage, from the doglike desire of people seeing the private parts of strangers to want to sniff them. Some wore them on the back of their hand like a demi-glove, offering their hand politely like in the Victorian days to a stranger to sniff. Then there were the gays. They took to wearing realistic imitation private private parts around their necks or on their chins, and they'd walk around or sit in public meeting areas sucking or licking them as a kind of enticement. Lulu had even seen one gay once in a park with a penis hanging off his forehead, inviting any gay man to come up and give it a beejay to introduce himself. The fake ones were often as realistic as the real thing too. Each to his own, she sighed. Live and let live. She and George were hetero and would stay that way even if they lived to a hundred.

A few lowriders, although it was illegal to own a private car now without paying exorbitant luxury taxes except if it were used as a taxi or a limo, so all of them had designer virtual signs and logos. Many used power inline skates or power skateboards or power bicycles quite proudly. Some used power canes, which, in conjunction with special wheeled shoes, created a three-wheeler vehicle just by putting the cane down in front and operating the controls.

Mariachis playing for spare change. A soccer game. A nest of Amerindians, sitting in a circle. In the center a troupe in native dancing getup complete with feathers and drums shaking a leg and whooping it up. Reuben Broke Leg, an old friend of George, waved hi. Virtual screens cast into the air everywhere, creating a wild entertainment experience. Americans would always have plenty of cheap entertainment,

even the poorest. There was almost total unemployment here, but all were happy with life mostly. This was not the poor side of LMC. Few here were criminals or on parole. The lifestyle was retro in comparison with the gringos, but the people here considered themselves American and did their best to assimilate, even if their best was not too good. Not that there wasn't a rising conservative Catholic moral majority, as they called themselves, stirring them up to feelings of guilt and resentment all the time. In this era that had for so been ruled by libertine gringos these people seemed worse than retro, dangerous. Lord, we don't need another mountain. There will be mountains and hillsides enough to climb. What the world needs now is love sweet love. It's the only thing that there's just too little of. Yes, it would take a new generation raised from birth that way to go back down that road, thought Lulu.

Love. There was family there. Their extended family included hundreds if not thousands. The ones who weren't family knew them or about them anyway usually. There were so many young single men with tight butts, Lulu immediately noticed. Some had beautiful balls that she could see through the OC jeans, over the cowboy boots. And Carmen was really the most beautiful woman in her family. She was really old-fashioned and modest, wearing closed crotch clothes, like Lulu did, although if Lulu were single she'd go OC she thought. Lulu was intermediate in natural looks between Carmen and really plug ugly sisters such as Sylvia, whose face looked like a horse's ass. She would probably not have to go up to the men, and if she did she might score. It was not good to be her age and not have a man. People would think she was a dyke, even without the chin or neck lickpiece. Her breeding days were at their peak, and where would she be without children, little angels of her own? She had to get herself a muchacho as soon as possible. Lulu would do her part. So would George. She won't have no worries now.

The first thing was to get her smashed. Lulu handed her a beer, toasted her, coaxed her to drink up. Not a regular beer. A malt liquor. Old English "8000" brand. Kicked like a mule after a few gulps even though it went down smooth. Individual supermolecular chains of alcohol had a time-release coating. From the picnic sack she pulled out

her secret weapon, a pint bottle of tequila, cactus juice, Cuervo brand, no time-release. That stuff had killed half the livers in her family, and it had to be kept under lock and key like a weapon around her house, but now she handed the bottle to Carmen and bid her take a snap. She did. Lulu took one of her own, but she actually spit it back in the bottle so that she could stay sober and keep an eye on her. Even then, she got a buzz from it each time. And back and forth it went, snap after snap.

George came up, spied the Cuervo, and produced a lime from his pocket. He soon had it peeled and grabbed the bottle with one hand while holding the lime in the other. Up went the bottle, and down again, then up went the lime into his mouth, sucking wetly on it. He made his usual horseplay sounds and motions indicating down home gratification. He bid Carmen do the same, and she did, with some shyness and awkwardness, but no attempt to hold back on the Cuervo intake, gulping a good gulp of it. She was definitely getting smashed, to Lulu's and George's great satisfaction. This made them all the more festive.

Coming home from the park around 9:30 p.m., carrying burros on their backs, that is, smashed, they opened their apartment door only to be stunned with the disorder and disarray inside. Somebody had busted in and trashed the place, something that had never happened before. Too bad they were too smashed to do anything about it, and they ended up stumbling in and landing on overturned furniture, fighting off sleep to no avail.

When Lulu woke up she was in flimsy orange jail clothes, in a small and bare cell. Her ass and pussy were sore and aching. Her hands were numb and tingling. There were handcuff sores on her ankles and wrists.

Chapter 5.

* * *

There was one villain they never bested. He called himself Lopped Chiver. The planets hurt, burst into flames. The villain smiles big like a cave. Pardon me, but I'll never be the same. Be the same. Pardon me while I rise above the flames.

* * *

The police had arrested Lulu and George on drug charges while they were unconscious. Carmen had not been arrested. Perhaps she had awakened and left before the raid, they didn't know. There was some great power behind the way they railroaded them into a federal prison in a trial only a five days later. The judge seemed to be working for the prosecution, as did the shitty Hispanic public defender, meeting with them only briefly to tell them the "good news of the great plea bargain" offered them already that would "get them out of life in prison and into an easy twenty-year stretch" if they would "just save the court's time and plead guilty and not request a jury".

All their relatives could do was wait for hours for one chance to visit them through bars. When they did, they knew to not say much, to keep their heads down. Surprisingly, they were mainly concerned about themselves, about where they would crash overnight now, who would help them get by with food and loans. Their landlord kicked them out of their apartment after seeing how trashed it was, and kept the security deposit. It was rented again within three days, the rent raised beyond what they could afford anyway, after a couple of other properties nearby suddenly got buy offers out of the blue at double their assessed value, and the entire neighborhood was in a buzz about it.

It was a bad situation. One that stretched the imagination. One they had to make the best of. To keep on keeping on. Believe it or not, the prison authorities piped this old Motown song into their cell for hours.

They did as their lawyer advised, since they couldn't read the indictment well enough to question it, nor understand anything about the gringo legal system. During the short court proceedings in downtown Denver they were provided with

a Spanish interpreter even though they didn't speak Spanish, and all he did was make it hard to hear the English. The only thing the lawyer told them as they were being taken from the defendant's table to prison by the marshals was that they should feel like a part of history since this was the very courtroom that the big anti-government gringo Timothy McVeigh was tried in.

Lulu and George had never been to prison before, never been separated for any length of time. They were such good, law-abiding citizens. Steady, straight, reliable, dependable. Yes, they did a little drugs, but so did everybody they knew. The cops mainly left them alone. The jail system was totally overcrowded and even if a person was arrested he was soon released. But not them.

From the time of the prison entry stripdown, where she was ogled and whistled at by guards and prisoners alike, told to spread her cheeks and open her pussy for inspection, Lulu found out about the bull dykes. Her panties were used only during her monthlies, the rest of the time being little more than window decoration, tied to the bars, like a flag. She wasn't even given a bra to wear, and her flimsy prison costume flopped open if she wasn't paying attention, but she soon realized that others were, and very appreciatively.

She was, to them, a femme, a passive sex partner, and highly desired, so much so that they fought for her. The winner made her eat them, no matter how big, ugly, fat or gross. And they ate her. Her pussy became the dykes' breakfast, lunch, dinner, and late night snacks. She was frightened but at the same time somewhat flattered by it all, since she was no spring chicken, and nowhere near as bitchin' as she was when in her teens. But in this environment, she was now. Pussy gets hornier and blooms, someone told her, the more mature a woman gets, like a flower. Then it wilts and goes dry all at once, when she gets old. That day was still in her future, she added, all the while eating her out with her ring finger inserted and working.

Lulu's ring finger had no marriage ring. It was confiscated long ago. She didn't want George ever to know that she had done it with a woman, or been unfaithful to her man. Her

conscience was shocked. She was numb. But she got along. Better to stay alive. Ring. Ringo. The Beatles. John Lennon. Yoko Ono. Ringo. Gringo? Nevermind.

What was worse, she was actually beginning to get ideas about it. Have dreams about it, and like it. She finally got it. She began to get off on it, experiment, have orgasms, far more than with her George, except perhaps in their first year together. Only one requirement. She had to do it in the dark, from a sense of loyalty to George, maybe to men in general. But she did learn to like it, to jump into it, to go all the way, spread wide, serve it, dish it out. The little orgasmies were great tension relievers, a great substitute for drugs. And a possible danger of addiction. She began to wonder what it would be like to do it with a woman in space or on the moon. She even played the butch dyke, introduced one newbie to it, then another, and another. Learned to be tough with the newbies, scare them numb, play the bull dyke. Learned to smile when she saw them shocked, numb, unbelieving. Learned to stay with them until they too got it, started giving as much as receiving. Learned to laugh openly and appreciately at dyke jokes, such as the one about dykes being born with longer ring fingers, holding hers up cocked to show it was longer.

At times she grudgingly guessed that the male gays might be doing to George what the dykes were doing to her. This made her sad, depressed, frantic at times. They were married for life. They had said such dear things to each other privately, made such solemn personal pledges. This was everything to her. She was dead here, in suspended animation, like the corpseys she no longer worked on. Yet with one difference. Fireworky orgasms every night dilated her eyes like black olives. Those orgasms themselves kept her hopes up, made her want to keep living. She was a dyke, and admitted it. She imagined scenarios where she introduced George to her lover and he watched appreciatively or even joined in. She would always be married to him, but what does lovemaking have to do with it?

Chapter 6.

* * *

The state of Jalisco, adjoining the Pacific Ocean. Puerto Vallarta, Guadalajara, Laka Chalapa. Nice places if you are a rich gringo. Every poor Mexican family can make burritos and tamales to sell to gringos. If they could see the kitchens they'd puke. If they bite into a cockroach we tell them it's a chicharron. San Pedro, San Gabriel, San Juan, Purificacion are Catholic names. Nice places if you are a priest. Ocotlan, Tiajomulco, Tepic, Jocotepec, Zapotlan, Tamazula are Indian names. Aztec Indian. Nice places if you are a cruel haughty Spanish landlord oppressing the indigenous peoples. Tamale's an Aztec word, right? Tamazula. Tamale.

* * *

Five years later Lulu and George were both paroled at the same time. This wasn't unusual since for decades the federal prison system didn't permit paroles, but was finally forced to from sheer overcrowding. Of the 440 million people in America, some 50 million were in state and federal prisons, and another 100 million on probation or parole now. Among these 150 million, 70 percent were Hispanic. It also helped, said the parole board, that the government had seemingly lost all its case files on them, and couldn't establish their records of conviction or even the charges.

One problem the system never got over was how so many Hispanics had identical names, nearly identical mug shots, and a seeming cabal to foul up urine, fingerprint and DNA tests with their friends' samples. But Trancia was no common Hispanic name. Indeed it was unique, and George never explained how he came by it. Now he couldn't.

One thing the prison system did for her was fix her eyes, with laser surgery. She wasn't allowed eyeglasses anyway, and she had vision problems, and actually got into reading and studying, so she went for the free fix.

Many times after that she had nightmares about evil gringo eye doctors in free street clinics in Denver using trick equipment to blind long queues of Hispanic street people and mug them off to slavery somewhere, maybe the moon. They would pin their eyes open, aim the laser at the unblinking eye, and vaporize the entire eyeball. Hideous. Horrible. But she kept dreaming about it. Vincent Price. Alfred Hitchcock. Freddie.

The moon.

She was such a little idiot. Why she didn't have a good enough memory for that she didn't know, but she had forgotten all about her former job going to the moon until the eye doctor nightmares suggested the locale to her. She had worked on the moon, she was sure of it, but doing what she couldn't remember anymore. Something about eyes.

They reunited in chains and leg-irons and handcuffs in a federal marshal's van going into the Denver federal courthouse. They showed little affection, but that was how they had been raised. They weren't allowed to touch, being kept on separate sides of the aisle, locked in place with other prisoners. They kept their heads down, a little bit shocked at small differences. He was fatter now, no longer the lean lanky gaucho with the tight butt. She couldn't help thinking he was a homo now, or that he thought she was a dyke. Later he would tell her how he was shocked at seeing her going without eyeglasses but not squinting, and at how immodestly she acted, as if she were single again.

Going to court together, they were given the conditions of parole and formally released, then driven to the local federal temporary lockup, given street clothes, a little money, and unceremoniously shown the door.

They met on the street, their new home. Several small flakes of snow danced down 19th Street in the eery mile high light of March 27, 2045. Her ass was now a dyke ass greeting the windy street, she mused silently. But blood is thicker than water, and George was her blood. The weather was warm, in the forties, mild because of the low humidity

and intense sunlight, and soon would be clearing. Spring was just around the corner she remembered from prior years. The few trees she saw still had no leaves. Maybe there would be a late snow. Out like a lion, in like a lamb.

George started walking with her, where she didn't know, probably anywhere. They had to keep moving or probably they'd be hassled by cops. Down this street, up that street, long block after long block. The snow stopped, revealing a blue-white backlit sky. Hypnotized, Lulu was thinking. They move through life as if hypnotized. Somebody give me a microphone.

She did something new now, intercepted him from the front, steered him to a wall, backed him up, and then put her strong, tattooed but soft arms around his head and gave him a big, wet, sloppy kiss, with plenty of tongue. He was surprised, looking past her, eyes darting, afraid of being noticed. She took that as a challenge to prove something about herself, grabbed his hand and put it in her pants, made him rub her pussy, which was wet already. She took his hand out and, as he let her guide it willingly to his nose, asked him if he missed that. He gave a big farmer laugh like in the good ole days. Then they embraced in tears, letting it all out to each other.

The next few months were hard. Thankfully it wasn't winter, for they had to sleep outdoors many times. There was no halfway house. All overcrowded. The lure of changing into a life of street crime was great, but it was against their upbringing. They both longed for the good ole days, when George was so dependable and steady, provided for her. Even the days when she worked by his side.

They circled around their old apartment more than once, after dark, sobbing. The new tenants were gringos.

One night in October they were out before dawn, a huge harvest moon racing visibly to the west, racing to meet the horizon before it got so big it couldn't fit in.

"I love you more than the moon, Lulu dear," crooned George.

"And I love you more than all the cockatoos on peoples' shoulders," said Lulu sweetly.

"Huh?"

Suddenly they saw a shuttle from the spaceport silhouetted against the moon, just starting its takeoff.

Chapter 7.

* * *

Tlaquepaque. Euqapeuqalt. Paquetlaque. Tla que paque. Tla tla tla. Until I was four this was the biggest city I had ever been in. A seven by nine grid of main streets. The cooked pig parts sold on the streets would make a gringo puke.

* * *

Slowly they reassembled their nuclear family, found their daughter Debbie, learned that Junior was in jail for a two-year stretch for aggravated assault, meaning he would be out on the streets in three or four weeks. Too bad they couldn't move in with their kids and get off the streets, but they were still street kids, not caring about tomorrow, only about their hot asses and getting laid and making out and being wild.

Debbie even had the nerve to ask them for money and to take care of her kids so she could go partying. The kids' father got wild drunk and hit her around, beat her up, but she loved him she said. Actually there were four kids, three from one man, who was long gone, and the latest from the wild man.

There was something about that kid that reminded them of his father, and they wished he'd go with his father and jump off the end of some border. As for the other kids, they wanted

to say yes, but didn't have an apartment anymore, and shelters were no places for kids, nor working alongside them at menial one-day jobs.

George's family down in southern Colorado were too distant to visit, as was Lulu's down in Mexico. They got them on the videophone, visited as long as they could afford, after reversing some of the charges. Things hadn't changed much. A few deaths, a few new sicknesses, no new economic leaps.

"What happened to Carmen?" Lulu asked George one day during a day job picking up trash.

"No one told me," he replied.

"Let's try and find her."

They had to quit their jobs, but they did. She lived on Colfax Avenue in Aurora, on the east side of downtown Denver, in a notell motel, on the edge of Little Mexico City. The border, as she called it. She was excited to see them drop by, and when they told her they were homeless, she offered them a motel room of their own. It had a homey, Hispanic look and feel to it, the usual colors they liked such as black rugs and purple walls, red bathroom, and the usual family pictures, but the bed humping noises coming from three directions at once, and the foot traffic, and the presence of bad types packing under their coats didn't fit the picture of a mere notell motel.

They immediately saw through her. This was a whorehouse and she was a ho.

"Let's forget about the things I said when I was drunk," she started.

"You're a ho, ain't ya Carmen?" cried Lulu, upset. "All these years you kept it secret. How could you?"

"Now hold on, Lulu. It's my life. I have to make my way. I didn't have a good hubby like you did. If I did, would I be a ho?"

That quieted Lulu down. George said nothing until now.

"If I know anything I know you're too damn old to be a ho, love. What are you really?"

She gave up at once.

It turned out she was the madame of a whorehouse servicing mainly rich gringos with young stuff. She spent a lot of time scouting prospects of both kinds out on the street, and apparently sampling the young stuff, of both sexes, herself first.

Now they knew why she never married. She had made her money here, saved it, stole some as well, and parlayed it into a piece of the action here. Ruthless she must also have been, but they never mentioned it. That she had never mentioned what she had been doing all those years, or offered them any money, even as loans for emergencies, was also not mentioned. They hadn't asked. They actually found a new respect for Lulu's big sister. Beautiful and smart at the same time. A business head on her shoulders. No one in their family had gone to college or otherwise could even run a business, so this was impressive even if it would take a little getting used to. They solemnly agreed not to mention it to the relatives down south, who thought she was a lonely spinster who worked for a low rent motel cleaning service that still couldn't afford robots.

During the afternoons, when Carmen was idle, they would talk. In stark contrast to her earlier favorite subject of gossip about relatives, they now found her very philosophical and idea-oriented. She was into the occult, prophecies of the millennium, Indian medicine man prophecies, Mayan calendars, zero point energy, time acceleration, DNA upgrades, Chandra black holes, the Ascension, the Rapture of Jesus, Atlantis, UFOs, free energy, underground UFO bases, the New World Order. Too much to fit into their heads.

Above all she was expecting a millennial change of the world order. The coming and going of the big year 2000 didn't quench the fires of millenarianism, rather the opposite.

The big date of December 21, 2012 when the ancient Mayan calendar suddenly ended was supposed to be the end of the world, but it didn't happen. Then some expert decided that 40 years should be added, making the big year 2052, only 7 years in the future. Only seven dozen moons in the receding mirror of the future. That's when the world would end, she solemnly asserted to the wide-eyed Trancias.

"Scholars have known for decades that the 13-baktun cycle of the Mayan Long Count system of timekeeping was set to end precisely on a winter solstice, and that this system was put in place some 2300 years ago. The fact that ancient American skywatchers were able to pinpoint a winter solstice far into their future and claim it was the end of time itself must mean something, right?"

They bought it. What did they know? It sounded convincing. There had to be a reservoir of wisdom the gringos couldn't claim. They weren't mud people, like she had heard them called by mean gringos. They were the truly wise, the gringos, the foolish but cruel, the rapists of the land and the good people, and little else when it came to judgment time. Those hideous frozen gringos were trying to evade judgment. That was all. But they would just face it the worst possible way.

Carmen turned out to be an uninhibited nudist, who not only went around their motel apartment in the buff but loved to hang upside down in gravity boots, sit on the kitchen table lathering and shaving her pubic hair the old fashioned way with a plastic razor, have casual intimate sex with young stuff of both sexes anywhere, all as if it was nothing unusual. One item she always wore, however, was a Catholic crucifix around her neck. She would talk philosophy with them while one young stud had a penis in her vagina trying to "hold it" while another young philly was lapping their organs with her tongue as Carmen worked a vibrator on her curled up crotch and manipulated her large melonlike breasts with huge bumpy nipples expertly.

Before inserting the vibrator she asked Lulu laughingly if she'd like to wet it in her mouth first to break it in. When Lulu caught herself reacting positively, she glanced at

George and loudly refused, feigning disgust and putting her hands up defensively. Carmen wet it in her mouth and went on merrily, with nary a break in her philosophical talk. "Women make better philosophers than men when they can get their rocks off freely and in AC and DC," she explained. "Men can only do philosophy if they're not getting any at all." Most of the rest of the stuff she said sailed right over their heads.

In years past the Trancias might have freaked to this lifestyle, but after their prison experiences, where they had both been turned bi, and still hadn't had the courage to confront the issue with each other, it helped keep their illusions of a hetero marriage going. Always modest, they would only fuck in the dark when nobody was around, and under the covers, and with a minimum of bucking. Lulu found herself wishing her husband would do oral on her, but he wasn't raised that way. Nor would she do oral on him for the same reason. She was a lady. She only blew George during their courtship, to stay a virgin until she could give him what he really wanted, make him happy. She also found it hard not to have lustful feelings for her sister, not to dream of doing the wild thing with her in front of George, or joining in with her dykes in an orgy. But that was incest, and she wasn't brought up that way. But she was bi now, and how would she tell George?

The issue was at a kind of standoff when Lulu and George took over the kitchen, sitting there all day talking, laughing, watching the entertainment center, and letting Carmen run wild in the rest of the place. The philosophy talks were over their head, and Carmen gave up. Time passed.

After about five weeks Lulu and George grew tired of living free off her sister, wanted to make some money of their own. Carmen asked them both jokingly if they wanted to go into the "ho biz", but they politely declined. At least they had a permanent address, so more types of employment became open to them. After another four weeks George landed a graveyard shift job at a robotized trucking firm. There were still things robots couldn't do. Lulu landed a waitress job at an all-night restaurant. People still wanted live servers for

company, and no sex was involved other than the standard light flirting. For both their hours were approximately the same as Carmen's, so they would be free and awake at the same time.

One dreary day the kitchen squatters turned their entertainment center on to a comedy show titled "Baby Boom Morticians". The gringo experiments were sliding by on a robot assembly line like robots themselves, while the Hispanic and occasional old loser gringo geek workers busied themselves with antics, practical jokes, flirting, and sex.

One of the old gringo geek workers was a hideous 80-year-old Bill Gates, another an even more hideous Jim Carrey. "I couldn't churn out software like you did, Bill, but how did I know that computers would make real actors obsolete except in cheap C-productions like this?" "How did I know that computers would make me and break me down into your straight man?" Bill retorted in a high whiny geeky voice. "At least I had sense enough to market my ass while it was young, and invest in GEMMS stock", sings a hideous fat old Madonna, made up like a young woman with a hideous ill-fitting blonde wig, shaking her hippo titties and booty, dressed in a boss outfit. Big laughs. The real Bill Gates had become an experiment himself, and was kept in a VIP part of Moonstock awaiting reanimation in 200 or 300 years it was rumored. Ditto Madonna, Jim Carrey, and most every gringo baby boomer with the money to pay for it.

Most baby boomers went bust before the time, getting steered to hideous old folks' homes that sucked the last money juice from their accounts like vamps. Not that anybody cared, but the ones who had their fifteen minutes of fame hurt the most. Herman of the Hermits. Davy Jones of the Monkees. Little Richard. The Bionic Man and Woman. Billy Jack. The Village People. Joan Jett. The Chips guys. The Osmonds. George Foreman. Steve Jobs. Donovan. Twiggy. Carrie Fisher and Mark Hamill. The sitcom people. The rock bands of the 1900s. Ninety-nine point nine nine percent of the Screen Actor's Guild. Add more nines for the Rock Music Hall of Fame, the Country Music Hall of Fame, the various Sports Halls of Fame.

None of the actors or musicians were real now. All was done with computers. The programming was done by third world grunts working for a nickel or a dime a week. Sports stars had peaked in the twenties then crash-dived as the supply of third world genetically-altered thoroughbreds glutted the market, and the pay slid down to minimum wage, the grunts thrilled to be so rich.

The last Academy Awards had been crashed by jewel thieves, as if anything could follow the suicide acts earlier, like the one where a virile male romantic actor, in the beauty walk before the awards, waited for the cameras to reach him, then grabbed a boy actor and raped him in broad daylight for several minutes before cops reached him, only to be blown up when he set his bomb off. After that, further ham incidents were not stopped by the cops. They knew they would all end in suicide. Not that public sex was shocking anymore. Almost all movies were what would have been considered pure smut at the turn of the century. It's just that so many PC laws regarding workplace etiquette went one way while the work itself went the opposite way. The loopholes were soon to be closed, making it illegal to even act un-PC for money. And finally even those actors who survived prison were unemployable and knew this was their last stage.

The awards went on anyway, only to suddenly lose all power and blackout as the jewel thieves made their move. Only a few awards had been presented. The customary audience had shrunk from a billion at the turn of the mill to barely hundreds of millions. The scandal was used to justify shutting the Screen Actors Guild down the next day and arresting all actors that didn't go into hiding.

In a way the demise of the SAG was the end of all gringo heroes. SAG had been their stable since the days of Al Capone. American gringos made heroes out of professional phonies, bigger heroes than real professionals. The handwriting was on the wall when they began to make politicians out of actors, took another hit when they made actors out of munchmouth bodybuilders, politicians out of former actor bodybuilders, became a self-parody with computer geeks who couldn't act and had no body. Even the phoniness of the hero cult couldn't take that geek (s)hit.

Lulu had taken to creating her own superheroes deep in her dreams, but even they vanished when she awoke, as they couldn't survive in the real world either.

Computer geek programmers and programming managers as heroes. That was when the baby boomers knew it was all downhill from there. Their angst surfaced openly. The stock market had its headiest times ever. A whole generation got in front of a computer terminal and waited to die, clicking and typing like rats in a Skinner box, trying to get some magic pellets. They made themselves obsolete.

There was nothing cheaper now than programming, as the saying went. Anything that could be programmed already was, or it would be dirt cheap to get it programmed. Robots were still not capable of the price-performance of humans in a number of areas, so that is what kept American menials from total unemployment. That, and the eternal lure of sexual services. In compensation, the prices on many consumer goods slid, so that even the street people could afford what they could not steal, and the employed could afford to live without much stealing.

The main irreplaceable commodity was housing. Living on the street wasn't nearly as brutal as in decades past, since the government provided livable streets, as the saying went, in most big cities, streets that had hot air or steam grates, vents, shelf-like cubby spaces where one or two could bunk down and sleep even in the daytime, and police protection to keep the streets fairly safe. Police cots for sleeping were free for the asking, as was jail-type food from police vans. The nice police even came by on cold nights and distributed blankets and sleeping bags, hot-air blaster robots. Not to mention the free entertainment centers. It was no standing joke that the streets were just the overflow area of the jails, but the grim truth. The gringos in control indeed thought that way, and were content to keep street people on the streets, as long as they kept out of their rich gringo housing, commercial and industrial areas.

There were eyes everywhere. Everybody on the streets was booked, fingerprinted, photographed, DNA tested, and monitored automatically. Government privacy laws prohibited

street data from being given to commercial entities or the press, but not from being shared with other government agencies worldwide. Therefore, street crime had always to pay off the cops to falsify the street data collection on the perps before they would be free enough to do anything. The government therefore got a piece of the action in street crime, but thereby kept it under a form of control, which in these days of tens of millions of illegal immigrants flocking to the country each year was the best of the worst as far as the authorities were concerned.

After the show ended, Carmen asked them why they never talked about their jobs at the GEMMS corporation. Both were totally and genuinely stunned. They didn't remember ever working for them. Carmen, in turn, was stunned at their amnesia.

Enter Carmen's pimp, Miguel. He pimped his own cousin, but he was, after all, known for his laziness. They weren't surprised to see him with her one day, that mean angry look on his usual smiling face as he accused her of holding out on him. She was. He made her come clean, and promised her a good slug, but not in the view of his cousins Lulu and George.

Miguel was into the game, as he called it. It's not how you play the game, he said, but how the game plays you. When Carmen mentioned GEMMS, he was soon up-front with a talk on the power and connections of that megacorporation, and how George and Lulu's amnesia was part of their discharge process, done to all its moon workers. It was all legal, he asserted, because workers going to the dark side of the moon sign away their rights, and American law can't reach there.

"You didn't think the fine pay was for nothing, did you?" he joked.

He was greeted with puzzled looks. They didn't remember signing anything. But that was just it, he told them. They never would.

"The gringos are dinosaurs, cousins. Leave them a wide berth and they will fade into history. You know what really gets

me about this cryo shit thing they're spending their dough on?"

"No. Don't tell us!" they shouted in unison, to no avail. He brushed them off with a pimp daddy's contempt.

"They wait until their brains are turned to fossilized stone before they go under. So what if science can revive them in a hundred, two hundred, or two thousand years? They'll never get their brains working at primo speed again. They'll be permanent morons."

"Takes one to know one!" they shouted gleefully, in unison.

Chapter 8.

The GEMMS Complex in Denver is certainly an architectural landmark, looming larger than a beached Titanic in a skyscraper land of comparative barges and tugboats and icebergs. The central tower is attractive and interesting, even beautiful. It was constructed almost a century ago for another corporation with Colorado red rock slabs carefully fitted together with skill and mile high feel, the cold hard feel of the indomitable Rockies to the west and south, just close enough to see, just far enough to not feel looming when your back was turned. But the structure seemed dwarfed by the surrounding additions, many of black steel with aquamarine windows. You did feel that if you turned your back on it.

The flatness of the prairie land and the hardness of the ground were palpable. In the central plaza a huge white globular replica of the moon was framed by recirculating rainbow light fountains and a huge projection of the ongoing Moonstock concert. Gringos all had implants allowing them to view and experience it. Hispanics mainly couldn't afford them anymore than the medical and cosmetic work that made them look rough and low class in comparison, like regular people would look next to fashion models fifty years earlier. The smell of big money was in the air. Money and

fashion. Of a sales pitch.

But Lulu and George were not interested in appreciation of the architectural value of the buildings, nor in the show. These buildings were not buildings in themselves. They were the physical face of the company that had once owned their souls. The show was all too familiar, although they couldn't exactly recall their time on the moon 'on the inside'.

Inside. Inside the GEMMS complex were housed all the mystery and wizardry of gringo science. Fear intermingled with excitement as they ambivalently approached the complex bright and early, around seven-thirty on a Monday morning amid a crowd of business and professional people and menial workers. They tried not to stand out from the crowd. Being Hispanic, they did. Not being dressed in expensive business suits was even worse.

Entering the lobby, they at once were stopped by a security gate, and after being scanned, asked to state their business by a robot receptionist. They said they were former employees and wanted to talk to management about possible rehiring. They knew very well that menial employees had to be pre-screened and would be directed to a back gate in a far-off plant for a real interview, but the real reason they wanted to walk in the front door is that they felt like the company owed them something, and they wanted the execs to see them up close and personal, and show that they knew they existed.

"Come with me, George," she begged earlier.

"Why, woman, why?" he moaned, shaking his head.

"Because we have to, that's all."

"That's not an answer. That's an emotion."

"I have dreams every night. Voices. Angels. From God. We have to visit the people who run the company and let them know what's going on."

"What is going on?"

"That's just it, Georgie. I don't know. But I have dreams telling me there's a coverup and we're in the middle of it."

"You think they don't know?"

"Maybe not, George. They are basically good, like all people. It's the people under them that are bad. If we can get the door open and just have five minutes we'll shake things up, clear our consciences."

"You're like your grandmother, Lulu. You have great instincts. Okay. Just this once."

She was in a reverie, didn't respond.

"Louise? Louise? Do you hear me?"

"Yes, don't shout. I have great instincts, yes. When we get this over with I'll cook you a mess of beans you never forget. Are you with me?"

"Yes I'm with you."

"Good. Hug me and let's go for it."

Now that they were here they had already chickened out and not stated their real business of requesting an audience with management in order to inform them of a coverup. They were both looking warily at each other as they were escorted to a waiting room by uniformed robot guards and the door shut on them and locked.

By eleven-thirty they knew they weren't going to be rehired. Suddenly the doors opened and an odd sort of person walked in and stood at the opposite side of the table. She was at least six feet six inches tall, pumped, with huge shoulders and thighs, and wearing a black jumpsuit with a space helmet. She was carrying some kind of weapon, which she clicked a button on. Immediately they both felt a wrenching pain in their guts, and blacked out.

The white hallway. There they were again, going down that white hallway. This time they were naked, and all secrets between them were open. Lulu was arm in arm with a naked dyke, and George with a naked gay man. They turned their heads towards each other as they walked, reading each other's faces for signals, but not wanting to stop.

The hallway stopped. At the end were big white tables covered with sheeted pads. Both couples got up onto the same table and began making out. Lulu would make out with her dyke while George made out with his gay. Move and countermove, just like a chess game. She showed George her stuff and he his. She was actually glad for him, he for her. He was getting off. She was getting off. Without needing each other. The moon suddenly appeared in the sky, and they threw lassos over it and reeled it in.

The orgy went on for hours. George's penis was longer than her forearm now. She had never suspected it could get that long. Only for another man would it, she realized. He had been holding back on her, saving it for men. Her pussy was bigger than George's head, and wetter than a rainstorm. Only for another woman would it get like that, he realized. She too had been holding back, while claiming she took good care of him. They totally sold each other out in front of each other's eyes, were totally unfaithful to each other.

How do they separate their sighs, their cries? They don't. Once you know you can never go back you gotta take it on the other side. The sighs gave way to the oohs and aahs of shameless self-gratification, orgasms, release of every bodily juice, to the point of utter dryness, to the point of hurt from having had too much. Exhausted, they looked at each other curiously now, suddenly realizing that Lulu's lover was her daughter Debbie, and George's lover his son George Junior.

They were summarily ejected onto the white dusty gravelly surface of the moon. Naked, no spacesuits. Their eyes began popping out of their heads, their blood began to boil. They clawed at their own faces.

Late at night they woke up in a dumpster on the edge of

Little Mexico City, clothed as they had come. Too stunned to talk, they crawled out and began hoofing it through the streets, suddenly afraid of crime.

It took seven hours to find their way back to Carmen's motel, tired, hungry, depressed, beaten. They were human garbage in this world they felt. No words needed to be spoken. They had no secrets now.

Never would be the same. Never the same.

Chapter 9.

Back at Carmen's, Lulu and George both accepted jobs as hos, dyke and gay hos. They suggested it to her simultaneously, eagerly, not waiting for their turn to speak. Carmen didn't look surprised, but grinned mischevously and told them she was glad they finally came around.

"Why only gay work? You still trying to be faithful to each other?"

"Yes, Carmen, we're still trying to be faithful to each other," recited Lulu, careful to get the wording the same. George just kept his head down, said nothing, but his eyes came back up indicating assent.

The nights were dizzy with the action. A job was just a job, after all. The customers were just experiments who wanted a different kind of service. They, the hos, were the ones who had the control of the situation. There was no way to get it on with a customer until they got them to relax. There was a good security service watching and waiting to explode into the room at all times. Deadbeats or false identity cases were known to be disposed of in the liquid sewage system.

Come on. Get it on. Be cool. Purple margarita season. Do it for yourself. Do it for your friends. Fire up the

party. Take out the purple toy.

Being a dyke ho was not glamorous, Lulu soon found out. The kind of gringo girls who patronized Colfax notell motels were old, fat, or something otherwise wrong with them, and all the female cops had to be done for free, as did the male. Still, any woman, even at their worst, was a damn sight smoother skinned and more eatable than any man. She even learned to like chunky love, gobbling pussy buried between huge fat soft legs and belly. The management regularly aired the performances for money, and without her knowledge or consent, but she figured it out for herself eventually. She even agreed to a staged shower and hot tub sequence, a sauna sequence, and even went out to a cold horse ranch somewhere way south and did it outdoors, pretending it wasn't so cold. That was acting they told her. Pretend takes the place of real. Welcome to paradise.

George became a wild Indian, blowing gringo men and letting them blow him. He did the butt thing too, always greasing up first, and requiring them to use latex. He too had some mighty hideous old gringos with red worn-out penises to blow, but he gave them as much careful attention as he used to his gardening. No penis was really impotent now, with all the medical advances. It was when they were limp that the age showed the most. But penis enlargement was very common, as was every kind of youth treatment imaginable. So by and large it was fairly clean work, and paid very well. America was still the land of opportunity.

Between work hours Lulu and George didn't talk to each other so much anymore, didn't spend all their time drinking beer and cracking jokes and light conversation about relatives. Nor did they eat a lot. They liked to keep their weight down for the customers. They wouldn't pay doctors for expensive treatments like they did even when they had the money. Money was still almost a sacred item to them, and they preferred hoarding to spending.

After a while, George started an affair with another gay ho, a teen lad with reddish blond hair and freckles and a cute tight butt. When Boil, as they called him, would kiss and hug George, have oral sex with him, or engage in mutual

masturbation in their motel room, she would just pretend to ignore them, or maybe sometimes come over and sit and smile and watch, perhaps playing with herself and lathering up. They basically ignored her, even when she was trying to turn them on by putting on a sex show. Instead of feeling jealous however, she felt herself wishing she could find a teen gringo girl with blond hair and freckles for herself.

Their kids took their liberation, as they called it, in stride. It was okay to come out of the closet, they said. It's PC to show your bisexuality. No big deal actually. Everybody changes. They had had too many hetero years if anything. Both of them hit on them, asking to be allowed to crash at the motel. Both were politely denied with the suggestion they get jobs.

Life settled into a languid course, as it is wont to do. The GEMMS experience had completely changed their lives, but their life was worth something more, far more somehow now. If only their amnesia could be cured. It was like a part of her mind had been cryofrozen, put in suspended animation, awaiting reanimation, just like the gringo corpseys on the big green cheese.

* * *

It was winter. George loved his football, the 400-pound running backs, the 500-pound linemen. When he and Boil were watching it, drinking beer after beer, Lulu would support them like a cheerleader, celebrating when they celebrated, cursing when they cursed. Not that she understood a first down from a beejay, but even she 'got' that lingo about tight ends and wide receivers, 300-pound or otherwise.

She had taken to wearing eyeglasses again, sunglasses with rose-colored frames. It made her life more rosy, she would say. She also had her own garden, in every spare spot of dirt around the motel lot. Her favorite crop was jalapeno peppers. Every day she made her patrols to pick ripe ones and complain about thieves and vandals. Almost every beer they drank now had a pepper inserted in there by Lulu first. Many a time she spotted George and Boil having sex with peppers, the details of which are too hot to handle, she

would tell Carmen jokingly.

Carmen seduced Lulu finally, figuring out that she liked to be seduced on the first date, and figuring right.

"There's something in our manner that expresses to sympathetic people how we really feel," Carmen told her.

"You were not growing peppers for the men, you were trying to dissipate your hotness for me. And couldn't."

"I couldn't have said it better myself," Lulu cooed, making out with her nude and standing up, feeling Carmen's soft toys with expertness that she couldn't hide any more.

"You're out of uniform, solder," said George, suddenly entering. He then laughed big, approvingly.

The two began a hot love affair that knew no letup for days and weeks. On the bed, the couch, the table, the floor. Up against the wall. Indoors, outdoors. In front of customers, other pros, George and Boil. They liked people to watch.

It burned itself out from its sheer excess. Carmen broke it off suddenly, irrevocably, with finality. Lulu didn't take it well, got depressed, pouted, was looking for a change.

"I've got traitors everywhere, even in my own family," she would mutter audibly. She now took to talking to herself more and more, asking her erased self to come out.

"My God, my God, wherefore art thou, my God?" She was confusing the Bible with Shakespeare, but it was heartfelt.

She was wishing daily and nightly for a change, for a new person to come into her life, for an end to the torture of being split in two, being incomplete.

Then one night Lulu met Chief Speer Boulevard, Chickenchoker at Large.

Chapter 10.

* * *

Why do people put live cats in microwaves? Why do gringo scientists torture live animals to test gringo cosmetics? Why did they blowtorch that live pig to death? The way he just stood there, uncomprehending, loving, shivering. The gringo in the white coat calmly blowtorching him up and down, up and down.

* * *

Like any major city, Denver never went completely to sleep. The foundational main street that ran diagonally through the heart of old Denver, Speer Boulevard, followed the picturesque Cherry Creek, on which there are no cherries. At once bleak and suggestive of past years of beavers and buffalo, pioneers, unemployed miners, cowboys, Injuns, bums and low life, yet, for seventy years or so, remodeled, lined by bike and jogging paths and overlaid with viaducts for the frequent cross streets leading to the vibrant big city on the higher north side, as if attempting to cover up all manner of shit that had gone down there since the early 1900s. The coverup was only on the surface. Beneath and around every viaduct lurked all the old low life. Here was a whole fertile area for stories that Stephen King never touched.

Part of the coverup has been made into a public virtue. There is a section of Speer Boulevard that crisscrosses a set of streets named after Amerindian tribes. Acoma, Bannock, Cherokee, Delaware, Elati, Fox, Galapagos, and more. It might have been meant as a tribute at the time, but to real Amerindians it must have seemed like a loathsome tombstone on their holocaust, entire tribes wiped out in the 19th century only to leave shitty little streets named after them in a gringo town run by Irish cops and mayors who were as corrupt as hell but put on a good show for the rich tourists, as long as they left a lot of money behind. This was even before the ski industry boomed after WWII. The

Hispanics didn't even start coming to this Northeamericano Mexico City until after that, but soon settled into the south side of the creek on these very streets. At first it was just gringos and Amerindians, then the Irish, the Jews, the blacks. When the Hispanics came the others were already getting comfy, and made them feel unwanted. Not that Hispanics didn't make fairly good neighbors to gringos. They knew how to keep their heads down, be the underclass the gringos needed them to be, and make precious little waves as long as they got a place to live and enough to eat.

The Amerindian streets around here had for several decades been welfare state Hispanic squats, but gringos had eventually bought them all out and raised the rents, forcing them on to what is now Little Mexico City to the north and east. No matter how fashionable and expensive the heart of Denver became, however, the gringos could never take the bleak, desolate, almost skid row feel out of this section of Cherry Creek. It was as if the spirits of the dead tribes haunted the place, kept it half wild, half unreclaimed.

As Lulu settled back in the taxi, speeding along Speer, only a few cars passed, all controlled by robots like hers. Only the rich and the tourists travelled by private car anymore. The mass transit was ample and usually mandatory by law. But taxis, expensive as hell, got around the law. It was one A.M. Thursday morning on a frosty February in 2047. Lulu was very jazzed up, not wanting to sleep. It had been an unbelievable night.

The cut on her lip and the bruise under her eye had grown painful after losing their initial invigorating sting and subsequent numbness. She gingerly touched her wounds, feeling the strange new shape of her skin over and over, compulsively. She didn't want to get medical treatment tonight. Not tonight. She wanted to ride the devil's wind, to give one fat push on the devil's wings and topple the giant down.

She made the cab stop at an Amerindian cross street and got out, told it to go on. It pulled off smoothly and disappeared, leaving her feeling, not alone and vulnerable, but rather on the prowl and feared, like a big bull in the

old prairie wilderness. What could she encounter except a few beaver and squirrels and gophers at this time of night, when the buffalo herd was elsewhere?

Down she went into the Cherry Creek, following a footpath to the bottom, and started to walk north towards the next visible viaduct looming dark in the street lights. Denver didn't go completely to sleep, no, but down here it never rested, in the vampire type of way. There would be no cops down here. They protect and serve themselves first. It's after all only a job.

She decided to stop just shy of a dark viaduct and climb up the slope a little to a tree, where she sat down with a thud, talking to herself loudly and perhaps trying to appear to be crazy and not worth hassling. Perhaps it's normal too. A lot of people do it, especially lawyers rehearsing speeches. Everybody in the government now was making speeches.

It was over her head every day all the speeches being made. There was a turmoil in the land. The gringos held perhaps ninety percent of the wealth, but had fallen to less than half the population. Greasing palms could only go so far to prevent the inevitable, the election of Hispanic mayors, governors, legislators, Congressmen, Senators. When she saw the U.S. House of Representatives on her new implant she thought she should be seeing Argentina's or maybe Brazil's instead. But the reality was that it was basically all gringo, if you count blacks and yellows with them. She felt so depressed sometimes she thought she would burst. One Colorado U.S. House representative was Hispanic, just one. There had once been an Amerindian U.S. Senator from her state too, before her time.

"How come we Hispanics are the majority yet are such an underclass?" she was saying to herself. "What happened to the rule of the majority? The damn gringos push us around like dirt."

A smell of old tobacco and an unwashed body suddenly met her nose, even before she heard the tiptoeing sound. He was so tall her radar could sense him even without the use of eyes.

A body feel. A fight or flight feel. She chose neither.

"You, maam, are no underclass," came a deep, flat, almost stereotypical Amerindian Big Chief voice, directly at her. Startled, but not that much, she glanced up from the grass to see him. She could call the police anytime on her implant, so she felt safe even at this hour. That wasn't it though. She felt like the Amerindians must have felt when Jesus Christ visited them once, according to the Mormons who used to knock on her apartment door and try to convert her and George for years. A coming.

"Yah we are," she responded, making conversation deliberately, invitingly, with no fear or shyness, rather the opposite, a hope, a need even. She would set the formal but respectful tone and keep it on that level come what may, she decided immediately. And she wanted to take that chance, to step over the bridge that separates strangers.

"Come here," Lulu said, quite normally, looking directly at him, smiling and winking. "I don't believe we've been properly introduced."

The tall old man came to her, stood towering over her. She tried not to hold her breath, but rather to breathe of his aroma deep, get into his personal space, look quite pleased with it, show him.

"I'm Mrs. Lulu Trancia. Pleased to make your acquaintance. And your name is?"

"Chief Chickenchoker."

"Pardon?" She really didn't hear it well. It was all garbled up, too fast. He had raised his voice to a falsetto and sounded like a turkey.

"Chief Chickenchoker." His voice slid back down to its deep flat paced pipes.

"Chickenchoker?" Giggles. "As in beating your meat?" She made the thing with her hand, couldn't help drifting her eyes down to his crotch area. It was wrapped in an Amerindian style

blanket, his hands hidden under it. She half expected an erect penis and a jiggling wrist.

His next words were smooth, friendly, and totally not inappropriate. It was if he was reading her mind.

"Rape me. Rape me, my friend. Rape me again and regain my respect."

He paused, then pulled the blanket aside, revealing an erect penis in hand. He had nothing to hide now. All the small things that keep people apart vanished.

She looked at him with new eyes, straight and staring, unblinking. At first she said nothing, not from shyness, outrage, or any attempt to hurt, but because she knew it felt better for him. Then she assumed a face of joy and ran her hand over herself, down to her crotch, and rubbed it enticingly.

"Rape me. Rape me. Rape me, my friend," she answered.

"No, rape me. Rape me, maam. Life sucks. I know what's on the dark side of the moon."

Violins played somewhere. Make that rock guitars. Heavy metal ones. The angels were singing. A religious moment. She found, if not God, at least his son.

His tobacco smell was mixed with a virile old saddle soap. She smelled the heady smell of bull sperm mixed with old deer leather. Her hand grabbed him behind one calf, tried to pull him closer. He kind of hopped at the invite, like a man long denied what he needed and now knowing he could have as much as he wanted, if he could get in position. Now his robe parted further to reveal a long erect penis and big ball sack looped in a pair of twisted mauve panties, the bare legs dressed in garter belt and hose. Smelling strong, of urine, whiskey and bull sperm. It turned her on, fired up her party. Put down that spear, purple margarita season is here.

She was soon blowing him, his balls swinging under her chin,

as he fed her his peace pipe in joy and wisdom. She began rubbing his nut sack, massaging it, causing him to reflexively moan and put a hand out on top of her head, hanging on and swaying his hips in a circular fucking motion. He was soon bucking like a goat, fucking her face.

He came gobs of corn juice, and she unabashedly drank it down, greedily, hungrily, with relish, with the juicy slurping noises. She kept drinking his penis and massaging his nut sack until it quit giving the corn juice, was spent, grew soft in her mouth, soft and sticky. His penis and balls were dirty, filthy even, but she loved it, held back a desire to just eat them like oysters, use teeth on them, swallow them. She searched for the right words.

"My pussy is hot," she gasped, spreading her legs and rubbing herself. "Fuck me."

"I can't, maam. I'm spent. I'm an old Injun. Thanks for giving an old Injun some warmth on a cold night." He chuckled. "Now is there anything I can do for you, maam?" He grabbed his spent penis and shook it before putting it back in his old native-style loincloth and closing his robe. She realized he was almost naked under there. He must have been tough to stand the cold.

She laughed like George now. "Anything you can do for me? Well, Chief Chickenchoker sir." She said the words very politely, even regally. "There just so happens that there is. Are you by any chance a magic man? A medicine man?"

"Yes. I have the medicine. I am a medicine man. Go on." He was rubbing his penis now absent-mindedly. She thought that proved he was very lonely and had to masturbate a lot, but she said nothing to give it away. She would make him happy now. If only he would give her what she wanted, she would give him what he wanted. No. Needed.

"Do you know about amnesia? About somebody erasing your memory? I need my memory back. I can't stand being incomplete."

He squatted down Indian style in front of her, his face up

close revealing a hideous but at the same time fetching mass of leathery wrinkles. His breath was not what she expected, not rancid or like that of a goat, but had a pleasing sweet mint aroma. No, not mint. Marijuana and an alcohol vapor about it. Almost like a rich gringo. A thought flashed over her that this was a gringo in a getup. No, that was not true. She had sucked genuine Amerindian penis, knew the Indian smell from her dear George, who had quite a bit of that blood in him. Gringos stunk worse in comparison, more like pure shit. The shit smell even came out in their sweat. In the natural state they were the stinkingest kind of race. Her race, and the chief's, they were the ones who didn't need gringo perfumes and shit.

"There's no such thing as an erased memory, Mrs. Lulu Trancia maam. Only one that has had its home village moved. To another reservation." He was trying for a joke. His smile elicited one from her. A forlorn look suddenly took him over, and she was quick to understand.

"Are you homeless?" she asked.

"I have no home."

"Come with me then, kind sir, kind Indian prince, or should I say chief? Come with me to my humble abode. I have money and I will give you a home. I have sucked your peace pipe and found it good. Now don't say no and break our peace treaty."

She was using her best sexy cutesy voice now, a devil inside her telling her what to say, telling her this was her destiny looking her in the face. Suddenly remembering her facial cuts, she looked self-conscious, drew attention.

"Have you been beaten, maam?"

"No, nothing like that, sir. Nothing like that. I was just at a wild party. I'm a dyke hooker and my date got wild, bit me and slapped me, that's all. Do you like to watch two women get it on together, chief?"

"I love the sexual spirit in all its meadows and fields. I

love the corn stalk and I love the corn silk. I love the corn cob. I believe I am your spirit guide. Show me my new home, maam."

Getting up, she grabbed his hand and beckoned him up also. Then she did like she had done with George, putting her arms around him and standing on her tiptoes to reach his face, and french kissing it. She tried to visualize how far the federal courthouse was from this place. It couldn't have been more than a couple of miles, a single mile and a hop. Old Denver was the size of a postage stamp, a horse town, originally built for the speed of the four-footed kind of underclass.

She felt suddenly high. Like she was on grass.

"Feel my pussy, baby," she beckoned, reaching for his hand. When she said pussy, it had a snakelike hiss to it that a man hopes to hear from a stranger in the night maybe once or twice in a lifetime. Correction, that a lady only allows one, maybe two gentlemen in a lifetime to hear. Pardon me while I burst into flames. The sound that makes the world go round, that rules the nighttime streets. The hope that springs eternal in the human breast. The pardon me about people's mindless games not. A big fat black double-headed dildo. That was recreational equipment for her mom, for all women too old or fucked up to thrill a man with that primordial hissing sound. No, she was not too old yet. The flower was at the peak of maturity and ripeness. The peak. Here is the composition Just a Gigolo.

"Pussy. Pussy." He licked his lips, lost in a kind of waking trance, his eyes darting to left and right. She was thrilled her pussy word had had its intended magic effect. Now she was boss.

She caught his hand. He was stubborn, but she guided it to her crotch, helped him get a feel of her wetness. She suddenly orgasmed and squirted female juice all over his old dry hand. She didn't say a word but her pussy couldn't say no.

A taxi came when she called, and together they rode the

streets of Denver, cuddled up like young lovers, the moon shining magically into their faces, a quarter million miles away.

Chapter 11.

* * *

I felt like a hideous piano wire drawn out to its limit of tension, ready to snap at the slightest increase. Ready to slice living bodies like liver.

* * *

It was May and spring was in full bloom, summer just around the corner. Lulu and George were now living in southern Wyoming, on Chief Chickenchoker's reservation. George at first didn't want to go, didn't want to leave Boil's behind. That was a joke that Lulu told. George left his lover's body lying somewhere in the sands of time, but there was nothing he could do outside of the dark side of the moon, as the current saying went.

Most nights there were big nude Indian wrestling matches, which George participated in with success. He was quick and good at reversing holds. Lulu was taken in by the women, who gave her kitchen and serving work, no robots allowed. All the food was prepared in the old way, like Julia Childs or Martha Stewart did. Not exactly PC for this gringo age, but Indians were exempt from gringo PC laws, like Congressmen and the Catholic clergy.

She was surprised at the rampant lesbianism going on in the kitchen, pleasantly so. They certainly liked hot chilis, as one woman told her, admiring her breasts, her mouth watering openly. She finally let them do what they wanted, after they had showed their respect long enough.

"Wet your appetite. Here's your favorite brand of electric

pickle!" she cried, high on cactus juice, which they had ample supplies of.

"Do the clam digger!" she laughed, as they got her spread monochromatically on the Thanksgiving preparation table.

The men couldn't hear, didn't care about women's business. She loved the Indian qualities of character that they bring into any role they play, just like children.

They were a closely knit family, these Indians. Here in the hinterlands of their rez they lived the natural life, as they called it. This rez was off limits to gringos and Hispanics, except when visiting their gambling casino on the border, but George and Lulu were given special exemptions by the Chief, who really was a chief it turned out.

"I'm big here on my own land, but when I go into gringo land I'm nothing but their ass wipe," he told them. Indian women would serve him hand and foot as he sat on a buffalo robe naked, often being treated with a hand-cranked vaccum pump to enlarge his already huge penis. Nudism was the norm here. Makeup was worn to make them resemble animals with magical powers, not for cosmetic attraction like clothed people needed to do.

Almost every night, when the weather was good, there was an animalistic dance in front of a campfire. The men would dance the circle with their big dicks hanging down, cahones and all. The women would stand on the sidelines with their tits hanging out and their pussies bringing up the rear, cheering them on. They didn't feel there was nothing they could do, like gringo women cheerleaders at gringo ball games. Clam diving was okay as long as it was shielded from the men in a kind of second cheerleader line.

The free life here made Lulu flashback to a neighborhood that she and George lived in once, where a beautiful young woman lived with an older, not-so-beautiful woman, whom they all took for her mother. As time went on and the young woman was never seen with men, or anybody except her mother, and the mother turned out to not be so old, they gradually realized they were carpet eaters, lesbians, and that this

young woman with a perfect ass and that honeybee curve look and perfectly pretty face was giving every ounce of meat she had to her "mother" every night, as if it was as normal as being a Clooney or a Fonda. This was around the year 2020, when her own marriage was just getting going, and she didn't 'get' dykes. Now that she did, she wished those dykes weren't so shy, that they would have introduced her to the delights of carpet diving. Here she had her second youth.

Indian music was now very electronic, very rock, very amplified, filled with virtual 3-d and all the gimmicks. It was a savage shameless orgy. And it was a big finger flip to the whole gringo race, their stinking moral codes, their sex guilt, their religions, especially Catholicism, which had been systematically making a comeback and pushing its views on the media and the laws.

Yes, the mass of non-Hispanic gringos had jumped from orthodoxy like Mexican jumping beans, but that had been only in the past hundred years or so mainly. As late as the 1950s they still didn't have the birth control pill, and women still weren't into pre-marital sex, still remaining chaste and celibate until they hooked a man such as Rock Hudson. It was the last year of the baby boom, 1964, that the pill went boom, ending the boom, just as the boomers were starting to reach the big one-eight and get legally free from their parents and priests. Nice shot, somebody. But that was the gringo world. Her own parents were from retro world of Mexico, and bred in the rabbit tradition to give the world more devout Catholics.

So the gringos were freer. Big dead. They also doomed themselves to extinction, if the cryo deal didn't come along just in time. No sooner had the gringos extricated themselves from centuries of moral straightjackets than new tidal waves of retro, superstitious, orthodox citizens came in and set up shop, making the gringos kind of like the new Indians, since they didn't even speak the same language. Real Indians had always been free, when the gringos didn't force straightjackets on them. Lulu felt more like one of them now than either a Hispanic or a gringo.

The chief soon introduced them to his "handy-dandy medicine

man", assuring them he would "get their memories back even if he had to fuck them up the ass with a horny rattler to get the job done."

"Not really," he laughed. "His methods are very gentle, relaxing, better than anything you've ever experienced before. Trust me." The medicine man didn't talk, appearing to be in a deep trance.

Indians engaged in spiritism, using psychedelic drugs to elicit spiritual experiences, the chief explained to them, handing them big Indian pipes filled with tobacco and other substances, bidding them to smoke, inhale deeply, hold it as long as possible. Gringos didn't 'get' that tobacco was spiritual dynamite, too dangerous for them, he said.

"The only people I ever heard call the use of tobacco spiritism were the Jehovah's Witnesses who kept pestering us until we finally flipped them off," he added. "They think the Catholic Church is run by Satan, and tried to get people to defect, going door to door and standing in public handing out their dangerous literature. And then when printing got outlawed filling half the Net with their incessant propagandizing and organizing shit." When they assured him they flipped the JWs off too, he dropped that line with the final insult, "They are living walking in suspended animation."

The damn gringo government, he went on to expound, outlawed all manner of Indian spiritual substances for decades before finally heeding gringo political celebrity William F. Buttley Jr.'s advice and decriminalizing all drugs.

"William F. who?" asked George. He looked over at Lulu, who shrugged.

"Buttley. A gringo deep thinker who fought the hippie liberals and steered the country to the Catholic right for decades before he died," said the chief. "He was supposed to be of English extraction from New Hampshire or somewhere, a seagoing type of Yankee with a problem about accepting the Anglican Church, but he had a lot of relatives from Texas and the South somehow. Everything he stood for was crap,

except one. On the one issue of decriminalizing drugs he surprised his enemies by agreeing with them, but not because he used or advocated drugs. No, from political principles. He thought prohibition of drugs was disastrous for the country, just like alcohol prohibition earlier. Cost the country more than leaving people to decide for themselves. After his death, and a disastrous American attempt to use the military to fight the drug war, only to result in the drug lords buying off half the military and staging the first military coup attempt in U.S. history, his followers counted on the then-powerful former hippies, now middle aged and beyond, to carry through the legislation. They disagreed on everything else, however."

He suddenly broke into a war whoop. "Hoo hoo hoo hoo hoo hoo hoo hoo!" Stopping suddenly, he asked, "Anyone read Buttley's fiction?"

They weren't interested. He dropped the subject, getting back on track on the spiritism subject.

Ironically, the government succeeded in criminalizing tobacco just before all that, he added, probably talking to himself, but hoping not.

"That was the straw that broke the camel's back, that made their landscape a never-ending calamity, that gave them focus days, that crunched their grahams" the medicine man interjected, surprising the Trancias by breaking his silence. They thought he had been in a deep trance, duh.

To them tobacco was a sacrament. They learned to truly smoke for the first time there on the Rez. Feel the snake bite enter their veins. Not remember why they came. If this was the life the gringos had tried to destroy when they invaded, they agreed the gringos were nuts, hypocrities, 3-d rejects stuck in Flatland.

For two weeks the Trancias lived in a high cave under a ledge, getting high, chanting, dancing, having spiritual experiences, trances. Little by little their erased memories returned. The jobs they had at the company. The training. The corpseys. The accident. The diced up

corpseys. The white hall. Even a little bit of what went on after the white hall. The white tables. That hideous gringo worker with his pound of flesh.

Sitting Indian style in front of a campfire on top of the ledge, overlooking the prairie, the moon loomed over them as they filled the air with retro uh-oh rock music, strong on that song called Kryptonite by Three Doors Down. They had gotten their minds back. They were pronounced cured.

It was here that the big war against the company found its army, Lulu reflected pensively. When she returned to walk the dark side of the moon one day, there would be nothing they couldn't do. The corpseys would be her friends at the end. Her superhuman might would be like kryptonite. She had tears for her diced up corpseys sometimes, wished they hadn't been diced up, wished they could come back to life, that time could go backwards, everything be made right. But she didn't talk about it. If people thought she were crazy she couldn't any longer be superman.

"Let's talk turkey now, skintimate peaches, raspberry rain, cumon, let's get skintimate with our turkey legs" said the medicine man, Laughing Humpback, Leader of Men, as he said once. They took that as his name. Other times they had heard him referred to as Ned.

"I used to do my taxes online, but couldn't find my god damn W-2 forms anywhere," the medicine man laughed. The Trancias didn't get the joke.

"I gotta take it on the other side," he sung. Blank stares.

"Your name Trancia, you think it means you are destined to go into trances, right?" They looked at each and smiled, seemed to get the joke, broke out laughing.

"In Italian, a graffi da trancia finissimi is a light scratch," continued the medicine man, the words seeming impossible to be coming from a hideous old Indian man in fierce animalistic tribal makeup, his old balls hanging down almost to the ground as he squatted. They had all been naked since day one, but there had been no sexual activity.

"In German they call it ein grat, in Spanish una raya fina de maquina, in French une breche leger. And do you know what the Italians mean by affilare il cotelli di trancia? To grind the knife, that's right, to sharpen the knife. Afilar la cuchilla in Spanish. Enlever le fil de la lame in French. Messer abziehen in Deutsch."

"Dutch?" asked Lulu.

"Deutsch. That's German for German. The Dutch are really low land Germans, like John Deutschendorf, whom you might know as John Denver." His eyes flared with pride and delight. Remembering something, he added, "And afilar, the Spanish word, meaning to grind or sharpen. You know what it also means? To make love to, to woo."

"What does trancia mean in Spanish?" asked Lulu, her usual sweet voice and mixed Hispanic-Japanese looks blossoming in the absence of female competition.

"Nothing. But trance means a dangerous situation or a critical moment. Trance el ultimo means the last moment of life. Trance a todo means at any cost, come what may. Que pasa, besame!" He looked at Lulu just as straight as a judge when he said that, his voice escalating to the range of a Mariachi singer with a stiffy.

"How do you know all this?" asked George, game.

"I graduated from the Amerindian World University on the Net, all without leaving this ledge," he replied proudly. "Majored in Romance languages and linguistics while choking my chicken. Minored in serious drama and pornography."

They were duly impressed, the shits hissing universal from the dentures of the humbled audience.

"There's a friend. My real name is Ricardo. I no speekee Engleesh. Anyone have a tambourine or a tangerine?"

Silence, puzzled looks, then light scattered laughs, which he seemed to approve of.

"What does that mean to you? Or do you just think it's something I do?"

"Play the tambourine?" asked Lulu.

"No, Jungian psychology. Freudian too, when I run out of monkey to spank. Being a medicine man means never having to grow your own corn."

More puzzled looks.

"The id. The ego. The superego. Dream states. Oedipus complexes. Mother and father hating. Anal retention. Birth trauma. Dianetics. John Travolta. Terl. Pee-wee's Playhouse. You sleep late, you lose. REI understands? You grab any excuse you can to get outdoors? You kinda noticed I was sitting behind you in the theater?"

They were now shaking their heads back and forth, stunned, speechless, glancing at each other and making big eyes.

"No, there's nothing wrong with me. It might kinda hurt at first, but it helps to know the truth. You're both smart, talented, beautiful. You'll do some special things in your life."

He watched them now very closely.

"Thank you. I now understand your deepest secrets." He started chuckling, then laughing, then slapping his knee and guffawing, finally rolling around on the ground about to split his sides. His worn-out genitals were a visual shield against looking at him too much or too close.

His laughing spree at an end, he sat back up bow-legged, becoming serious again. Everyone felt like they had been married to him for decades.

"It's just one of those phases. Nobody wants to wake up. It's just one of those days."

"What about us?" interjected Lulu.

"Yes, let's get serious. My suggestion is to keep your distance. Right now I'm dangerous. But since you asked, you tell me," said the medicine man, suddenly spring towards her, grabbing her, hugging her, and kissing her full on the lips, feeling her up at the same time, dipping rough dirty bony tobacchoy fingers into her pussy.

"Walk soft, play loud. That's my motto," he explained, returning to his sitting position, bringing his stinky trophy fingers to his nose to smell her pussy after the dip. He seemed to be going into another trance.

"Smell good, Ned?" asked George, in a neighborly way.

"Mmmm! Si!" The medicine man then cried like a coyote, looking up at the sky, like in an old Warner Brothers cartoon.

He got serious again, looking at them with probing eyes.

"What do you intend to do about this gringo company that has killed the people in its care and tried to cover it up to their loved ones in order to avoid lawsuits, money settlements, and even to bilk them of more money for more care for these dead ones that can never know the delightful smell of women again?" He glanced at her frankly amorously now, and she realized her clitty was poking out of the hair, because she too was aroused by something, perhaps him. The thought of his maturity and experience crossed her mind. I have a dirty mind she thought to herself, humphing introspectively.

"Do about the company? Why, blow the whistle on the bastards," she cried. "Get them in trouble. They fucked with the wrong insects this time. Right, George?"

George laughed. But he didn't exactly say yes or no.

"Maybe you should leave matters as they are, uncomphghres," the medicine man said solemnly, looking at them sagely.

"The gringos deserve what they got. Why should you care if gringos die? It's the ones that can still be reanimated we

should worry about, neh?"

George grunted approvingly, admiringly. Lulu slapped him on the shoulder lightly. Shouldn't break ranks like that, she was thinking.

"Maybe the gringos should never have been born. Maybe they shouldn't try to live forever. But I saw what I saw, and I've got morals, a conscience. And look at what they did to us. I have a lust for revenge. Right, Georgie?" She elbowed him.

"Right." His heart wasn't in it but he said it.

"Well, if that's your final answer, we'll help you. We have adopted you into our tribe now. Just join in our usual sex orgies and your wills and ours will be one."

"Orgies?" asked George. Lulu's eyes went big and hollow, like the moon.

"Our tribe lives in a free love, like the hippie gringos used to do. They copied that from us, you see," he winked, looking at Lulu's exposed cunt. Her clit withdrew back into the muff like a scared pet turtle and she looked a little alarmed, but tried not to show it. He was family.

"I'll give you a free body piercing, whatever you want, just so you get it on with me real soon, baby," said the medicine man to Lulu. "And contrary to what you've heard, all of us Indians are bisexual, George, and you gotta let me blow you like a tobacco pipe soon, okay pal?" He winked.

The couple reflexively hugged, then searched each other's eyes. After a few whispers, a kiss, another hug, they both looked at him, smiling merrily.

"Okay!"

The courtship with the newbies over, the whole tribe now got naked and enjoyed a drunken, drugged, omnisexual orgy that never stopped until the last person fell into a stupor. Lulu realized that a lot of these Indians weren't as dark

and angular as Indians she had seen before, had too big of a brain case in comparison to the face, but they weren't gringos either, more a cross. Not that she was racist or un-PC, but Indian beauty wasn't her cup of tea. She preferred Hispanic beauty. Be that as it may, these babies appeared to be the last descendants of the short-lived hippie free love movement on American soil, even if they had to live in an Indian rez to get away with it. "Like a man who bought a raccoon coat second-handed and still wore it around, but only on the Lawrence Welk show," seconded the medicine man, reading her lips.

Never mind, she concluded. If she understood anything about this kooky world, she'd kill herself. Uno dos tres, cuatro cinco cinco seis.

Meanwhile, this indeed was a kooky world where every square inch of the earth's surface was surveilled constantly by super high resolution satellites that the powerful could tap into, getting around laws. The high ups in the company were being given surveillance reports on their every move, their every word. At least they couldn't read their minds quite yet. Give them another fifty.

Chapter 12.

Safe on the rez in Wyoming, she immediately threw herself into preparing an expose of the company, which the tribe put up on the Net. She put in it how the company destroyed the viability of a hundred thousand experiments and then covered it up, and her part in the gruesome masquerade. How they had wiped her memory clean then summarily kicked her out the door. How she suspected they had engineered her bust on drug charges in order to get her out of the way and make her into a convicted felon with no credibility just in case. How she had glimpsed God through native American religion and got her memory back. How she was taking a big risk with going public, but her conscience wouldn't permit her to let the victims' families be swindled and taken advantage of,

given false hopes of future reanimation.

As to which specific experiments in Moonstock were affected, she admitted she didn't know, but demanded a government investigation and on-site inspection. She combined her political essay with free dyke, straight and gay porno action of herself, George, the chief, and others.

After getting a million visitors a day for a three weeks straight, she was not surprised to be given invites by the mainline media.

"Mrs. Lulu Trancia, welcome to Meet the Press. You've caused quite a storm here at Capitol Hill with your allegations. Your reaction?"

"Mrs. Lulu Trancia, ladies and gentlemen. The whistleblower from Colorado, or is that Wyoming? You have the mighty GEMMS corporation spitting cotton, do you know that?"

"Greetings and welcome to Firing Line Virtual Universe 3-D. This evening's guest is one Lulu Trancia, who has gained a lot of publicity recently with her allegations against the General Earth-Moon Management Services Corporation, accusing it of all manner of wickedness and underhandness, and a coverup too, right? Just what connections do you have, Mrs. Trancia, to the Communist Party of America?"

One day, at the Wyoming International Raceway, she was at the gate putting in her bets, when she realized the crowd around her was mainly reporters sporting tiny cameras in inconspicuous places. One came up to her and started questioning her.

"Have you ever had sex with animals?" he asked.

Before she could answer, another shouted her question.

"Have you ever been to Disney World?"

"No!"

This triggered an avalanche of questions, bombarding her like

a mob shouting down Frankenstein.

"Tell us about your criminal record."

"Why does your family never attend Mass?"

"Just because you see something on a monitor does that make it real?"

"What do you know about your past psychological problems on file with the NMHA?"

"Are you a former prostitute?"

"Where'd you lose your virginity?"

"Are you a real femme or have you had a sex change?"

"Are you ageist? Do you think you'll be young forever?"

"Take off your clothes and show us your chichis and chacha."

"Whose payroll are you on?"

"Why are the FBI, the DEA and the INS investigating you?"

"Was your father a member of the Mexican mafia?"

"How much did your mother scam out of the people of Denver?"

"Where'd you get the money to bet at the track?"

She smelled fear and fled, driving her mushie into a flashbulb silver future, a little like Baby Jane Hudson at the end of that hideous black and white movie.

Blanche! What had she done to Blanche? What had Blanche done to her? And what connection does this have with Rock Hudson anyway?

Rock Hudson. There was a major tookie bandit. Like JFK Jr. Except he liked to snack on cock when he wasn't putting on his act with Doris Day the dyke. Doris and Rock, America's

number one romantic couple. Bette Davis' Baby Jane Hudson days. That was back in the days of convection ovens. Baked parrot. Big private cars. Black maids. Charlton Heston playing a Hispanic and an Indian. Orson Welles. Broderick Crawford. Hispanics picking lettuce and fruit and returning to Mexico without police escort. Camelot with its brains on top as the princess crawls. Cesar Chavez. Joan Baez. Jose Feliciano. Erik Estrada. George Olmos something. Fantasy Island and its suicidal dwarf. The Mod Squad. Menudo. Cheech and Chong. Gloria Estefan and the Miami Sound Machine. Jennifer Beals and Flashdance. Salsa. 1980s Denver Mayor Federico Pena and his blonde white dyke marathon runner trophy wife. Ran her pussy white. No more periods. Selena. Killed by her dyke manager lover. Ricky Martin. Castro. Elian Gonzales. Janet Reno the hideous gringo dyke from Miami who never had any children. America as the land of refuge. Parachutes. Pair a socks. Big pile of ashes. Spontaneous human combustion. An archangel appearing and whispering in her ear.

Too hideous! Pardon me while I burn.

* * *

Back in the safety of the rez, she got in the sack with Ned, the medicine man, the reformed Nazi skinhead, demented acquitted priest murderer, founder of Fight Club, the bitter herb in the Passover seder, a cry for help to single women in Silicon Valley, a former waiter at a dating club called Table for Sex, former travel consultant for Sri Lanka a.k.a. Ceylon, former geek striving for his first million dollars on paper, former sexy lingerie store owner, and that's just a few days' worth of his horseshit. That's why everyone should wear sunglasses, prescription or otherwise, he would often tell her.

"Just what do the gringos get out of freezing themselves anyway?" she ventured to ask him, the all-around man of sage Indian wisdom, on a sudden urge.

"What's the alternative? Cremation? Up in smoke? Burial? A makeup job, pickling juices, and interment in the dirt? A mauseoleum? A hundred thousand bucks to a funeral ripoff

service for a headstone and cheap casket that breaks and spills the half-decomposed corpse out in front of the bereaved suckers with the depleted bank accounts? All of them funeral services are a giant ripoff, after all. They give you nothing, take everything. The corpse will decompose whether they take your money or not. What they give you is a show to blow your nose at. The American way of death they call it. Funerals are for the living, not the dead. And how stupid can you get? The people at every funeral will all eventually get their own, like a sadistic game of musical chairs. Everybody gets short-chaired eventually. It's death alone that wins. Cryonics, on the other hand, is for the living to prevent them from becoming dead. And it even gives hope for the dead, since death is a relative not an absolute. Far better to preserve the whole body, brain, memory and all, than just a bit of DNA to make clones with. And yes, it's expensive to transport stuff off the earth, but given humanity's track record of wars and senseless destruction, it's a bargain if you're wanting to store yourself safely for hundreds of years. At the turn of the century it cost about ten thousand dollars a pound to boost loads into orbit, but with big business entering the field and optimizing the factors involved they have dropped that figure by, who knows, an order of magnitude. The actual figures are top secret. Even a million bucks for a hundred pound body isn't bad when all is considered. And it helps when your insurance covers it."

He waited for her to appreciate his wisdom, say something such as wow or cool. She grunted. Good enough. He began to sing, play air guitar.

"Now make someone happy, make someone smile, let's all work together and cheat death a long while. Let's work together, come on come on, let's work together."

She laughed on cue. Good enough again.

"I myself am planning on cryofreezing and in fact our whole tribe is paid-up in advance on the group plan."

"With GEMMS?"

"What else is there? They have the market cornered, a virtual monopoly."

"True."

She was busy giving him a hand job all this time, wishing he wouldn't stop until she had finished choking his prairie chicken, which she had greased with petroleum jelly. He hadn't. She pulled out a wet sponge and caught the sickly thin stream of puke neatly, cleaning up the miniscule amount of spill fastidiously. His chicken was very very old, but still a chicken, and it does what chicken do until it can't do it anymore. An older and-or uglier woman probably couldn't have got a drop out of him, and thus she was pleased. And never would she deflate his ego by mentioning all the more virile chickens she had had. Instead she'd tell him how a cigar gets mellower with age and other such horseshit. Her flower got mellower, true. A man's chicken peaks at sixteen and goes downhill forever. Boy did she know.

He raised his arms behind his head and lounged contentedly. Every owner of a prairie chicken wants a woman who squats to pee to enjoy the feeling of choking it, he was thinking. Why did he call it prairie chicken? It would be more accurate to say featherless chicken, supermarket chicken, rubber chicken, nude chicken. Nude chicken. Brilliant.

She was thinking of sopranos, how those little nuts could control the pitch of a man's voice so dramatically. The chief had a very low voice, so his nuts must have been very big. Ned's voice was fairly high, but no higher than a lot of men. Maybe than most. Once in awhile he could go into a boylike voice, like Pee-wee Herman, but this was only an act, not his usual pitch. She was thinking of feeling his nuts carefully with the thumb and index finger and recording the finger gap, then comparing with the chiefy's, scientifically.

"It's a matter of balance, the hobbies you're interested in, such as yours of choking my nude crotch chicken, but I don't think a grave is a good place to meet the opposite sex, do you? In the future, when we are reanimated, we will be

given the fountain of youth by advanced science unimaginable today, and be back on the make at the nearest hen house the same day."

"You never know unless you ask," she said. His mention of the word science made her decide not to do the measurement for fear of starting an argument.

Then, after a little thought, she had to ask.

"But what about dying so you can go to heaven?"

"Heaven'll wait, baby. Drink less, pee less. Now sit on my face and do that squeeze thing."

Corn nuts. She was thinking of corn nuts, those little snacks. She and George both had a thing for them, as they did for cooked-to-death, as they called it, corn kernels cooked for two or four or even six hours at the lowest of low temperatures until they got brown and chewy and nutty. They all turned to corn nuts in the bag.

As she was riding oldface she just had to interrupt her moaning and ask another question.

"Why do they call the chief chicken choker instead of you?"

"We're all chicken chokers, baby. Shut up and bush my mouth."

He and the chief were, after all, yet more baby boomers themselves, she didn't say. Even the damn Indians helped the American government fight WWII, and went into the baby-making business when it ended. Yes, she would shut up and bush his wise old mouth before he gave her a fat lip. They weren't the enemy. GEMMS was.

* * *

A while later it was the medicine man who spoke.

"Piss in my mouth, baby."

"Say again?"

"Piss. In my mouth. I want a deep drink from your spring, little goddess."

She laughed unbelievably.

"Why would you want to drink my piss? Who ever heard of that?"

She looked down at his hideous old face, flushed with blood and coated with her juice, looking back up at her intently.

"Didn't I ever tell you that urine is the secret of long life and health? I'm not a medicine man for nothing. Trust me, weshachu. Piss into my mouth and do an old man a kindness."

"But it's nothing but waste water."

"Not so. That is a myth. The truth about urine is that it is an overflow of vital substances your kidneys extract and reinject into your bloodstream. If you eat or drink too much of a good thing, the kidneys give your blood all you can use, and let the rest go. None of it is bad. It's all good, sterile, sweet. A young maiden like you has an excess of what an old man like me needs most. I bet you didn't know that amniotic fluid, which every unborn papechu breathes, is mainly urine. Or that urine contains the best known skin moisturizer, diuretic, cancer-fighting chemicals. It is the fluid of life, not waste water. Real waste goes into the shit."

She had no answer to this unexpected scientific reference, so she just looked at his face like a picture, smiling, feeling a little naughty.

"Trust me. I have a Ph.d in Chemistry. I know the difference between urine, uric acid, urea, and carbamide, the latter being long sold by gringos under the brand name of Murine. I have drunk the sweet streams of more Indian maidens than you can shake a tit at for more years than you've been alive. If it weren't good I wouldn't be here

now. Just let it loose slowly, not too fast. I don't want to waste it."

She did as she was told, trying to hold back so it wouldn't overflow his drinking capacity. When she was done, he smacked his lips loudly and howled like a wolf.

"It's all right. That was damn good moonshine, baby sweet cheeks. I should start calling you River Phoenix."

"And I should start calling you human toilet," she didn't say. She would ask the chief about urine drinking later and hold her opinions open for now.

"I bet you don't know that the secret to the cryo process is urine," he added.

"No. You mean the company's?"

"That's right. They found that urine is the ideal fluid for encasing a frozen human in, the perfect fluid for eternal life. In the early years they used shit like glycerine. Funny, huh?"

She didn't say anything.

"They probably gave you some mumbo-jumbo about superconductivity or something to throw you off the trail. No, the real secret is urine. Man is born in urine and forever seeks to return to it. Urine is the secret to eternal life. There's never enough urine to go around. The secret of why people love to eat pussy, to get back in the womb and that amniotic fluid. Urine is precious. Urine is god. Urine..."

"Do you want me to drink yours?"

"Heck no, baby. My stuff is too old for you. It's young piss that's what we all want. Crystal lite. The younger the better."

"Baby piss?"

"Now that you mention it. But yours was just fine, and I thank you very much."

"Would you drink a man's piss?"

He spit. "Not on your life. A young boy's maybe."

She suddenly got very sleepy, her eyes closing.

"Tambourine. Remember when I asked about tambourine? That's tambo plus urine. A melody and an elixir of life in one."

She was already sleep, dreaming of tilting at windmills. As the sleep got deeper she remembered the name Murine, the eye drops. People put piss in their eyes when they're red?

"Melody and elixir of life," he ran on, talking to himself. "At least when I was young they had melodies, culture, looked to the future, to a better society. Now there is no living culture. Just a frozen dead one."

Chapter 13.

* * *

I arrived late that morning and was furious that Jerry had waited for me to scrub before beginning to open the patient's chest. Even though Jerry completed the procedure with record speed, my foul mood didn't change. Slitting a throat was all he ever did.

* * *

Washington did have cherry trees, she knew from all the publicity, but she didn't see any.

Lulu entered the government office with some trepidation, but Congressman Romero Eldorado de Guatemala en Guatepeor's demeanor quickly put her at ease. He was not angry and

curt, as Lulu anticipated, just concerned. A small Hispanic man with butch cut purple-green hair and a black pony tail, he always looked the same, in a tight three-piece yellow-green-red suit that exposed hints of a satiny embroidered vest, complete with a dashing gold chain and gold eyeglasses.

Eldorado spoke without pause in a kind of monotone, without a trace of emotion, but using his eyes to give people a limp biscuit, put people at ease. It was a bad habit to have with the likes of her, who had a fetish about eyes. But maybe it was a good habit since it gave her ambivalent vibes and kept her guessing.

After some traditional pleasantries, Lulu sat down across from the congressman, without a microphone. The latter removed his chic fashion glasses and carefully placed them at his side at the end of the gold chain.

"Look in the mirror, baby. You are the treat," he began. She noticed the mirrors everywhere, on the floor, walls, ceiling. She could see every inch of her body from every angle, including overhead, when she wasn't trying. And his body.

"Lulu, why didn't you come to me and discuss this affair before it got out of hand? After all, that's what I'm here for. You could have saved a lot of grief not only for yourself but also for your whole family. Obviously I am just one member of the House, but when there's a special problem I like to be the one to go to bat with it."

Lulu nodded her head in agreement. She was dressed in a combination of Indian blanket and hooker clothes from a habit of emulating Chief Chickenchoker. One twist of her wrists and she would be ready for sex. There was now the same old tobacco and wild bull sperm smell on her, mixed with her own sweet pussy and perfume smell, a smell she had come to think of as a tribal identity. She swore she was making the congressman horny, felt him get a stiffy, if there is such a form of ESP. She began to have thoughts of wild sex with him in the office. Her mind was drifting from his speech.

"Mister Congressman, the whole affair began innocently enough. The first years at the company were difficult, yes, but only because of the precision required of my work, and all the training. They sent me to school. They tested me. They watched over me. I thought the company was great, highly ethical and responsible. But then when the accident happened it turned bad so quickly. The coverup I mean. I turned up some information that astounded me and I thought, maybe. You're going to laugh when I tell you. It almost embarasses me to think about it. They're scamming the public bigtime."

He was not looking at her, but at a virtual screen. Unbeknownst to her, he was viewing her pornos from her Net file, the dyke pornos. He now definitely had a stiffy, and what's more, he was exposed under the desk, fondling himself.

"Try me."

"I thought maybe I was on the track of new revelations or data or coverup memos at the least."

The rep's face lit up with a genuine smile, a libidinous one.

"New revelations! Now that would be a coup for a pretty little thing like you. You know...." He was testing her reaction. "... I work better after getting my rocks off."

"Your rocks off?"

"Come now, Mrs. Trancia. I know all about your professional past. You're a big girl. I don't work well when I have a hardon. Let's go round the world right now and then get back to our serious discussion." He laughed at his own joke.

She paused as if in reflection, averting his eyes, then made her mind up and faced him squarely.

"Okay, but how?"

"Mira. La vida loca."

His foot pressed a floor button, which caused her chair to telescope forward under his desk, laying her on her back, as the desk itself opened up and moved to both sides. He was now standing over her, erect and exposed. The eyeglasses were now revealed to be a cock ring. He fell on her, kissing, unwrapping, massaging, horning off on her, still dressed in his suit. He like to do it in his suit, which she at last realized was a bullfighter's.

He was a hot Latin lover, no question about it. She wasn't going to get on his wrong side, not when she had his attention finally, so she responded wetly, doing everything he wanted, letting him do everything he wanted. At least congresspersons had immunity from all the PC laws, and were safe from being bugged, she figured.

"I overheard you at the cocktail party last week," he moaned, gorging on her like food.

"What cocktail party?" She had gone to about ten.

"The one where you put that bottle of Beck's beer in your bosom and slowly moved it to your crotch."

"That wasn't me." She was a little alarmed.

"It wasn't? Sure looked like you."

When she didn't respond, he changed the subject.

"What did you tell Senator Chelsea Clinton in your visit to her? She's not Hispanic like us. What do you expect a gringo like her to do about a company that her family is in bed with?"

"I never talked to her. I spent a nice hour there having oral sex with her page, a juicy shaved dyke from New Cuba."

"Ah. So you were just putting yourself in the driver's seat. You're more politically savvy than I thought."

Like most men the thought of two women doing it drove him into high gear. A tale of a bullfighter and his prize bull drove to a passionate climax.

Hours later, solution in hand, Lulu emerged from the congressman's offices with a mild sense of euphoria. It was as if the politician had some kind of religious powers of absolution. The ponderous problems of fighting the megacorporation had vanished in his grandiose assurances.

Although it was only a little after eight, the summer night had descended in earnest. The usual programmed afternoon rain shower had ended leaving a clean and cool accent to the air that made the heat bearable enough to enjoy. The temperature was in the low eighties. The sky was speckled with a few stars and a brilliant half moon penetrating the usual not very clear urban atmosphere. Lulu was greeted by the chief's jetcar, which drove them to the takeoff area and jumped into the sky like a muscular grasshopper.

The chase was on.

Chapter 14.

* * *

The secretary will disavow knowledge. This message will self-destruct.

* * *

The jetcar was not quite the nuclear-powered family car of the Michael J. Fox dash Christopher Lloyd Back to the Future movies. It was very expensive, comparable in price to the Lear jet, from which it was descended. It could take off and land vertically, run on the roads like a car, and, when it reached altitude, extend wings and soar at thirty thousand feet at 600 mph. It had a continental range, 2500 miles with the aid of the jet stream. It ran on special

fuel that was only for sale at special stations, all in gringo strongholds.

The chief knew they were being followed from the beginning, and had his rear-scanning radar on fastscan, watching their shadow fifty miles to their rear, keeping pace. Lulu was chatty and talkative like a parrot on the earlier trip to Washington, overwhelmed with the thrill of the high technology toy, but now she was pensive, unaware of the chief's concerns.

"Uh-oh," muttered the chief.

"What?" she replied.

"Two more bogies at 6 o'clock." He saw two more blips join the first, locking in formation like flying saucers. They were closing. Five, four, three minutes behind.

"We're being followed," he explained. "Let's try out the evasive maneuvers this little baby has built into her."

An hour later, if that much, it seemed like minutes, they had been dogfighting with the bogies from Washington east to Oklahoma. It was clear they could fire missiles, but were holding back, waiting for a good place perhaps.

At one point they tried the low altitude terrain hugging mode, playing chicken with a speeding silver magnetrain going two or three hundred miles an hour over the prairie. The chief had hoped the closing bogies wouldn't jump up at the right time like he did and would crash into the train. No such luck.

Sex with him was like wolfing down a candy bar, she was thinking. Fast, furious, and it's over in ten minutes. Not sex. Something else.

"Rules of engagement," he was saying. The rest was unintelligible.

"There is no choice now," he concluded, quite intelligibly.

* * *

Oklahoma was like Colorado without the mountains, in other words, not much. It did have Indians. A reservation. Friends of the chief. One thing it didn't have many of yet were Hispanics. They all knew about the gringos of Oklahoma, about the Bible-thumping religious right that made its last stand there, a kind of inner circling of the wagons of the old gringo supremacist culture, its capital being Branson, Missouri.

Their Indian cousins gave them shelter, refueled the jetcar. The bogies just flew by and never returned.

The first night there was a dance around the fire. Lulu was surprised to learn that this tribe of Indians were devout Catholics. They danced all right, but the movements were modest, restrained, and the dancers heavily clothed. Why couldn't they just shake their things in the open and be done with it, like in the centuries past, wondered Lulu. Even if a person has cloth over it, it's still there, right in view, shaking behind the cloth. The meat isn't going anywhere, is it? It goes wherever you go. Why people who dance in public are modest about their danglies was something she found it hard to 'get'. You have to be Catholic to be ridden with that kind of guilt, she concluded. What do they do about their assholes? When a priest or nun walks in heavy modest robes, everybody knows their asshole is walking with them. But they still manage to palm themselves off as holier than thou, as if beams of light came from their faces and their asses were so high up that their shit didn't stink.

Alone in their cheap shitty trailer, Lulu asked the chief what his religion was.

"I'm of the religion that is found in the barkly boles of trees," he said wistfully, "and in the corn and tobacco plant. I'm of the religion that was here long before the invaders came, and will be here long after they go".

"Do you worship your dead ancestors?" she asked.

"I don't need to worship them. They 'get' me if I don't placate them. I just try to get along with them." At that he crossed himself Catholic-style.

"You're a born-again savage," Lulu joked, thinking that was a funny thing to do.

"This is basically my gig, baby. What I do in life. Now thrill me, sunshine. My corn stalk is bursting my robes."

She blew him. It was as good as the first time, even if she began to wish he still called her maam. Afterwards, he suddenly pulled out a bottle of expensive Glenlivet scotch and began swigging it down. He wouldn't even offer her any until he had almost drained the bottle, then he handed it to her unceremoniously.

"Would you like to drink my piss?" she now asked.

"No thanks. I'm not into piss. Except young boys. Thanks for asking."

She decided not to ask him about urine being medicine. He had too big a golden twinkle in his eye.

* * *

In the morning Lulu was up and dressed before she heard the alarm go off in a nearby trailer. It kept ringing and ringing. Concerned, she pulled a robe over her naked body, opened the door and ran out. The chief was sprawled in bed exactly as she had left him the night before.

The trailer camp was totally deserted. Only three of the original hundred or more trailers of the night before were left, and those were deserted, abandoned. Somebody had forgotten he'd set his alarm clock, apparently.

"Chiefey", she said, shaking him.

"Wha-what, baby?" he whispered, groggy.

"It's a quarter after five. They abandoned us."

"I don't blame them, babe. We're geese and it's hunting season for the gringos."

They couldn't stay here forever. They took their chances, and decided to take off again, the chief struggling to his feet, clearly drunk and a little bit sick. He swayed and steadied himself against the trailer wall.

"No, I'm fine," he said in a voice that was slightly slurred. "And with the cutback I'm planning, they won't find us for weeks if at all."

She dropped the robe, lunged into the tiny shower stall, turning on the water before he could object. He soon plunged in with her, naked and swaying. Luckily there was some alcohol antidote on a rack in the stall. Emerging a half hour later, after a standing water fuck, they both felt much better, in better shape for jetcar driving. They grabbed a quick cup of coffee, some juicy nutrient preparation that he jokingly referred to as gringo Hanta antivirus, and headed for the jetcar.

It had been clearly tampered with, crowbar and hammer marks visible on the security latch. But the security was first class and the jetcar was still secure and ready for flight. The viewscreens replayed the attempted rape over and over for all to see. It was Indians not gringos.

The bogies would be knowing which direction they would take. No choice, said the chief. They went, not west or north, but southeast. After he was sure they weren't being shadowed, the chief wheeled around to the southwest, intending to fly to another reservation in New Mexico, then back around the "backdoor" to Wyoming, from the west.

"I thought we were going back to your reservation in Wyoming," she exclaimed, like a spoiled kid.

"Baby sweet cheeks, that was last night. Call me sick, but I have to take a few more days off. Let me drive and see if we can postpone enemy operations."

He descended outside Austin, Texas, drove them to a gringo dealer and traded for another jetcar. It seems he had virtually unlimited credit. Many Indian tribes had been growing rich for decades on casino gambling, and theirs was no exception. He played the homeless street person, he finally explained, "to watch the world die."

Austin was on the outskirts of another Little Mexico City that stretched from Dallas-Fort Worth to Houston. Over ten million people where English was a foreign language. To beat the heat they decided to lie low there, posing as street people, leaving the jetcar in a covered commercial parking garage.

Like lovers, Lulu and the chief ignored the morning crowds pouring into the streets, walking arm in arm in the early morning light. Lulu kept up a steady stream of enthusiastic conversation about the coming Hispanic revolution, which she said was evident all around them. She even told the chief she had a desire to go into politics, running for office. City councilperson in Denver maybe.

"You can never return to Denver," the chief responded. "In Denver you're dead."

"Do you hold elections on your reservation for official positions," she asked.

"Yes, we do. I was elected chief, just as that young girl was elected queen in the first episode of Star Wars."

She soon got it. A joke. She dropped the subject.

After they'd been walking for an hour, lost in the crowd of Hispanics of all ages, the atmosphere festive, the chief assured her that he was fine, she was fine, and all was fine. Hot tamales, laced with habanero peppers, the kind that caused gringos to faint and later burn their assholes, picked up their spirits, helped sober them up. The smell of hot grilled chorizo was irresistible, so they got some of that. More coffee topped their stomachs out happily. Just then a twenty-something well-built Hispanic girl wearing hot pants and a braless t-shirt and pushing a baby carriage came

up to them and asked if they'd like to have a three-way. She needed money to buy food for her baby.

They agreed, following her to an apartment a few blocks off the busy street in a residential neighborhood. Despite the buildings being little more than cheap hovels, there were a number of expensive cars parked on the streets. Lulu was trying to figure this out but couldn't.

Inside the apartment the Hispanic girl took the stinky baby out of the carriage, sat down on the couch changing its stinky diaper, then put it back to sleep. She then asked for and got her payment electronically, summarily dropped her hot pants, threw off her top, and grabbed Lulu, kissing her on the face and feeling her ass. The chief let them go at it, not even undressing until they had eaten each other out and were oooing and aahing with orgasms. Then he took off his clothes, revealing a hard corn stalk, and jumped in between them. They began giving him attention, and the morning passed delightfully on a couch.

Relaxing in orgiastic release, the chief suddenly jumped up as if at an intruder. A young Hispanic lad darted out of the furniture and was gone in a flash. They had been robbed, their clothes taken.

A stinging feeling in their backs. They both swooned.

A sudden total body shock awoke them. Cold water. They had been tossed in a river by rough-looking Hispanic men, who laughed at their disorientation, at their crude attempts to dog paddle. The current was sweeping them away as the men ran away.

A harrowing few minutes later, the chief managed to help Lulu to the bank, where they rested on some grass, naked and panting. The chilly water had invigorated them, and the hot sun was now beating down, warming them up fast.

"Your people are all low life criminals," the chief cursed.

"So are yours, so what?" she cursed back.

He laughed heartily. She did too.

A half hour later the duo was walking arm in arm again, as nude as Carmen, down the river path. There were few people here, mostly bums. Nobody took any notice. They felt suddenly liberated, brought back to union with nature. The chief was, after all, an Indian, whose forefathers loved roaming around naked. They were indeed in love, like young lovers only not so young. She wished they could live like this forever. The chief would show her how to live off the land, eat well, and fuck and suck anytime they wanted, not caring who watched.

Stopping by a field of mushrooms, the chief began rummaging, kneeling, inspecting scientifically almost. Assuring her these mushrooms were edible, he handed her some, and began nipping at one big cap. They certainly looked delicious to her. She waited, though, until he had eaten an entire large cap. After nibbling a tiny bit, she decided not to try it. Too many stories about mushrooms being poisonous. He grunted and feasted until his belly was full. Women, he said under his breath. Cunts. Cowards.

By evening, they were sore, parched, bruised, suffering from thorns, burrs, insects, sunburn, sunstroke. They had taken to rolling in the dust to cover their bodies with some kind of protection, and laying under a bush, too tired to argue or have sex.

After dark, they made their move. A man was sitting on a street corner, on his haunches, his bicycle parked in front of him. They sprang out of the shadows like wild Indians, the chief kicking him over and over while she got the bike, mounted it, waited for him. He leaped over to it, got in front, found that didn't work, let her get in front, and took off, her legs dangling uselessly, her pussy suffering on the hard bars and gear levers, her tits juggling up and down painfully. He had taken the chump's clothes and put them on, saving a sports jacket with some kind of team logo for her. Being so tall the clothes didn't fit him well, but hers did, nicely covering her top and going all the way down to her top thighs, where she could cover her bush and ass as long as she kept her legs together and didn't bend over.

She had never loved wearing clothes more.

When they got back to the busy part of elemcee, trying to find their way to the covered garage, the bright lights illuminated her jacket. It turned out that she was wearing the colors of one of the vicious street gangs that ruled this area. It didn't take long to find out that they were in the wrong neighborhood. Not that they could read all the colorful graffiti which was as plain as the nose on their face.

Automatic weapon fired hammered the night. Bullets pounded the chief's chest, knocked the big man off the bike, hurled him backward, while Lulu spun wildly from the impact of the one-two-three hits, went down hard in the street, screaming in agony as her skin scraped the pavement.

The chief was wounded but still kicking. He threw himself against the glass door of a building, making it to cover as a bullet just missed his leg. Lulu felt as if she'd been clubbed against the thigh with a crowbar, but it was the bike, not a bullet.

He crashed through the glass door, dropping face down on the floor inside. He hollered. She looked up, ran to him. Bullets whistled at her feet, just missing, like in the movies. The door shattered behind her as gunfire demolished it, gummy chunks of tempered glass cascading across her back as she dove in hands first. Hot pain boiled sweat from them both.

A virtual screen was playing golden oldies from the sixties in the back of this dark place. Dionne Warwick singing about what the world needed was love, sweet love. The smell of marijuana met their nostrils, along with the smell of shit and urine.

Somebody turned on a light. It was an old folks home, on the low rent side of the spectrum. Hideous old gringos in wheelchairs, watching the entertainment center more than them. A few faces stared, and it soon became clear they were lonely and thought they had visitors, blissfully unaware of the gunfire and the commotion.

The chatter of more gunfire. A nurse in white poked her head out from a distant door frame, then withdrew it. Someone screamed, probably her. It wasn't a lasting scream. Brief, quickly choked off.

The chief was screaming, sobbing, calling for Jesus. A sudden warm wind made the plate glass window vibrate, hoot through the shattered door.

The gunman would be coming.

Lulu was stunned at the quantity of her own blood on the plastic floor around him. Nausea raped her guts, as greasy sweat streamed down her face. He couldn't take her eyes off the spreading blood stain that darkened the chief's ill-fitting pants.

She had never been shot before, so at first she didn't realize that she still hadn't. The chief had been. She was wounded by glass. Worse than the pain was the sense of violation and vulnerability, a sudden frantic awareness of the terrible fragility of the human body. Fuck nudism, she grunted. Not in this violent world. Not in gun loving America.

The chief was shot. He was barely holding onto consciousness. A ravenous darkness was already eating away like wolves at the edges of his visual universe. He struggled up to his feet, eager to get moving. He probably couldn't put much weight on his right leg, but his left leg was still game. Motioning Lulu to come, he grabbed onto her with his right arm and used her as his second leg. The gunman would be coming.

From the sound the weapon made and the brief glimpses he'd gotten, the chief told her it was probably one of those finger uzis, a kind of tube worn like a ring. It was less than three inches long and had a bullet feeder tube that ran up the arm and into a shoulder or back slung weapon pack that could hold hundreds or thousands of rounds.

They started plowing through the stinky wheelchairs, trying

to get out the back. After passing the door frame where the nurse had appeared, they found a long hallway with many doors leading into shitty little bedrooms, lined with hampers filled with shitty pissy diapers. The stench was unbearable. Peeking into one open room a Grateful Dead poster stared back at them. These people were old, pathetic. They probably spent the last savings from their cozy little dot coms of the turn of the century to end up in this paradise.

A sudden thought occurred to the chief and Lulu simultaneously. There must be medical facilities here. They began scouting out any sign of them, hoping to corner a nurse and have her treat the chief's wounds. The thought of the gunman coming raced in their minds with that, competed, made them desparate for a way to buy time.

Another hallway intersected the main one, and they turned into it, then stopped, listening for any sound of a gunman following. No sound. They came to a nurse's desk, abandoned.

"Anybody here?" shouted Lulu. "We need medical attention. Emergency!"

No answer. The smell of medicine caused the chief to point to a darkened room with a big glass window. He tried the door but it was locked. As if on PCP, he crashed his arm through the window, unlocked the door from the inside, and went through.

A telltale white indicated a nurse hiding under a counter. Lulu turned on the light, and she screamed to not hurt her. Lulu assured her they wouldn't, if she didn't make them have to. "Look at my man here and see what you can do for him," she demanded.

A few precious minutes later and they were back in the hallways. The nurse had bound their wounds with sprayon dressings and at least they weren't bleeding anymore. The painkillers were more than adequate.

The sudden sound of loud Jimi Hendrix guitar music blared

down the hallways. Purple haze. Just as suddenly, the hallways filled with old people, shuffling in robes or in motorized wheelchairs. They were approaching them like a herd of buffalo.

The herd had them surrounded. Somebody shouted from the middle. "We don't want your kind here, spics! Beaners! You're ruining our country! Get out or we'll kill you!" Focusing, they saw that several of the gringos were packing tazers, stun guns, metal objects that could hurt.

They suddenly realized why the gunman hadn't entered here. He would have been in fear for his life in this nest of racist retro gringos.

"We don't want to be here," assured Lulu. Suddenly she understood. The jacket. They thought she was a gang member.

"I'm not a gang member, if that's what you think," she spouted. "I stole this jacket to have some clothes, that's all."

No answer. Nobody was buying that.

"Why do you think I'm naked underneath?" she added, pulling up the jacket to show her bush.

Nobody was turned on. Nobody bought it.

"Okay, gringos," said the chief, in his lowest Big Chief voice. "I'm an Injun, and I am a savage. I've taken more of your paleface scalps in my day than you've smoked joints. We're walking out of here, even if I have to take a few more to do it."

He produced a glass bottle from his pants, broke it on the wall, held the jagged remainder as a weapon. This they bought.

"The exit is that way," said the group spokesman. A path was made for them to pass through. The Hendrix music progressed to The Star Spangled Banner piece that he had

performed on the last day of Woodstock.

As they walked fiercely but defensively through the stinking mass of baby boomers, Lulu suddenly felt a wet bony hand trying to feel her up. Whirling, she was greeted by a hideous spastic old gringo with a silly wide toothless grin and a hideous Star Trek uniform, his tongue sticking out and moving like a headless snake. He was wearing those ears.

"Yum! Pussy!" he screamed, with a hairlip accent, overcome with joy at being noticed.

His breath hit her face, the odor of Grape Nuts being the most tolerable thing about it. Breaking his turtle grip on her wrist, his arms and hands curled up towards his face as if he had cerebral palsy as he began a babyish goo-gooing.

She kept walking, more aware of the dirty diaper odor than ever now. She became uncomfortably aware now of the large number of robodolls and roboanimals on the floor, their laps, strapped to their backs. Hideous. They actually jizzed off in their orifices with their hideous worn-out institutionalized mystery meat dino pissdicks when the dick prescription drugs were working. Did she just see one that looked like her? They could adapt. Give me something to break, she said to her other self, the one with a fat lip.

Never misunderstand me, never misunderstand me, yeah.

As she was getting past the last gringo, she hit the brakes, bent over, pulled her pussy lips apart, and waggled her hips, looking at the upside-down gringos through her legs. There was cheering, whistling, clapping. Upside down, she spotted a big virtual ad poster for the GEMMS corporation on the hallway wall screen.

Chapter 15.

The chase got hairy.

Before going on the street, Lulu stole a psychedelic tie-dyed robe from some inmate's room. She kept the jacket for warmth, but at least now it wouldn't show. A big cache of hippie length wigs was also discovered in a closet, and both of them picked one out and put them on. They emerged on the street looking like long-haired retro hippies. Very out of place in this Hispanic hood. Not that their skin colors didn't fit.

The chief still limped badly, but he said he would accept the pain, if she would feel it. She nodded.

They were totally lost, and neither of them could speak Spanish, so they got no help when they shouted for directions to passersby. As dawn broke, they were still wearily trudging along the seemingly endless Little Mexico City, at the end of their ropes. Unlike the elemcee in big Denver city, there were no police welcome wagons with free food and lodging. Perhaps this was the chic section, the self-sufficient mainly employed section, she figured to herself. Just their luck. Hmmpfh.

They took up begging, with no luck. Hispanics were usually takers, not givers. Not that Lulu blamed them. The gringos owed them everything, starting with the land under their feet, which they had stole.

They took up looking for road snacks, wrappers that had a nibble of food still sticking, bottles that had a few drops of potable liquid. Don Miguel Breakfast Burrito. Since 1908. Eggs, three cheeses, smoked ham. All ingredients artificial and genetically altered. Yummy. They found a restaurant and went behind to the dumpster, pawing through to find anything edible. The irresistible smell of french fries coming out the kitchen air vents made them go crazy. They found a discarded lard container, took turns scooping the remainders with their index fingers and sucking it off. Some potato skin scraps hit the spot. Some maggoty garbage made her hold her nose, but the chief picked the maggots out and ate them with relish. Indian survival skills, she guessed.

A bottle of Pennzoil motor oil. The chief made some

hyperbolic comments on how long it had been since he'd seen one of these. Taking off the plastic cap he shook out every drop he could on his arm, then rubbed it in enthusiastically. Not much, but he was piqued by the discovery enough to begin rummaging around hugely, picking up big things, exerting himself in the hopes of more. No luck.

By midday they were sitting behind some junk in an alley, trying to get some shuteye. One would close their eyes while the other kept awake as a guard. At one point the chief got the trots, probably from the mushrooms. He got up and went over to a garbage can and tilted it a bit, hastily, then shit in it, making loud noises and farts as it slopped out of his ass like green chili. He then let the can return upright again, whipped out his dick, and peed in it, the stream of hot lemonade making an unmistakable muffled sound as it hit the mass of chili.

It probably wasn't really a garbage can, she was thinking. Only commercial establishments still had those. Garbage was worth too much. More likely one of those Japanese people cans for their really crowded cities. Like an experiment canister, only smaller and less luxurious.

She was right. A couple of Hispanic street kids shrieked and bolted out of the can, covered with the chief's waste. They ran, stopped to clean themselves like oil spill storks, ran more.

She admired men for the ability to pee standing up, without squatting, even if it was not PC to do so. She went over to a half-decomposed plastic picket fence surrounded by bushes and trees, squatted and peed first, then shit. Her shit was dainty, firm, torpedo-shaped logs, not sloppy green chili.

Mushroom expert, indeed. At second thought, maybe it was the garbage or the maggots. That thought made her suddenly wish she had feasted on the shrooms. They looked mighty white and fluffy, as big as beefsteaks. Her stomach grumbled as if to second that motion.

As night fell, and the night life whipped up audibly, the

chief had an idea. He ripped a wristphone off a chump in the crowd, ran for it, then used it to call his reservation, describing his position, the street intersection closest to them, while she played lookout.

It worked. The jetcar company chauffeured their jetcar right to them, the chauffy not balking at their appearance or smell, since the chief's eye-dee was in the files. She felt somehow glamorous entering the jetcar, like one of those old Hollywood actresses, in a big wig and all. Never mind their asses hadn't been wiped and the chili in their shit made their assholes burn.

Taking off as soon as they were able, which was only after they had driven over ten miles through the crowded neverending downtowny graffiti-laced underclass street world, they took off and were soon cruising at thirty thousand feet, heading for Arizona, the garden state.

"We have the strong male character, the stronger female character, and an exciting plot," he joked with her as they started descending. "Now all we need is a bright orphan child with ESP, and a dog, and we have a Dean Koontz novel."

She didn't know who Dean Koontz was.

Arizona had another Little Mexico City, stretching from the border, up through Tuscon, into Phoenix. This time they used the chief's credit and booked into a luxury hotel in the gringo area, in Winslow. It looked like a little Mexican rancho, with fake adobe walls and all the cutest cactuses money could buy. Inside it was pure gringo, a price tag on every service offered.

Two weeks later, their asses clean enough to eat off of, their wounds all-but healed, they found themselves in a heart-shaped waterless chemiwhirlpool drinking margaritas and eating from a huge shrimp and fruit tray. Genuine Cuban cooking, with all the tortillas and hot peppers they cared to eat. They had ordered clothes brought in, but never wore them. Funny how the chief avoided the hot peppers. She was beginning to wonder if they did to him what they did to all the gringos, and was planning on teasing him until he passed

a test. But another idea intervened, and for that she didn't want the chief's mouth laced with hot peppers, since that might backfire on her tenderest tissues, which weren't used to them.

She was determined to make the chief eat her pussy finally, get him over his one-sided desire for beejays. It wasn't right that she did all the work.

She was going to tell him that old story about the lonely girl who liked watching lesbian porno in the tub. One day she bought a live lobster and stuck its tail in her vagina. To make the lobster wiggle it harder she teased him with a cigarette lighter under its head. A couple of days later she found herself praying to an unknown god of pain. Sitting on the toilet she felt like she had a million kidney stones at the same time. Trying to pee, she couldn't, which really pissed her off. Finally her vagina begin emitting more gas than a fat Mexican friar after a feast. Then a giant load of filthy green wretched slop blasted out. Screaming at last brought in the police, who had to use great force to uncross her spastic legs, but when they did a green slimy thing slid out of her vagina and plopped on the floor.

It was a mud shrimp. What's more, the toilet was full of them. It seems the lobster had crapped them into her vagina to get even with her. Usually when lobster is boiled the nasty mud shrimps it eats are rendered harmless. Mud shrimp take two days to gestate. Being near to her period made her vagina the perfect incubation temperature. Moral: don't get your rocks off with a rock lobster.

She spent too many minutes enjoying that story to share it with him. The point would have been to get him to eat her. It might have backfired, even if she transitioned from the shrimp they were eating to the mud shrimp as brilliantly as Socrates or Plato.

You make me cum. Yah. Yah. You make me completely miserable.

She finally found his hot button. Fruit. She'd put it in her vagina, he'd eat it out. After several pleadings she

squeezed fruit juice on her vagilips and he began giving her damn good cunny sansa fruit. As far as she was concerned this was real love, better than marriage, be it gringo, Hispanic, or Indian.

The chemiwater glowed in the dark, and the light too, as long as they were chemiwet. The lights off, a glowing Big Chief silhouette ate a glowing Hispanic twat on the deck as the stars twinkled in through the thermal-managing roof windows.

"I love you more than all the stars in the heavens," she told him, humming.

He suddenly bit her clit, hard. Hard enough to draw blood. It didn't hurt her. She felt nothing.

"Enough of this voodoo gringo love talk, babe," he scolded. "I don't believe in love. Indians don't believe in love. That shit was invented by Christian gringos back in the days of Don Quixote. You get cooped up in a musty old library reading too many books, and you have time to invent idle shit like that because you're not getting any. I believe in lust. The lust of the corn. Now shut up and do that squeeze thing for me."

He began lapping her labia faster and faster to stop her from talking. A few minutes later he stopped to take a breath, thought better about being so short with her, flying off the handle. What goes around comes around. The karma would surely return. He tried a recovery.

"Breathe in, breathe out, breathe in, babe. Slide to the right. Do you Hispanics all believe in love?"

"I think we do, as long as it's between Hispanics."

"Ugh!"

"Okay, chiefy, I'll get off this love shit. I just want to get off. You just want to get off. And then, have a quick and painless death."

"And leave a young-looking corpse," grunted the chief, going back to lapping her labia.

That expression. It startled her. She froze. He could tell it.

Looking at him as if for the first time, she realized he was a plastic surgery job. The day-glo chemiwater showed where the seams were. He was not even really that old. What's more, he knew she knew.

"All right, it's like I'm really a gringo. I work for GEMMS, okay? The Indian rez is company owned, I'm sure. A kind of dude theme park. I'm an unemployed actor they gave a chance to. Like I'll do anything for work in times like this." He had slipped into a Californian surfer boy accent. He couldn't have been over fifty or sixty she thought. Still fairly young. Not in the hideous stage, eighty-plus.

She scowled tomahawks at him.

"I used you, okay? I didn't want to get personally involved, but how did I know I'd like you so much? Like, did you want me to think you were some virgin yourself? Gimme a break, dude."

She said nothing, feeling like a stepped-on snake in the road. A switch going off in her head, she started to get up, flee. He held her back with surprising strength.

"There's no escape, babe. This hotel is like an armed fort. You didn't think you ever had a chance, did you? You haven't got any fans. Nobody cares about you. This fucked up country is just too full of panty-liners wanting somebody to care about them. And this country is in a line with about two hundred others. Somewhere at the bottom."

He was trying to affect the Dr. Strangelove cast. She wouldn't have got it anyway, so he gave up.

"You're a member of the underclass, baby. You're Hispanic. The gringos have never and will never care about you. If somebody wrote your story up in a book no gringo would

publish it, and if it were published, no gringo would read it."

She looked tormented tacos at him.

"I'm gringo, baby. That's right. You're not. Your kind may be breeding like rats and causing a population problem, but our kind has always and will always run things."

"Are you sure?"

"Rock sure. Why not?"

She wasn't up to argument even in the best of times. That wasn't her thing. She thought about her chili pepper test and found a little triumph there. Gringos had some genetic weaknesses. Their assholes burned, and so would they.

"I've got orders to wait for the big guys to come and pick you up. Don't fear, they'll wait until I tell them to come in. Let's make it all night, one last night, then like say sayonara come morn."

She chuckled sickly, resignedly. Slumped, beaten.

"What do they want with me?"

"You are trouble to them. They want to snuff you."

She shrieked. He tried to calm her with his hands, keep her twat where he could eat it. She finally froze, went into a fetal position. A little inconvenient for cunny, but he was okay if she didn't move again.

"The media already has been informed of your tragic jetcar crash in Oklahoma weeks ago. There's like an FAA investigation underway now. It will be blamed on inadequate maintenance vaguely, but no one will ever be indicted. It's all about the he-said-she-said blues. So come and get it, dude."

She started crying, bawling, coming undone. He wasn't mister duck, he was thinking. He waited stonily until she

had run out of porosis, reluctantly got up and held her, patted her, like he had been taught in feely-touchy acting school.

"Don't cry, babe. You're going to a better place. It will be painless and quick, I promise you. Now have one last night of big oys as the condemned prisoner, courtesy of the house, okay? You have a lot of pussy to go to waste, even if it's Mexican or Spanish or Aztec or whatever and like I'm a rad Anglo-Saxon who prefers bitchin' blondes like everybody else. And like you do give one hell of a blowjob, eh, baby?"

"What about the medicine man?"

"He's no more a medicine man than I am. You asked me if I were one and I figured it was like your hot button and told him."

"But, if you all work for the company, why did you help me get my memory back?"

"We were trying to fuck it up worse, keep you from ever getting it back. Mistakes happen. You did it yourself."

She pouted, cried on. He did the little trick with his finger on her chin, getting her to open one tightly closed eye. He smiled beautifully and radiantly at her, and she couldn't help but smile back, see dada in him.

"And might I add that you're not too far from fifty. The clock is laughing in your face, baby."

How did he know she didn't want to live past fifty? That pushed buttons with her.

"Say that without breathing my pussy smell back in my face, dude," she replied, her spirits lifted, sniffing up a big lugie. They hugged like lovers. Then he dove her twat like a surfer, and her clit was harder than a full leech.

How could she say no? Now that she knew the truth about her chiefy, she actually was more turned on than ever. She had

always secretly wanted a gringo boyfriend. A boyfriend period. She had married the first backward beet-picking Hispanic farmhand to woo her. Married too young to enjoy playing the field, learn independence. In a way chiefly was her greatest mentor, and she forgave him all, since it was the big bad company not him that was at fault. If only they had met under different circumstances.

One last night, okay! She tried to forget everything negative and just give it all to her chiefly. They made love till dawn with every last drop of juice in their bodies. Hers anyway. The entertainment center turned off long enough to be meaningful.

The sights and sounds of a Denver day. The rail traffic and their horns. The air traffic and its hushed roars. The space traffic and its rumbles. The birds. The whitish blue sky. The too-bright sun making everything look like overexposed photography. The hardness of the ground. The vast mountains just in the distance if you looked, if the air was right, or you were on a ridge. The scant week or two when tulips would be blooming before wilting each spring. The tremendous loudness of entertainment centers small and large wherever her people gathered and partied. The Denver cop vehicles. "Protect and serve" on the shield logo. Protect and serve who? Protect the rich and serve the poor jail pig food. Camelot it's not.

Her mommy and daddy. The farm in Jalisco. The time to kill the pigs. The eating of every last bit of the pigs, even the lips. The maize, corn. The church. Confession. Purity. Innocence. Hymen. The first period. The lure of American eyes. The downhill slide. The path to hell and its good intention lining. Like her panty lining. No hymen in there anymore. What she could have done over. There be no shelter there. There be no shelter here.

American eyes. American eyes. Bury the past. Rob us blind. Leave nothing behind. Those American eyes.

He was mainly thinking of those now-illegal ethnic jokes about Hispanic women. The one about how they use Shell No-Pest Strips for tampons. The jokes about tacos and

burritos. He had done time in a federal prison. That's where he learned them. Like his cellmates told him, don't shave your legs. It'll keep you a virgin like it did them. They would risk death in a knife fight for pussy this good.

To grind the knife. That's right. To sharpen the knife.

* * *

What he didn't tell her wouldn't hurt her, the chief reflected as the company men took her tranqed body off. The company didn't start out owning them. It got to them after she moved in, threatening to expose their fake Indianness to the feds if they didn't sell out. They had started as a group of baby boomer hippies who had been once been forced to flee to the Caribbean and found their own free island state in the Bahamas because of the closing-in of American drug enforcement, the originally free atmosphere of the Ken Kesey days of the sixties relentlessly squeezed out by the fascists along with their crackdown on Vietnam war protesters, Black Panthers, and generally everything anti-establishment. When the atmosphere relaxed in the teens they had a huge net worth from investments in real estate and stocks, permitting them to buy themselves a new identity as an Indian tribe.

They had indeed tried to restore the Trancias' memories, curious as to what their secrets were. They had been leading the company on, planning on covering up by rescrambling their brains, after they got the secrets, in a misguided attempt to get something on the company they could use as leverage. They had even helped Lulu prepare her Net site expose to get her to spill everything she knew for their possible use later. When they switched her expose with a disinformational one, they were shocked to find that hackers had already stolen the original and were sending them blackmail threats if they didn't put it back up.

When they informed the company of the blackmailing cyberterrorists, they were told to go along with them and keep Lulu in their grip so they could implement a smear campaign and an assassination. A lot of exposes simply went nowhere. There were a lot of exposes. Most people didn't

know what to believe. Her very association with morally lax people like them hurt her credibility. Too bad they were behind the times, and it wasn't like that at all. Those days were over in America when what you did in bed could turn the public off to hearing what was going on in your head.

It came as a mild surprise when the company told him that the leader of the hackers was Lulu's big sister Carmen, that she had gone underground and couldn't be found. That her notell motel operation was just a front for a vast underground of Hispanic operatives trying to undermine gringo dominance of the MIC in the northern hemisphere.

That girl had some serious family connections, he tssked to himself. Serious family connections. But not serious enough. It was her people that had chased them out of Washington, forced them to land in Oklahoma. While they were sleeping they staged a commando raid on the camp and were close to liberating her when the tide turned to the company's side. They were busy chasing the remainder when they awoke, leaving the camp appearing to be abandoned, and giving him his chance to take off again for higher ground. When they were shot at in Texas, he still wasn't sure if it was just a Hispanic gang member of the wrong colors, or one of her people.

Yes, the gringo power structure was holding the country together with thinner and thinner glue. It was a power struggle under the surface between forces even he only understood through a glass darkly. He wasn't even sure if the company were ultimately controlled by gringos or that they were just fronts. It was all very confusing. He'd talk it over later with his father, Ned the medicine man.

A pity, but she was as good as dead already. He didn't want her killed, but the company insisted on it, and would have taken him out if he didn't go along with it. At least they promised that her death would be quick and painless. Not that he had any reason to trust super-rich gringos. Being a gringo himself, he knew he not to trust them. But he saw no point in making an issue over it now. Give them a little rope and see if they hang themselves. He wasn't born

yesterday. His own family came first. Besides, she had cut his bag off in the night and that wasn't nice. It would take at least a month to get it back in working order.

* * *

The next afternoon, Lulu was resting in peace in the local GEMMS mortuary. She wasn't dead, just knocked out, but the technicians neutralized the sedative while prepping her, lowering her body temperature and decreasing the pressure in easy stages until she was in cryofrozen suspended animation, ready for shipment to the Denver spaceport. She had Bette Davis eyes, one of the techs said to another. He was summarily erased and fired.

The shipment from Arizona to Denver was by magnetic monorail, in sleek bullet-shaped cars going at 200-300 miles per hour. At the Denver railhead her canister was unloaded along with a hundred others and put in the transfer station, awaiting the next shuttle, which had a capacity of one thousand experiments to optimize fuel consumption. The usual additional prepping work was not done on her by her Hispanic successors in her old job. They would have noticed that she was not a hideous old gringo like almost all the rest. Not that any of her old workmates were on the job any longer. They were all erased and fired, most dead and forgotten to time.

After a late night launch, the shuttle reached the orbiting cemetery, where the load module was docked, awaiting the next earth-moon space hearse. It had a capacity of one hundred thousand, so the wait was about three weeks for the next one. Fuel use had, after all, to be optimized.

Chapter 16.

This is what it's like when worlds collide.

Lulu got yanked off the dark side mortuary, straight to the

Buttley Canal on the light side, and reanimated.

A little bit of history. When William F. Buttley Jr. (no comma -- he insisted on it, calling it an "apositive") crossed the Atlantic from Portugal to Barbados in a sailboat in 1990, he was in favor of continuing the Panama Treaty, which was not renewed. He then speculated on places to dig a new canal, suggesting Arizona at one point in a fit of journalistic humor. In 2030 the growing Catholic Conservative Front in America got Buttley Canal officially named on the light side of the moon, secured settlement rights, and tried to entice rich retirees to move there to spend their last years as a kind of protest against the cryonics going on on the other side. The deceased would be shipped back to earth for a "real" burial, given special clerical dispensations, and then permitted to decompose "as God designed".

Buttley Canal was never very popular, but it did attract enough to be viable. Mother Superior Farrah, a hideous old baby boomer who had once been a Hollywood beauty, but whose Catholicism and personal experiences with male abuse had finally caused her to become a lesbian pedophile nun, was the head of the strictly segregated and chaste women's compound here.

Buttley's son Christopher, a baby boomer born in the 1950s, who ended up an ultra religious ultra right winger even more to the right than his father, was the patriarch of the Canal, and it was into his presence that she was soon shuttled for an audience. He wasn't a priest, but he dressed almost like one, more like an archbishop without the ring.

Lulu was led into a room by nuns dressed in black nuns' costumes. She had been dressed in a white nun's costume, with a straight jacket over it. The room was windowless, cavernous, and the carpeting opulent but the furnishing severe, with the temperature especially hardy, perhaps in the low thirties Fahrenheit.

"You're quite a troublemaker, aren't you?" he began, sternly. She immediately noticed the odd facial

expressions, the hideous tar-stained teeth, the bad breath blowing into her face through the chilly air in a visible thin smoky vapor.

She didn't answer.

"Answer me or I'll m-m-m-m-ake you wish you had." He stuttered when he got angry.

"You bet I am and I don't give a shit what you think either, mister big important whoever you are."

"Mister Buttley to you, puta. Have you ever heard of W-w William F. Buttley J-j-junior?"

"No. Is that you?"

Her blessed ignorance suddenly calmed him.

"It's my father, may he rest in peace." The room filled with 3-d virtual images of him. At first she thought she was looking at a rat-man, the way he worked his hideous mouth and forehead. Those eyes, those teeth. Did he ever hear of a toothbrush, she wondered?

"And I don't m-mean as a cryonics experiment either. He is buried the way God intended, on sacred soil on earth. He was a true Jacobite. Did you know what he always liked to have for breakfast every morning, come what may, troublemaker?"

"What's a Jacobite?"

"Nuh-nuh-n-ever m-m-m-ind. Answer my q-q-question."

"No what. Tell me." She humphed and pouted, feeling a terror welling up under her facade.

"Puh-puh-peanut butter. Red Wing gourmet brand. On toast, rolls, bagels, any kind of bread. Buttered usually. And always with a little honey."

"What do I give a shit what your father ate for breakfast?"

Who are you? What are you going to do with me? I'm an American citizen and I have rights. I demand to speak to the American consulate."

He grunted snidely. "Here I am the American c-c-consul. I am also the luh-luh-law here. Do you know why you are here, p-p-puta?"

"I suppose because the big bad company is behind it."

"The big bad company is it? Big yes. Bad no. It's doing G-God's work. Do you ha. Do you have any idea why?"

"God's work? I thought them corpseys were cheating God out of their souls by wanting to live forever. God's work?"

"For once you're right, Mrs. Trancia. That's what the heretics w-want to do. Ch-ch-eat God."

"But then you're..."

"I'm on the buh-b-board of the c-company."

"But the company is cheating God, like you said. Right?" She tried not to sound insolent.

"Not the company, Mrs. Trancia. The heretics who think that by paying for the company's services they can cheat God. So now do you get it? We f-f-fix their w-w-w-wagons. We make sure they cuh-can't ch-ch-ch-cheat God."

She got it. But he explained it to her in surprising detail, in a monologue stretching for an hour, the stuttering and the cold and the bad breath included. She was a captive audience. In a straight jacket.

The world had gone to hell ever since the deposition of Roman Catholic King James of England and Scotland in favor of William of Orange and the Protestant Mary. The issue was the divine right of kings to rule by the authority of the Almighty God alone. Ever since, Buttley explained, men have been poisoned by the idea that authority comes from the ruled instead of the Supreme Ruler. From the creature

rather than the Creator.

The American revolt, as he called it, was just one of many terrible consequences of the demise of the divine right of kings in 1688 by a heretic Parliament, he told her. The whole world has gone to hell. It was time, he clucked, his face making funny rat-like poses, to right the wrongs here in America. He means there not here, she was thinking, but didn't mention it.

The United States Constitution was to be abolished in favor of a divine right monarchy based on a legitimate descendant of Bonnie Prince Charlie, his own son Charles Winslow Stuart Buttley. The Roman Catholic religion would become the one and only legal religion, and the ancient rights and immunities, powers and privileges of the clergy would be restored, including the Inquisition. The "traitor Kennedy clan" would be "dealt with especially hard." America, thus cleansed, would become the shining light for all the world, and the center of a world Inquisition, restoring the divine right of kings everywhere.

"The final triumph of the Kingdom of God on earth and in heaven," he concluded, the stuttering under control all of a sudden.

"The Inquisition?" she asked, incredulous.

His expression changed, seemed to vacillate between embarrassment and apology. He crossed himself.

"The wuh-word only means inq-q-qu-uiry. A church body that inquires into the orthodoxy of the faith of puh-p-pretenders to religion."

"Who's to say who is a true believer and who not? Truth is in the heart."

"Heretic! Say no more or I'll have your mouth stapled sh-sh sh-sh shut." At that a giant rat-like visage of his father appeared between them, and snapped at her like a great white shark.

She said no more. He ranted on as she tried to make herself shrink up and disappear, unsuccessfully.

The Mafia was a gang of criminals, but at least they had kept the Church well supplied with funds, he ranted. They would be permitted to remain in the new America, under clerical control, so they could steer them to heretics, and keep heretical criminal gangs down, Jewish and Asian especially.

"Jewish? I thought the Church apologized for what it did to the Jews." As soon as she said the words she regretted breaking her code of silence.

This time he visibly calmed himself before answering.

"The Church expressed its sorrow at their suffering, not deny the justice of it, that they had brought it on themselves. The apology was for people taking the law into their own hands instead of acting as God's lawful agents, which is their sacred duty."

"Sacred duty?" Now she was feeling self-righteous. After all, anti-Semitism was un-PC.

"Like all heretics, they will burn in Hell forever anyway, and in comparison any suffering in this world is, while regrettable, just an infinitesimal portion of what they will ultimately know."

"Then what about Protestants?"

"All P-p-rotestants will be dealt with like heretics should be."

Burning at the stake would be restored to the legal code. The launchpad of God, he called it.

"But I blew the whistle on your damn company. The whole world knows about your coverup. That will bring you down."

She suddenly became aware of a hilarious laughing going on in the background. A woman. Like a sound track.

"Wuh-wuh-wrong again. You th-th-ink we wuh-would just erase you and return you to earth? Rem-m-em-ber the whuh the white hall? This is the white hall. Y-y-you never left."

He nodded to somebody, and suddenly the cavernous room they were in lit up with a sickenly pious assortment of religious icons and idols, in virtual 3-d. He began genuflecting, crossing himself, muttering prayers, for perhaps forty minutes, as she watched mutely, incredulously. Rosary beads rattled. Monkish choirs chanted medieval. Organ music blared. He was in an orgy of sorts, ignoring her until it was over, then returning to his lecture as if there had been no interruption.

Science had always been dangerous, and should be brought back under the authority of the Church and the Inquisition. The ultimate insult to God was Cryonics. All the Moonstock experiments had been secretly poisoned during the freezing process by reprogramming the nanobots to destroy all living tissue upon detecting body temperatures above freezing. None would ever insult God by trying to breach the Gates of Hell. The true purpose of the priests in the dark side chapel was to quietly excommunicate their damned souls, hurl anathemas at them for their sacrilege day and night.

The Anathema Shack. She didn't say it out loud, but the hilarious laughing picked up, like a sound track.

A retro flat movie screen sim popped up overhead, an old Hollywood flick in motion. Only a small loop of the movie kept playing over and over, a pretty gringo lady talking. "When I hear matters of state discussed, I invariably find myself wondering if the wine has turned sour".

"That was Oc-c-c-t-t-t-avia, in "C-c-c-leop-p-p-patra", n-n-n-ine t-t-t-teen s-s-s-ix-ty th-th-th-three."

Maybe this was the white hall, but she couldn't accept that she never returned to earth, never reunited with her children, her family, Carmen, the Indians. Maybe they did and maybe they didn't, she couldn't be sure now. If he was right, the world hadn't been warned.

She started going blank and dry and hot, having an anxiety attack. She finally couldn't take him anymore.

"You're nuts! The United States Constitution is the greatest document in history. America is not going to fall to you and your kind. You will lose. I pity you."

"I puh-p-p-p p-pity y-y-y-y you."

It ended abruptly when the hideous old man went into a sudden spastic fit and male hooded attendants came out and took him away. Even in the light gravity he shuffled like the very old, his spine bowed over nearly to where he was able to suck his own dick. He wasn't that old, she was thinking. And they had cured osteoporosis years ago. Why don't they put him on a rack and just stretch him out straight.

She suddenly noticed the lack of windows here on the light side of the moon, with such a beautiful earthview beckoning. The hilarious laugh track. It was her own voice all along. She had been on the rack, unable to accept the fact of the pain, disconnecting her mind from her body. As long, that is, as she didn't trip up and make a mistake. She made it.

She was still laughing hilariously hours later, her nude body stretched on the rack, her breasts and pudenda hanging out from her rubber limbs like hot air balloons, hooded male inquisitors eagerly licking and sucking every inch of her like starving egg-sucking ferrets in preparation for the gang bang and the really funky torture to come.

* * *

The last thing she remembered was a smiling fearless good crime fighting superheroine named Chillbaby Blain that she had been inventing in her dreams for perhaps years, when the dark side of her mind was in charge. She always wore a Mod Squad cap, dressed in open crotch fashions. She was a super Hispanic like Raquel Welch. She kicked gringo's asses. And they liked it. Never ran away. But she had always stopped playing for her when she awoke, until now. That's okay,

because now she would come to the rescue.

* * *

The last thing she remembered was the jetcar suit ride, being towed by a robotic bungee cord at 600 mph as the chief raced along the old Indian plains. The spacesuit made the air shock negligible, and indeed had its own entertainment center geared to the landscape through AI. She could feel like Supergirl, extend her arms in front of her, feel in command of the entire earth.

* * *

She could see her own pussy. She was looking up her own legs. She could see only that. Her pussy hole, the inner lips, spurting out like a flower. The flower was flapping, dancing, vibrating like a curtain of silk. It was intelligent! It was talking! Talking pussy! The ultimate superheroine! It talked and it thought and it came to the rescue and saved the day. It was Talking Pussy. No man could have it.

* * *

Talking Pussy meets Chillbaby Blain. The crime duo of all time. Can solve any crime. Can protect against any bad guys. Terrorists. Killer robots. Evil hooded monks. Genetically altered soldiers. Spanish Conquistadors. Spies and secret agents. Gangsters. Serial murderers who looked normal. Big dicks. Mobs of ferrets and geckos in hoods with human dicks.

* * *

Talking Pussy meets Supergirl at thirty thousand feet. Chillbaby Blain is piloting the jetcar. She is driving with the convertible top down, jauntily dressed in a space suit with a Mod Squad hat inside. Together they are the most impregnable crime fighting trio in history. Nothing can harm them. Nothing dares take them on. They go wherever there is injustice, wherever there is wrong, wherever there is oppression, wherever there is pain.

* * *

There was one villain they never bested. He called himself Lopped Chiver. The planets hurt, burst into flames. The villain smiles big like a cave. Pardon me, but I'll never be the same. Be the same. Pardon me while I rise above the flames.

* * *

The state of Jalisco, adjoining the Pacific Ocean. Puerto Vallarta, Guadalajara, Laka Chalapa. Nice places if you are a rich gringo. Every poor Mexican family can make burritos and tamales to sell to gringos. If they could see the kitchens they'd puke. If they bite into a cockroach we tell them it's a chicharron. San Pedro, San Gabriel, San Juan, Purificacion are Catholic names. Nice places if you are a priest. Ocotlan, Tiajomulco, Tepic, Jocotepec, Zapotlan, Tamazula are Indian names. Aztec Indian. Nice places if you are a cruel haughty Spanish landlord oppressing the indigenous peoples. Tamale's an Aztec word, right? Tamazula. Tamale. Chopped liver. Don't chop my liver. Where's the cops? Where's the jail? You say you are the cops, and I'm the one in jail. What the hell is my age, man? My age, man? Secret agent man.

Tlaquepaque. Euqapeuqalt. Paquetlaque. Tla que paque. Tla tla tla. Until I was four this was the biggest city I had ever been in. A seven by nine grid of main streets. The cooked pig parts sold on the streets would make a gringo puke.

The pig parts. The hideous pig parts. Don't look.

And that's about the time she walked away with me. She was half my age, didn't want to go out with me. The age thing kept us from falling in love. What's your age, man? What's my age, man?

After the chemo he had stem cell transplants. Don't cry. Face up to the finality of death. It's not like gringo TV, where they're just pretending, and show up on another show

next week. Or a movie. Or another startup in Silicon Valley, before it became Little Asia and went on the downhill slide with the gringos.

You make me completely miserable. Stuck to a chair watching this horror atomic. Everything goes by so fast, making my head spin. Used up all of my friends, but who needs them when you need everything. I am not afraid of being used. So much is the same, it makes me helpless. A child again. My whole life ahead of me. A boyfriend. An engagement ring. A marriage. A wedding. A happy ever after. A lot to eat. A lot of laughter.

Kiss the hideous blue lips of your dead old grandma, in her cheap casket in the Hispanic-owned funeral parlor in Denver. Death is final. Face up to it. Spit all you want after, but give her that kiss.

My kids. I don't want to outlive them, have to kiss their hideous cold blue lips. I could never afford the company's prices, never in time to prevent the finality of their deaths. I don't get paid the kind of money gringos do. The ones who are in the company. The owner and the owned. Exploitation. Serve them, serve you. The corn is high, the pigs are fat, and the farmers lean.

* * *

There is no blame, only shame, wet the bed, just complain. Do you say? Do you do? When it all comes back down from this cloud, the savior will find out all of what we do, find out who we did it to. Sit up, spit up, cry cry cry cry cry. Die.

Is it me or mostly you? When it all comes down? It's taken all this time to see the light. Come down. Come down from this cloud. This cloud, this cloud, this cloud, this cloud, this cloud, this cloud.

* * *

Gringos are all wannabe professional actors. Like their heroes. The act is the thing. There is no truth, only the

act, the paycheck, the awards. The little people they thank. I really hate that check they adore.

They even change their gender. Talk about their ex-nuts in bed as I say waa waa waa. They think about how when they go to Moonstock they're gonna take it all, their nuts and all. Meanwhile they're lathering my crotch for more.

The walls are cold in here, the cage made of steel. The air in this room is cold like a beer. The expectation of silence is why I burn. If I could only think away the silence I'd not feel the pain that was given on a sad day of sounds.

So I hang my head up high. All the captives in the sun hang their heads up high. As they die. Standing firm on the creation, holding their heads up high for the director in the sky.

Dying is an act they put on, get paid for. Part of their career. Glad to have work. Being a gringo is having a career. A career person can be unemployed and the career is still growing. Put it on their resume. That's why they go cryo. A temporary halt on their career. Future gringos will reanimate them when their agent has a casting call to send them to.

If you take it away I'll have nothing again. Sew my back up and start over again. Stain a new shovel. Nine inch nails.

How long? How long will I slide? Separate my side? I don't. I don't believe it's fair. Slitting the throat is all I am. Once I know I can never go back I gotta take it on the other side. Marry the sea. Never change my mind. Take it on the other side. Take it on the other side. Take it on. Take it on.

* * *

I felt like a hideous piano wire drawn out to its limit of tension, ready to snap at the slightest increase. Ready to slice living bodies like liver.

I arrived late that morning and was furious that Jerry had waited for me to scrub before beginning to open the patient's chest. Even though Jerry completed the procedure with record speed, my foul mood didn't change. Slitting a throat was all he ever did. Nothing pleased the master surgeon in me. Just give me something to break. A chainsaw what? A chainsaw what? So come and get it. It's all about the he-said-she-said blues. I think you better quit. So come and get it. Not only had Jerry done a piss-poor job but the scrub nurses weren't handing him the instruments properly. The residents weren't giving him adequate exposure, and the unanesthesiologist was an incompetent son of a bitch passing the baton without making it clear to people what had to be done. A faulty needle holder, thrown against the wall with such force it snapped. An uncontrollable temor. A needle buried in an index finger. A large catheter that took blood to the heart-lung machine. A faucet filled a wound with blood and the unsterile drapes soaked and dripped onto the floor. The clamp held the suture around the vena cava. The whore had physical and mental tools. Her whore hands danced in imaginary choreography as she attempted to block the puck from her mind's goal. I managed to suck more blood from the wound, connect her cranium to a cranium burster. Her brain would soon be nothing but two mushy pounds of bony glue. I used to desire a career change but now I know I've dialed the right place. I'm getting engaged in May, buying loose diamonds.

The secretary will disavow knowledge. This message will self-destruct.

* * *

Darkness imprisoning me. All I see is hell. Taking my sight. Taking my speech. Taking my soul. Taking my life to hell.

Why do people put live cats in microwaves? Why do gringo scientists torture live animals to test gringo cosmetics? Why did they blowtorch that live pig to death? The way he just stood there, uncomprehending, loving, shivering. The gringo in the white coat calmly blowtorching him up and

down, up and down.

Cut this life out from me. Oh please God wake me.

* * *

Supernova. You think it's over, but supernova don't stop.
Super shock. Super pain. Super suture.

I'll be safe at home. A stonger man-whore, pinching a
clothespin, swatting a blanket, stitch in my side. Yes
I'll be safe at home, crinkling my weak nose, hay in
the stable, strong in the cradle. An instant reward when
I need it. Suicide. Where nothing's well. Where nothing's
swell. Where nothing's waiting. The man-whore. The
man-whore. Your mother. Your brother. Your father.

So now they're continuing with a shotgun. A shotgun.
Staring at an empty chick. An empty bitch. A toxic fox.
A changed whore.

Can't wait for the pain that hurts worse than pain's
limit of hurt. After all the sweat a bullet is more than
I deserve to get. My guts coat the streets on the west
side of town. The west side at dawn. One of these days
I'll chase you down. Right now you make me breakdown.
I don't wanna look like that. I don't wanna look like
that. Baby you make me breakdown. Breakdown. Tell you
what I'll make brown. Just don't break quite through.
I may be a little crazy frayed around the ends. One of
these days I'll face you again. Try to get out. Try to
get out.

So now I see ya fucking with a shotgun. Let the quiet
people dance. Don't don't.

* * *

April showers bring May flowers.

Chapter 17.

"Giving life to a storm may be memorable, but dangerous to those in the storm. One cannot deny miracles, but has no reason to expect one. If one takes one's ailing self to Lourdes, one should not expect to return a fountain of youth and health. Likewise, if one goes to Rome spitting on the Pope's cape, one should not expect to return at all."

Having said this, a hand motion was made by the cardinal, a large ring decorating it hideously, and the inquisitors tightened the rack on her.

"Tragedy and hope is a book you should live to write, you damned heretic. Feel sorrow and recant, sign the instrument before you, and save yourself any more earthly sorrow."

Lulu tried to scream, but was unable, because her tongue had been yanked out with hot tongs. Her vagina had likewise been raped by a hollow bull-size metal phallus into which molten lead had been poured, as had her anus. Her nipples had been burnt off with hot tongs, fleshy parts twisted off with pliers. A noisy chainsaw had had its fun with her. She still had a nose hole and two eyes. Breathing was extremely painful since hot lead had been poured down her throat. Her wrists were flayed, as were her back, feet, chest, and legs, but her hands were still intact, presumably to permit her to sign her name.

Before being raped with hot lead she was raped by over a hundred robed inquisitors in every orifice. All of them were of course male. This was the true secret of why the priesthood was and would always remain male, a voice informed her, as if in a confession booth. This most sacred function of their offices. Afterwards they ripped out her uterus and burned it in a grated stove, hurling anathemas at it and her mother's uterus which bore it.

The cardinal implored her now in a loud, authoritative voice. "Will you sign now? Nod yes please, in the name of our dear Lord and Savior God Jesus Christ, and his blessed Virgin Mother, the Mother of God, and His Holiness the Vicar

of Christ and God on Earth."

She didn't nod. Another ringed finger-flick from the cardinal, and the inquisitors began pouring salt on her wounds from large canisters, rubbing it in, much like a Texas barbecue. She recognized the Japanese people canisters like she had seen in Texas, suddenly remembered that the company was the manufacturer.

She screamed dry. Wept blood. She had a crown of sharp thorns forced onto her flayed scalp, and they now set her scalp on fire with burning pitch.

Why did they save her eyes? She didn't want to think. But soon they showed her. They brought her son and daughter before her, naked and chained to white sheeted tilt tables, alarmingly vulnerable but untouched, their heads hooded, whining, crying, beseeching. Taping Lulu's eyelids open, clamping her head so that it couldn't move, and positioning her face so that she was forced to look closely into theirs, the hooded robed inquisitors took her daughter's hood off, spread her daughter's face with honey and peanut butter, then released a ravenous hand-size sewer rat on it, letting it slowly start stripping the meat while she screamed.

"Have you ever heard of the word usufruct?" asked the cardinal, curiously. "The right to use another's property as long as you don't damage it."

All of the inquisitors, the cardinal included, then raised their robes, revealing huge erect penises and scrotums, none shorter than nine inches. Probably enlarged with vacuum pumps. Some began vigorously masturbating their hard curved pale swollen crotch serpents while others mounted her daughter. Almost at once the cockheads began turning purple in their grip and spurting in Lulu's open mouth, held open by an icepick shaft without a handle, dulled on both ends so it would catch and not slide through.

Some spurted in her eyes, her precious eyes. The cardinal's cock had another holy ring on it, she couldn't help but noticing, blinking off the white foam to preserve her last dignity.

Her last dignity was taken away from her.

Hours passed like eternity as she saw her Debbie's once beautiful and vital face stripped of all meat by first one big rat and then another. She just wouldn't die it seemed. The rapists had left her body bleeding from the vagina and anus and covered with sperm, but otherwise untouched. If a rat tried to jump off the face, they picked it up and put it back. They had cut her breasts off and thrown them in the fire. Her own mouth had become an overflowing sewer of a thousand men's stinking scum. Only after the beloved face of her Debbie had been reduced to a white skull mask did they loosen the clamps that held her own head.

Another solemn plea from the cardinal, with the holy mumbo-jumbo that she now knew too well.

She still refused to nod. After another flick of the ring, the inquisitors began disembowling her daughter, throwing her entrails into the fire. They took her off the tilt table and after a while a virtual monitor appeared before her eyes, showing the body being thrown into an underground sewer, where it was soon covered with sewer rats, hungrily picking her to pieces. The peanut butter and honey jars were brought out again and they began to apply it to her son's unhooded face.

She nodded frantically. They put the instrument up to her hand, gave her the pen, and she signed it. They then all took turns raising their robes and shitting on her from head to foot, after replacing the son's hood. Finally they pulled her eyeballs out of the sockets, put them in cups filled with slow acid, and let them be eaten in agonizing pain while they had more fun torturing her with dental instruments and other toys.

Meanwhile, the funeralboomcoon on the moon was having a happy if not wet dream.

* * *

Up From Liberalism, by William F. Buttley Jr. God is not

mocked, said dad. The Church exists, and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it.

Rome had always been known for its catacombs and crypts and dungeons. It was the original and true Hell, its real endless party going on deep underground while the endless act went on above ground. Even before Christ. The catacombs were the true origin of Christianity, a Satanic cult. The symbol of the fish, the cross, the Virgin Isis, all that was from far in the past, hundreds of years before Augustus. The true chairman of the board of the company was the Pope. The major stockholder was Satan, the chairman of the board of the Church. After all, what place on earth was safer for his satanic majesty than here, the seat of his world government since the fall of Greece? What better way to beat fight that pesky Christ than to take his name and attempt to conquer and rule mankind using it? The name Christ meant anointed. Spread with sperm from their most holy penises.

Gemms. All priests of Satan were into gems. Gems are forged deep in the earth, in the fires below.

Too bad the early Roman Christians spawned apostates and heretics from Britain to Gaul to Palestine. That's why it became the official religion of Rome and has remained so ever since. Why Emperor Constantine remained a devotee of Satan to his death, worshipping his solar furnace in the sky, murdering his son and wife when they got in his way, and torturing and persecuting masses of people, while forcing Christianity on the Empire with the s-s-sword. The priests of S-s-satan were good fiction writers. The cover story documents were meant to spread a story so wonderful and so unreal that it would make every pagan in and out of the Empire into a soft blithering idiot that could be controlled as never before. The inexplicable source of the gospels, a cruelly ironic title, was there in underground Rome. The cover story that there were a true group of apostles in Jerusalem, who lost control of the movement around 100 A.D. to apostates, who later founded the Roman Catholic Church, worked very well to keep the true secret, to throw people off the real track. There was no real Jesus of Nazareth, or any apostles. The wild musings of Kazantzakis were more

real than any real person in that Jewish cauldron. Even the Book of Acts was made up, as were the epistles of Paul. There was no real Paul. A Pharisee Jew named after the first king of the Jews, who murdered Christians but suddenly saw Christ in the sky and was instantly accepted on his own word into the inner circle of his former enemies, preaching a spirit Christ in the sky somewhere? Pretty good fictional plot twist, throwing the track off. A dummy corporation, nothing more.

In reality the Emperors had systematically destroyed the Jews and their religion, and had the Christ documents written and released after they destroyed Jerusalem, murdered a million Jews, and took the remnant into slavery where they couldn't speak out or challenge them. Truly adept thinkers might have realized that the so-called early Christians never wrote a single document about the Jewish-Roman war or the fall of Jerusalem. The one and only official history was written by a turncoat Jew named Josephus who, after helping them wipe the Jews out, was rewarded with adoption into the emperor's family. Or that there is no mention of Christians in first century secular history, except as a movement at Rome that the emperors could blame their mistakes on.

The gospels and epistles were written by enslaved, tortured Jewish priests conversant with the Hebrew Bible, acting under orders. The original Hollywood. The reason that the real Jews remaining in Alexandria and Babylon didn't accept Jesus is that there was no Jesus to accept, and their religious brothers in Jerusalem had never been preached to by any real Jesus and had never written to them about him. Perfect cover story to persecute the "Christ killers" later. The entire New Testament was manufactured by Rome to permit it to persecute anybody it wanted and have it blamed on everybody but themselves, who were portrayed as the fair, impartial government authorities caught in the middle and washing their hands. And to throw the track off their god Satan and his innumerable god-devils. After all, didn't he offer Jesus the Roman empire and get rebuffed? How few 'got' that. Or why, if Jesus were executed for sedition, as a rebel against Rome's authority, his followers weren't executed with him, like in every other instance in Roman

history. That was what fiction authors call a plot gap, but it was so in your face nobody could see it.

The Universal Roman Catholic Church of Satan needed to control heretics with the power of the secular authority, the sword and the rack and the fire. Unless one is given power, one finds it hard to accept Satan as one's god. The masses of powerless will never accept Satan, thus they have to accept his false image of shining light, Jesus. Anybody who swallowed the message of Jesus was, of course, the very worst of heretics, but simultaneously the easiest to control. But anybody not showing unquestioning obedience to their authority while swallowing the hypocritical mass of doctrines and superstitions and ceremonies whole was dangerous. Irreligious scientists were the greatest enemy now. There was nothing wrong with Science in the Service of Satan. Intermediate level nuts who accepted the gospels as the infallible word of God and used the Bible to question the Church, to declare the Pope the Antichrist, they were almost too much fun to have to finally put to the fire, but the time was nigh. For centuries they at least served their purpose of keeping most scientists in some kind of reverence of the gospel crap. The ridiculous Millennium apocalypse fantasy having failed to materialize, the Protestants having shot their wad at holding back the rise of agnostic and atheist people free of religion completely, the scientific community being powerful but numerically small and suffering from bad press (much of our own secret origin), the birth control movement among the Protestant gringos combined with the population explosion and unstoppable Hispanic invasion of America has given us the chance to gain a final v-v-victory.

* * *

Cryonics. The most Catholic science of freeze-dried crying.

They cleaned and cryofroze her while still living, albeit unconscious and hanging on to life by a thread. The cleaning was not for her benefit, but for theirs, to get rid of the evidence of their DNA. The truth about cryonics is that they found it the perfect instrument for eternal torture. Her body was fitted with tiny electronic wires

through which they could constantly torture deep nerves with shocks, just like every experiment in Moonstock. She was laid in the heretic vaults deep beneath the Vatican, a cavernous facility with perhaps six million others, some going back 2500 years. The company maintained the new cryonics facility and the top brass considered it their finest work, Moonstock being second. A new, bigger one was planned for America, in a secret location where there would be plenty of room for expansion.

George Junior was taken away for memory erasing and release. Not being such a serious heretic, he deserved a second chance. Many of the higher clergy thought he was cute and that his blowholes had many good years left.

Chapter 18.

* * *

Note from the author:

_I could load you readers down with a long story now, not the real and simple unadorned truth, but the legend that has grown up, introducing new characters and merchandising the exaggerated action in order to make myself look good to Hollywood and its unemployed face and voiceover actors who want Lulu's legend to rival that of Don Quixote. No, I'll spare you that in favor of the punch line. In these days you're no doubt in a big hurry. I will spare you the think tank of mysterious elitist female priestess octuplets that Carmen was claimed to be the mother of. The crazy gringo lady carrying around a living boxed Hispanic genital and predicting the return of El Cid to America when enough women conceived by it. The shameless attempts of several of Lulu's and George's relatives to gain political office by bartering her name and fame, especially Miguel, who became Governor of Colorado for one month. The hideous Hispanic midgets and giants attracting armies of adoring gringo groupies and worshippers. The Hispanic Legless Lesbians

and their political demands. The wild thalidomide baby factories in elemcees from one coast to the other that churned out mixed t-babies for purchase by sick but loving and well-paying egg-or-sperm-donating gringo parents._

Nor will I adorn the story with magic, ESP, levitation acts and miracles, accompanied by stirring inspirational music. The angels. The courtroom mumbo-jumbo. The attempts by pro-family-values retros to claim her. The claims that the Lulu that met her end in Rome was a clone, one of Twelve created by the Activimo, the Anti-Cryonics Terrorists of the Virgin Mother, and whose spirit now sits beneath the latter in heaven. (The issue of whether Lulu was pro or anti Cryonics is itself hotly debated by the hot heads.)

Or clutter things up with the usual retinue of PC characters supplied by Hollywood unions, one of these, two of those, three of these, following Lulu around like dogs. And no surrealistic dream of an amnesiac who wakes up. This is not the same old pulp fiction sh*t. This is serious, okay? Call me pathetic or what you will. Tell me to quit masturbating and get a job, but I'd rather get into whistleblower paradise. It's not like I killed someone. I'm going to have forty thousand new friends at least.

* * *

The year was 2051. George had become reconciled to the loss of Lulu by now, and had come out of the closet, marrying Chief Chickenchoker, real name James Morrison XVI, wearing a ceremonial leather-and-feather wedding dress. The chief was handsome in his warrior outfit with war paint and war bonnet. The reconciliation was fast, so fast that the wedding took place a month later.

That was ancient history. Three years ago. Fred and Wilma were single, Dino was just a pup, and Rock Vegas was the place to go. Life went back to normal. George got his ball bag virtual-tattooed with a surface map of the moon, his penis with an ever-changing space ship. He can really think big. Where's the place for a man who can think big? Texas? No, Wyoming. Colorado was overcited. Nobody not born in Colorado will ever be accepted as a native. Catholic girls'

schools still required uniforms, and prohibited boys.

Spring break in the Mile High City. Jorge Fellatio Trancia Chickenchoker, formerly Jorge Trancia Junior, their 29-year-old adopted son, proudly announced that he was quitting his dissolute street life in order to become a Catholic priest. Not. He was coming out gay. He didn't need women any more than they did, he announced. He began living in sin with his parents, thankful for a free ride in life.

The American political scene was in a state of unrest. An attempt to call a constitutional convention to abolish the Bill of Rights and declare the United States a Catholic country was successful. The convention was held in virtual space, the voting system having evolved under the irresistible pressure of the PC times to total virtual democracy, where every person could vote by just touching a finger to a viewscreen. If they didn't have fingers, they could touch something else. Yes, millions used their genitals to vote.

The Hispanic population thus held the majority voting bloc, and up till now it was very solid and reliable. A bill to permit every resident of America to vote, even illegal aliens, had been proposed and rejected regularly for decades, coming closer to passing each time. There was a consensus that it would pass the next time around.

As it turned out, George Junior had recovered his memory just as his parents had, aided by Ned, who it turned out was a former Jewish comedian who played an eternal boy but whose career was ruined by a sex bust, and who had clawed his way back up for decades only to end up a victim of the general unemployment of all actors. The hidden cameras also helped. The chief had secretly placed several in Junior's body, as well as his mother and sister, and they had it all, the self-incriminating speeches, the torture of his mother and sister, everything. The promise the chief had made Lulu that her death would be quick and painless finally gave him a conscience, at least a desire to break with the company. He never let anybody know he was Lulu's betrayer.

Soon George Junior came out as a whistleblower like his parents did, aided by the chief, who took his Indian act over the top, persuading virtually the whole tribe to defect from their former employment as paid actors for the company and expose the company's true ownership of the rez, which they "liberated" and declared "free Indian land".

The popularity of their Net station already high from the Lulu revelations, the new revs of the return of the hated Inquisition caused masses of Hispanics to break lock with the conservative Catholic coalition for the first time ever. They voted down the proposed new constitution, and indeed many new leaders arose among them proudly touting the American Founding Fathers and the wisdom of their sacred document that had given them the land of milk and honey and which it would be utter folly to tamper with after this many centuries just because of a demographic shift that might or might not be permanent.

A lot of Hispanics even began to question why they had wanted anything to do with anything that had the name conservative in it, but we won't go into that here.

Chapter 19.

The Preface, Concluded

The rise of the Hispanic segment of the American population to an increasing majority was causing America to strain at the seams as the old guard was losing ground to the new. This story of a married pair of Hispanics, not of much importance in themselves, but witness to the big company accident of 2040, reveals a secret plan to stage a coup d'etat, turning America into a Spanish-speaking Catholic nation in the 2040s. This plan is discovered by the Trancias as they try to blow the whistle on a coverup by the big gringo-owned corporation. The big discovery is that the gringos who own it are fronts for Hispanics who use it to coverup the assassination of gringos in their way. Their

identities are laundered with the dead baby boomers, while all the latter are poisoned so that they cannot be reanimated. An even more sinister plot to entice all gringos that could get in their way to terminate their own lives early in favor of the lure of suspended animation and eternal life is also uncovered.

The Trancias are good people, and good people don't see race and politics, just what is right and wrong. After blowing the whistle on the original coverup, they try to blow the whistle on the coup d'etat.

The role of the Roman Catholic church hierarchy in the plot is shocking but plausible at the same time. Was it an accident that the Church publicly apologized for two thousand years of atrocities as the year 2000 rolled around? Or was it a clear signal that it would now push to make the entire western world Catholic controlled, under its enlightened management? A ploy to lull the gringos to sleep?

If you suck, here's what you missed.

Chapter 20.

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Note from the author:

In case I'm not infallible, I break my own rules a wee bit. But only a wee bit. Sauce for the goose and thank the big G for that.

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"Fire in the hole!"

"Lay down cover fire!"

"Keep your head down soldier!"

"The grav is lighter but the Grim Reaper is just as heavy."

The space marines came in six spaceships, and they hit the company and its light side lackies simultaneously. Too bad Samuel T. Jackson was long gone, an experiment housed in Moonstock himself, or his badass voice would have made a great action voiceover for the Marine action, Tommy Lee Jones serving as the serene second in command. As it was, virtual actors were soon shouting in badass voices in 3-d movies glorifying this event like few others in recent history. The actual battle had far more robosoldiers than the movie versions.

"Is there something about that order you didn't understand?"

"Sit down in the fire!"

"It's the written end of history!"

There was intense military resistance, every worker and boss being armed and fighting surprisingly well. Not that weapons weren't robotized now and pretty much fired themselves. The marines took two hundred casualties, forty-odd dead before they could be cryofrozen, fifty-odd more CTPD (cryofrozen to prevent death). The company casualties were three times that, many from workers mutinying and shooting bosses. Robolosses, which weren't kept in the same tallies, were in the tens of thousands on both sides. A lot of the marine deaths were from carrying or trying to carry the flag, which American law officially prohibited a robot from doing.

"Sheet hurts. Treat me like a redcoat. Party. When we come back again, wait right here for me. Try again tomorrow. Gonna kick tomorrow."

The moon having been secured, federal government advisors and scientists were flown in, assessing the situation of the experiments in the company's care. The news was not long in coming. Every last experiment was unrevivable, sabotaged. Booby-trapped to boot.

The entire federal government came down on GEMMS, putting it out of business immediately. The indictments were endless, many convictions obtained. The lawsuits were epic, and many insurance companies folded under the strain. Connections between GEMMS and the American Farm Bureau, famous for its suppression of the American family farmer while kissing big agribusiness' ass, the only major corporation with an official policy, as late as the year 2000, to oppose the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, the Equal Rights Amendment, and other anti-Conservative Catholic legislation, while backing the NRA and other CC causes, were claimed but never completely proven. A little like the Methadone case, if you remember that. I mean Microsoft case.

There's nothing like it seems, from the global warming crisis to the ozone. It's nothing but your dreams, made into anything on its own only to become a one-way ticket to the twilight zone, handed a big megaphone. Little that it needs, there's nothing but a little bitty breeze, a little bit of sleaze, then it's gone.

Bill Gates' face and whiny voice on post-millennial latter-day television, smiling like a harmless geek, in your face, in the race to keep ahead of the rest of the rat race.

The other theme parks of the company were likewise shut down, with the same horrors uncovered. Garden of Eden park on Ganymede was one all-too tragic for Europeans, who preferred it to Moonstock and its "arrogant cowboy Americans". "Merde merde merde" was the name soon given to it by the angry French, who had once been heavily Catholic themselves, but had thrown off the Church for a long time and were among those most vocally calling for Church heads to roll. It seems the most rabid anti-Catholics are always ex-Catholics.

Attempts to prosecute Vatican officials were stifled, however, by long-forgotten immunity agreements that were quickly trotted out, some hundreds of years old. That didn't stop massive protests in Vatican City, and mobs finally stormed the inner stronghold and laid the chilling pits, as they were now called, open to public inspection.

The Pope suddenly went on a goodwill visit, as he called it, to Paraguay, and decided to stay permanently, huge palatial compounds being erected at Church and government expense there. The Prison Vatican, the media soon called it.

Congressional hearings on Catholic subversion grew to an almost McCarthyist level, but didn't result in many big resignations, prosecutions or anything else. It did help public opinion come to a consensus that the Founding Fathers were very wise when they separated Church and State, very wise. Gringo and non-gringo politicians alike were exposed as owned by the company, and replaced in landslide elections.

Within ten years the energized Hispanic voting bloc had seated a Congress that was eighty percent Hispanic, yet extremely anti-Catholic Church. Significantly, one of its first official acts in its first hundred days was to pass a resolution respecting the Bill of Rights and its protection of minorities racial and religious. They then soon reached an eternal deadlock on practical legislation across the board, just like the gringo-dominated Congresses used to do. Business as usual took over. And Confucius lives next door.

One little difference was evident. Congressional sessions began to be conducted in Spanish. But that was okay, as most gringos had learned Spanish by now anyway, as if computer translation wasn't nearly acceptable to all but the most finicky. Attempts to make Spanish or any other one language the official language of the federal government were voted down readily, as they had always been. Some will win and some will lose, but the winners get to talk the way they want to.

All in all, a big lot of nothing happened as the political power changed hands peacefully to the new majority. If that's a story, so be it. Peace is the biggest, best story there can be, telling a million interlocking smaller stories of peace with peace itself.

* * *

The year 2052 came and went, and the expected coup didn't happen. The coup died on the planning table.

America reached the 22nd century happier, freer, and more open than ever. The Inquisitors were at last dealt with by the United Nations -- which America rejoined for the pleasure -- as world criminals, charged with crimes against humanity. The U.N. took over cryonics now, with extensive safeguards. Lulu Trancia's experiment, recovered from Rome, was given a world shrine status.

So sue the guy who invented baseball, right?

Epilogue

The United States of America was founded at a time when the population was virtually free of Catholics. Not that the nation was meant to exclude them, not at all. Yes, many of the Founding Fathers felt uneasy about the Church, fearful of Papism as they called it and its historical excesses. More than that, they were afraid of Rome and the old Roman legal system and system of tyrannical government, the whole mindset. They were also fearful of new forms of tyrannies, ones whose names hadn't even been invented yet. And time proved they would be legion.

The genius of the American idea was not to make the American Constitution anti-Catholic, anti-Papist, or anti anything else, but to constitute the government from the ground up into different organs and branches that were not respecting of persons, birthrights, lineage or associations, and were forever poised against each other, set to fight each other for power, in the belief that the system would forever be a stalemate where no branch could take over everything, thus insuring the freedom and stability of everybody under it. Even people supposedly of the same political persuasion, in the same political party, regularly struggled with each other after attaining governmental positions. Often broke ranks and voted with the opposition. Often switched party allegiances.

It was a government of, by, and for the People, with a

capital P, meaning the succession to power was constitutional, changes often being mandated at set intervals, even when the people were happy with those in power. Anyone in power, after all, is subject to corruption if left long enough to its influence. Even the most ardent opposer of the current status quo knows that eventually every dog will have his day. Everybody finds that being in power is far more sobering than the fight to achieve it. Power has responsibilities.

To boot the system up the land was purposely extended geographically far and wide, and filled with many inhomogenous peoples that in other parts of the world were bitter enemies, in the hope that, before time had proved the wisdom of the system to all, no one person or group, no matter how rich or charismatic, could ever gain nationwide power and short-circuit the checks and balances by declaring and implementing a dictatorship that abolished the Constitution permanently in an attempt to prevent succession.

The system worked. At times it was tested to the limits, but it always came through. Ironically, one of its darkest days were the days of Lincoln, who indeed did suspend the Constitution for a while, and perhaps reaped what he sowed. Another great test was the Hundred Days of F.D. Roosevelt. Another the early days of Johnson. But then there have been many tests, and the system keeps running beautifully without a major crash.

Man was meant to be free of tyranny, to rule himself, in a nation of laws instead of men, please overlook the PC objections. That was all that mattered, that too much power would never get into any one individual or group's hands. Power diffused is liberty, power concentrated is tyranny. Whether the power calls itself leftist or rightist, conservative or liberal, it is the power concentration itself that is tyranny. All systems of government make perfect logical sense when viewed in the limited capacity of one mind. That's what makes them all so dangerous, why the American one is indeed the worst, if it weren't for all the rest.

The true genius of America is to provide room for all, indeed to invite all to find their place, as long as they push and pull against each other within its framework, thus strengthening it by participating in it. Just as one small group of men upset an empire in the days of Augustus Caesar by preaching they were not of that system of things, so America will never be upset by such preaching, but only validated by those who enjoy the freedom to do it.

Ditto those who seek to destabilize America by burning its flag, not understanding that it is only an easily duplicated symbol of the living force of freedom, and is validated by its exercise. Other nations fear for their stability when their flag is burnt, not America. The Founding Fathers would fight for their own right to burn an American flag if it became a sacred relic of dead people thought more important than living people, if the government sought to use police power to prevent its physical desecration in the misguided idea that flags are a limited commodity, a holy shroud rather than mere pieces of cloth or paper that are nothing of themselves but symbolize the blessings of freedom under a government of, for, and by the People that has constitutional restraints on the police power like anything else.

We're of course talking about privately-owned flags. Specific flags owned by the government are already protected. Real patriots would prefer that the government protected your right to private property and freedom of expression.

After many flirtations, the USA finally rejected attempts to constitutionally ban the physical desecration of the American flag, and far more important, the United Nations one world government concept, preferring to set a shining example to other nations like it had always done.

Cryonics continued to be developed into a beneficial science. Hispanics from America were leading the successful effort to reform governments in Latin American countries by the score, just as Asian-Americans did in Asia, African-Americans in Africa, Euro-Americans in Europe.

Americans did not want to rule the world, past excesses and

mistakes admitted, and neither did anybody who followed their example. They did want to set an example for self-rule everywhere. And everywhere people proved quite capable of ruling themselves, and being friends, even in the Holy Land and the most war-torn parts of Africa.

As the 22nd century approached the USA was more happy, free, and prosperous than it had ever been before, and the Hispanic Catholic majority came to revere the American Constitution as a genius document that no Church official could ever be allowed to desecrate, deface or tamper with. Not physically of course. Its official wording and the meaning of those words. The Founding Fathers were one hot damn genius group of programmers. May we never mess up their original firmware with unwise test patches. How hard it would be to reboot a crashed system.

But who am I? Remember when I asked you that early on? I'm the spirit of freedom, crying out from the blood of the martyrs, that flows in every living person's veins. I'm hope, that springs eternal in every living person's breast. I'm the image that all people are made in originally by their master programmer, no matter what they do to it later. I'm the good in people, which, despite all the bad, exists and against which the gates of Hell will not prevail.

Remember when I said that the day of the big accident is when Lulu found God? God is good.

THE END

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