



Born Under a Bad Sign

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Paint It Back

In 1947, breech births were dangerous to newborns, so many mothers chose caesarian sections. The problem was it left a scare, so vain mothers avoided it, as did mine. Even so, my luck did not hold out—I survived.

A person’s earliest memory allegedly portends his future—perhaps. Let’s see.

My earliest was around four or maybe younger. It was before my imprisonment in nursery school. I’m standing behind my mother who’s cooking on the stove. What she’s cooking is beyond me, since I’m so short, I can’t see the top. My view is looking upward at her rear end, which wasn’t bad. In her early 40s, she was still in shape and a good-looking babe.

“What’s for dinner? I ask more than once not getting an answer.

She spins around in a flash with that screwed up face of unrepentant anger and yells, “Don’t bother me. I wish I had listened to your father and never had you!”

For about the next decade, that was her favorite incantation of meanness. Guess she was hoping like all witches that I would disappear. It didn’t work, unfortunately. But by the age of

14, I was bigger than her and my brain had matured enough to verbally fight back. So on one occasion of her now-well-passed-her prime rage when she barked, "I wish I had listened to your father and never had you!" I coolly replied, "I wish you had too." She never pulled that rant again.

After she finally kicked off, I asked my older brother, the one my parents didn't kill, "What did you think about mother?"

Without a beat, he replied, "Mean and nasty."

"What about me when we were kids?"

"You didn't like being pushed around." Sounds like a theme.

Infanticide

So what about the brother that the parents eliminated? Roger was born and disappeared before my entrance into the family that never should have been. It took me decades to find out the whole story and not until both parents were dead. Little bits and drabs would come out but never the full story. Before I started kindergarten, once when sitting on her bed watching her get dress to go shopping, not an unpleasant sight, she mentioned the brother I never met.

"Roger was a sickly child and died before he was even your age."

My older brother remembered Roger.

"Roger was still a baby. One day I went to school and when I came home, he was gone."

Years later while visiting an aunt in Holland, she said Roger was born with Down Syndrome. When the parents finally died, a buddy of mine at my request got a copy of Roger's death certificate. He died in the middle of summer of pneumonia and malnutrition. That seemed suspicious. Pneumonia in the summer? Then I realized why there had been a large air conditioner stored in the basement when I was very young. Except for that one air conditioner,

which also disappeared, never in my entire life did they buy an air conditioner no matter how hot it got in New Jersey. But they had one when Roger died of pneumonia. Also, since when does a child in an upper-middle class family die of starvation?

The logical conclusion is that to avoid the burdening costs of taking care of Roger—the parents were amazingly cheap given the money that a chemical engineer was making—and for princess mother to be spared the work of caring for Roger and the public embarrassment of producing an idiot, Roger disappeared. I actually visited his grave once. The parents were too cheap to even put a marker. All I had was the location in a cemetery and some of mother's ashes from her cremation.

“Looks like you were the lucky one Roger.” I said looking down at a small patch of grass. “You escaped their lunacy. Here are some of the remains of the mother who threw you away.” I poured the ashes on his grave. “Maybe in some strange way that will show you that you came out better than we did. Adios.”

Puppy Love

Third grade gave my fellow classmates and me one hot blue-eyed, blonde teacher in her early 20s. She seated us alphabetically going up and down the rows of desks. This was one time lady luck smiled on me. My desk was near the front and depending on how she sat on the desk while teaching; I had a partial view up her dress. The dresses back then were long, so no panty sightings, but for an eight year old, glimpses of a little thigh were heaven. She was also nice and considerate—unlike the mother I went home to after school.

Girls always turned me on, but in the beginning my understanding of them was limited. My earliest memory was seeing Gentlemen Prefer Blondes at five years old. Mother took me. In the movie Marilyn Monroe sings “Diamonds are a girl's best friend.” When she sang “These

rocks won't lose their shape," her hands were under the diamond necklace. By rocks, I thought she meant her boobs, and said to myself those are going to lose their shape, just give them some time. So I was confused. Confused because it wouldn't be until later in life that I realized the most important thing to girls is money, material wealth. They would sell out anybody for enough money.

In addition to our teacher, there were two student dolls in third grade—one a blonde and the other a brunette. As Mother Nature requires of boys, I hit on both of them trying to seal our imagined friendships with a kiss. They complained to our teacher.

"Roy, you can't go around trying to kiss girls unless they want you to."

"Well, how do you know if they want you to?" I asked.

"You just know or if unsure ask them."

"Okay then, can I kiss you?" She laughed, but I was serious.

This newly learned guessing game resulted in my hanging out after school with another hot blue-eyed, blonde girl in our class. We'd usually go over to her house because both her parents worked, so no one was home other than her older sister. We'd play around on her parents' bed, which was her idea. Guess there is a little Mary Shelley in even young girls. We liked each other, but then I made a mistake. One day after school, we went over to my house. Unfortunately, mother was not on the golf course as usual, so she found out who my girl friend was. A few days later, my girl friend and I were playing around on her parents' bed when her older sister comes in and says I have a telephone call. It was mother. She had tracked me down, which wasn't particularly hard in a town of 8000 people.

"Where have you been?" She yelled through the phone ignoring that modern day technology didn't require the volume of her voice. "We have a political diner tonight. You

should have been home hours ago.” Actually one hour ago, but I chose to keep quiet. “We better not be late because of you!”

“Okay, I’ll hope on my bike and hurry home.”

“No, we’ll pick you up.”

“Okay, let me get you the address.” Being a kid, I knew how to get to places but never bothered with addresses.

Still nasty, she said, “Don’t bother. I know where you are.”

How did she know where I was? She had gotten my girl friend’s last name when we had gone to my house.

The parents arrived in their four-door Dodge, I put my bicycle in the back and got in. Mother turned around yelling, and I mean yelling.

“I don’t want you to ever see that tart again. She’s nothing but a whore. Her family is no good, what would the neighbors say if they knew you played with her? I wouldn’t have it!”

I knew what whores were, but this was a third grade girl friend. I also knew my mistake; I had taken my girl friend home and introduced her to my mother. Mother ruined that romance, but she’d never do it again. Throughout the remainder of her existence, never ever did I bring a girl friend home or introduce one to either of my parents.

My third grade teacher also made sure I could read. Mother was remiss in helping me learn because she rather spend her time playing golf. My teacher told mother that unless my reading improved to third grade standards, she would have to hold back a grade the son of the President of the Board of Education. That’s right, father was the Board President—boy he would have gone nuts. But rather than tutoring me herself—the golf course was too important—she hired one of the high school football players. He was great. He made me want to learn. My

reading improved enough to meet third grade standards, but just when I was on a roll, Mother ended the tutoring. Why? To save money. Father gave her an amount to run the household, so whenever she could cut an expense, it would go into her bank account. More on that later.

Third grade for a boy—not a queer or androgyny or a girl—meant moving from Farm League baseball into Little League baseball. Back then boys didn't have to curtail their competitive instincts to keep girls and wimps from crying and the adults berating the boys for being non-PC. My athletic talents were always mediocre, but in third grade, I did come in second in the long ball throw to one of the better athletes, Adams. Didn't realize at the time that this ability would almost get me killed later in life.

Don't Play That Song

In fourth grade, the public school introduced us to musical instruments, told us to pick one and get a parent to sign a paper okaying the school to teach us how to play. At home I asked mother for the okay, but as always, she did something purely selfish—No! She was vehement; she would not allow me to play an instrument. Didn't make sense, my older brother played the trumpet, she used to play the piano and father as a kid played the xylophone. What was her problem? But as always the Nazi loon got her way. My revenge came 60 odd years later when I took a music theory course at Julliard. Tough course but a hot millennial teacher who really knew her stuff made it a pleasure—should have done this sooner.

Still in fourth grade, during an after school basketball class, I bounced off the gym bleachers—hurt the hell out of my left wrist. The pain kept bothering me, so I asked mother to take me to the doctor. Instead, she goes downstairs into the basement, comes up with a board and taped it to my arm—not exactly state of the art medicine. That lasted for a night before I removed it. The following week at basketball class while catching a pass from another player, I

collapsed on the floor in pain. The coach took me to the town doctor who found a fractured wrist and put a cast on it. It took me years to figure out why mother had refused to take me to a doctor in the first place. The answer was money. Less money spent on the kids meant more money for mother. As with most females who were pretty when young, they pursued money for when they lost the currency of their good looks. For them money was more important than their kids. It actually paid off for mother. At the end of the parents' lives, she had more saved than her husband who had earned it all.

Table Dancer

In the summer of 1957, the family went to Europe—father on business and the rest of us as tag-alongs. One night in Basel, Switzerland, after dinner and mother drinking too much, father and my older brother went to a nightclub. At nine years of age, I, however, was condemned to the hotel room with my middle-aged, drunken mother. For some reason, she started talking about her late teens and early twenties. Calculating the years, I put it at around 1930. She especially glowed when recounting her dancing on tables at the Astor Hotel Roof Garden—the “in” place at the time. Once, however, when drunk, she slipped and took out the table, so they threw her out. Too bad, that while hearing her story at the time, my instinct didn't warn me that at the end of the 20th century, I'd be dealing with another loon, my wife giving table dances six blocks north at Flash Dancers.

After Europe, mother and we two boys spent the last two weeks of summer where we always spent summer, at our cabin in the Catskills in a place called Beaverkill. The guys I hung out with, seven to eleven years old, used a gardening shed as a club house. The shed was on the top of a hill, surrounded by fields owned by a hot shot New York City lawyer. In the club house we smoked cigarettes stolen from our parents or older siblings and looked at skin magazines we

found rummaging through garbage. At the bottom of the hill was a thick line of trees, then a road leading down to the Beaverkill River where we went swimming. One day, while standing on the rock ledges of the river, one of the gang members comes swimming furiously over, “The club house is on fire!” We splash across to the other side of the river, race over the beach, up the road, and turn the corner. Against a pure, cloudless, azure sky, black billows of smoke rose from that lawyer’s once gardening shed. It was beautiful, but we were in trouble.

My older brother and his buddies said, “We know you guys did it. The state cops are on their way. You punks are going to jail.” We headed for the hills, which were nearby, since there were mountains all around us. When we ran out of candy bars, we surrendered to our parents. They apparently kept the state cops from bringing us up before the juvenile authorities. The fire made the local paper but the cause was not mentioned.

Our gang headed off on a new adventure after we dodged what we believed was prison and the faggots who inhabited it. We knew about queers back then and they revolted us. Most of the guys at some time or other had been approached by an adult fag trying to befriend him. Each of us usually carried a knife, so our hands instinctively moved toward the handle in case the faggot tried to get physical. Today in America, we, the young boys 7 to 11, would be chastised while the faggot would be considered a victim. What fools Americans have become. On a proportional basis, queers have destroyed the lives of more boys than heterosexuals have destroyed the lives of young girls. On the other hand, if some good looking adult babe was friendly, anyone of us would move closer in the hope of a touch or pleasant perfume. Of course, today we would be listed on the #MeToo website or given drugs.

The utility company had cleared a path up and over one of the mountains in the valley for power lines. The oldest guy in our gang suggested we hike up the “gap” as we called it. How

hard can it be, “the electric company already cleared the forest?” We armed ourselves—one had a machete, me a Bowie knife, another a .22 caliber rifle, others a spear or sling shot. We started early, and while the electric company had cleared the forest, they left the cut timber to crawl over and didn’t touch the boulders that stood taller than us. It was tough going, but at the top, the view was great. We ate what lunches we brought and started down the back slope—wherever that led. After slogging along until mid-afternoon, we saw with relief some dark color through the trees that looked like a highway. But as we got closer, the highway turned into a large lake. There were summer houses on the other side of the lake, so we walked around to knock on someone’s door to find out where we were. But nobody was home. There were lots of cabin, all the doors were locked, and looking through the windows they were all furnished. This place was spooky. A lake none of us had ever heard about, populated with houses on one of its shores but no people. We got out of there by way a dirt road going down the mountain. That led us to a paved road and a woman in a nearby house who gave us something to drink and told us which way back to the Beaverkill Campsite.

Summer Songs

Our gang’s adventures turned to different objects as teenagers. The campsite was the perfect breeding ground for teen girls. Families, complete with hot young daughters, would camp for a week or two than leave being replaced by others. An endless stream for the guys in our gang because we were there for the entire summer. An added benefit was that the drinking age in NY was 18, but in hill country it was post puberty. The booze was fun but not needed for the girls on vacation, since their social network at home would never hear of their unladylike activities. Their boyfriend at home would still believe he was the only one.

Sometimes teenage girls from nearby towns, such as Liberty, would camp by themselves without mommy and daddy. There was no fear of illegal aliens back then. On one such occasion at around two in the morning a buddy, Billy, and I were in a tent with two not particularly good-looking girls.

Suddenly we hear, "Billy, are you in there?" It was his mother. How did she find us? That was one of the drawbacks of the Beaverkill Campsite. There were NY State Rangers and spies everywhere watching the members of our gang due to our past propensity for trouble.

Sharing the Love

The end of summer from 1952 to 1964 always meant returning to the small suburban town of Midland Park in New Jersey. About 8,000 people occupying a square mile of the Earth that at one time had been farms. Our town was run by a cadre of Dutchmen which included my father and the uncle of another kid my age, Blackie. He and I had met at the age of five by way of a fight we had during a church play.

The town's oligarchs all had their own occupations while running the town's affairs the way they saw fit. The publicly owned artisan wells supplying water to the town and other towns were sold for a pittance in order to supply a fat bribe to one or more of the petite oligarchs. Farmland was rezoned for a Levittown type of development to the financial benefit of the bosses. They even allowed a brothel in town in the disguise of an inn run by some New Jersey mobster. Its benefits to them were obvious. Years later when Blackie and I discovered this, we wondered if the girls in high school whose pants we were trying to get into were selling their charms to our fathers and uncles. If there's one thing girls are good at, it's keeping secrets from boys.

In the late 1950s, pea shooters became the latest craze for juvenile delinquents. Hitting girls in certain parts of their bodies kept us entertained until they squealed to the teachers. So we

moved out of the school yard to the real world. Hidden behind bushes along the roadways, we pummeled cars as they zoomed by. The weather was warm, so we got a few drivers who had rolled down their windows. They'd lose controlling swerving over the road and then regain it—we laughed our heads off. But then the cops snuck up behind us. We were caught before we had the chance to run. Rather than ruining our lives by detaining us as juveniles, unlike modern day America, the cops took us home.

Making girls look stupid by bouncing peas off of their butts wasn't our only interaction with them. In sixth grade, we started having parties in which five guys and five girls were invited. No we didn't spin the bottle—we spun the girls. Each guy would take a seat with one handling the 45 rpm record player. One girl would sit on each guys lap and during the song they'd make out and fondle each other. When the song was over, the girls would rotate to the next guy. Better than the modern day lap dance, or table dance, because you could kiss and touch each other and it didn't cost the guy 20 bucks. The best position for the guy was running the record player. If he lusted after a particular girl, when she ended up on his lap, he'd raise the record holder so the song would repeat—until others who wanted a different pair of lips to kiss and body to fondle complained. The following year, two of these girls married much older guys—guess they couldn't wait.

Sixth grade or earlier was about the age when boys develop this idiotic belief that girls can't take care of themselves—that they needed a boy's protection. Girls know this and exploit it, sometimes out of genuine fear but often for the satisfaction of exercising their power of manipulation over males.

Our small town had this weirdo guy living with his sister, called Squirrelly Shirley, in a big house surrounded by hedges. During the full moon, crazy Joe would stand on his front porch

late at night howling at it. This made the little girls in the neighborhood so scared that they would run passed the loon's house as though the hounds of hell were chasing them. Even the older teenage girls considered him dangerous—but us guys didn't. This Larry Talbot want-to-be would also drive around town at night looking for who knows what. One night Blackie and I followed him using my mother's car. We couldn't use Blackie's car because he lived next door to the loon and would have recognized it. Besides, the cops wouldn't stop us because they'd recognize the car as that of a councilman's wife. Father had moved up the oligarch ladder from President of the Board of Education and now oversaw the police budget on the Town Council. We'd turn off the headlights to get close to Joe, back then car owners had the freedom to do that, which allowed us to see that he was looking around for something. Probably looking to way-lay a girl, we thought. But nothing happened. Must have been the wrong night for around the same time a 13-year-old girl, last seen at 9 pm in town, was found strangled and sexually assaulted but not raped near a brook that ran through town. Was it Larry Talbot, sounded like his M.O. of going for the throat? Who knows, no one was ever convicted even though there were at least six similar murders of teenage girls in Bergen County from 1966 to 1968.

Our presumed serial killer had always been a nut case hassling his neighbors. For example, late at night, he'd intentionally shine a bright light into his neighbor's bedroom windows. Okay two can play at that. Blackie and I ran an extension cord for a really powerful spot light. We snuck up to the loon's house at night and hit the switch. The spot light burst into the living room catching his squirrely sister smack in the face—it's a raid by the Untouchables. Rat-a-tat-tat-tat, we made a machine gun noise. His sister jumped, ha, ha, ha. That put an end to the loon's Apollonian illusions.

From an early age to college age, the guys in the neighborhood didn't suffer the loon kindly. Perhaps it was out of malice or a sense of gallantry to protect the little girls from the Marquis de Sade fears or worst to which this loon would subject these budding young femme fatales. The guys would throw firecrackers, apples and water balloons at his house and taunts at him. One guy put out a number of his windows with a BB gun. When the police showed up our compatriot quickly blamed the fat kid across the street.

Hot For Teacher

Junior high and the first couple of years of high school were largely a bore. It was just the usual teen preoccupation with rock 'n' roll and TV shows such as the Twilight Zone, Outer Limits, 77 Sunset Strip, Have Gun Will Travel and lusting after girls. Freshman year brought a new batch of kids from the neighboring town of Waldwick. The political idiot who pushed the town into building its Junior-Senior High School forgot to take into account the town's projected population of the kids who would attend it in the future. Within a handful of years, the school became too big, so the town took in students from Waldwick. Fine with me, some of those babes, such as Brachold, Certaro, Fraccola and Ferdella, easily outshone the indigenous ladies. Too bad these new girls were out of my league. I was only a minor juvenile delinquent. Got kicked-out of French class for the entire year as a freshman, but it did not help my standing with these ladies. The following year landed me in Spanish where I got kicked-out a couple of times but not for the entire year. On one occasion, the female teacher was praising the class's stellar student while referring to me as a "vegetable."

I replied, "I'd rather be vegetable than a fruit."

"Go to the principal's office, now!" She responded.

During the fall my freshman year, for some reason, I went anorexic. Drastically cut down on the food intake but can't remember why. Maybe to appeal to the tough looking ladies from Waldwick, maybe to bolster my J.D. persona or maybe the fun house mirror in the bathroom. Whatever, that piece of stupidity plagued me for the rest of my existence.

Summers were still fun up in the Catskills. Trouble was never too far away up there—but that was part of the fun. The 200-pound, one-synapse owner of the refreshment stand kicked me off its premises for life after my verbal acuity provoked him to give me a shove. If only I had known martial arts then.

With eleventh grade, life changed thanks to a hot 22 year old English teacher, dark hair, great body, smart and who cared about her students—many of whom were brain dead like me. Susan knew I was the son of the president of the town's board of election and took it upon herself to wake me up. Her course focused on poetry and literature from the Romantic Era in which she taught us to look beyond the surface words to the underlying meaning. When we got to studying Edgar Allen Poe, someone I always liked for some reason, my unthinking, suburban middle class, ignorant view of reality began to crumble. She taught me to think and coupled with my genetic intelligence, which mother always tried to suppress, turned me into an individual who thought for himself, free of the crowd conformity running most others. Her influence didn't eliminate a proclivity for trouble, but no one was going to verbally beat me into submission ever again—physically, yes, for the time being—but not verbally or emotionally.

Grand Theft Auto (not the video game)

In the fall of our junior year, the son of the town's Superintendent of Schools asks if I want to help steal his older sister's car and go for a joy ride. Naturally I said yes and naturally we were both under age, with not a driver's license between us. Taking the car was easy, since

he stole the keys from her purse. No need to strip the three ignition wires and start crossing them until the engine turned over as in future joy rides in stolen cars. He drove for a while and then pulled over on Goffle Road to give me a turn. My driving ability wasn't the best, since I had never driven anything beyond a go-kart before. Off we went down Goffle Road toward Midland Park. As we came over the hill, the cars in front were stopped at the railroad tracks crossing. I hit the brakes, but since the car was a stick shift, missed, and landed on the cluck. Facing imminent collision, swung a hard left into a shopping center parking lot, careened off one car, then whizzed up the incline into the rear of another car, slamming it onto the sidewalk. We got out, looked around—no one dead or injured in the parking lot, all three cars totaled. I yelled, “Run.” He didn't move. “Come on, let's get the hell out of here.” He still wouldn't move. “Look, if they ask us, we'll just say some thieves stole the car.” Which of course was true, but we wouldn't tell the cops that we were the thieves. He just sat down on the sidewalk. I wanted to split, but if he stayed, I knew he'd spell the beans on me, after all I was driving. So we waited for the cops—dumb. They took us to the station and released us to our fathers. We could have gotten away with it—no one carried cell phones cameras back then—but he didn't have the metal.

That Sunday we made the local paper, although our names were withheld to protect the guilty juveniles. It was my second anonymous appearance in a newspaper. The first being the torching of that New York attorney's gardening shed. In school on Monday, our fellow students knew we were the culprits, so my buddy Elliott nicknames me, “Wheels.” I could live with that. Some weeks later in court, the Judge put us on probation, telling us to do well in school or he'd have to review the case again. We were 16 and should have gone to reform school, but the fix was in. The Judge was not about to send us away because one was the son of the Superintendent

of Schools and the other the son of the President of the Board of Education, both of whom had extensive political connections with guys like Nelson Gross. So we walked, but it did push me into doing more studying, especially in Susan's English class.

Fast Times at MP High

Senior year and everyone had a driver's license—in New Jersey the age is 17. Yes, despite my record, New Jersey gave me a driver's license—guess the fix was in again. But I wasn't the only one to benefit from the good-old-boy network that made society work. My pal Blackie just couldn't seem to pass the driving part of the test. So his uncle, another political mover and shaker in our town, went to the third driving test with him. Before reaching the DMV, the uncle stopped to buy a quart of booze. At the test site, he handed the bottle to the DMV officer and Blackie passed—without even doing the driving part. Since then, Blackie has never killed or injured anyone on the roads. PC socialists complain today, but the good-old-boy network made this society function.

Some of the guys had fast cars but to prove who was the fastest required a drag race. There was a straight-away stretch of Route 17 between Waldwick and Saddle River. Route 17 was a four lane highway with two lanes going south and two lanes going north, separated by a grassy divider. The two cars that would race would each take a lane heading north. Behind them were two other cars in each lane. These two cars in the back would slow down to a crawl blocking traffic in the two lanes so the racing cars could start from a near dead stop. The motorists behind really got ticked but what were they going to do? One of the tail cars hits its horn, and the dragsters take off easily hitting over a hundred by the time they reach the finish line, the exit to Saddle River.

Besides drag racing, some guys with fast cars were always furiously peeling out from the drive-in hamburger joints we teens frequented. Having nothing else going for them but a hot car, they lamely believed such impressed the girls. One guy, seriously lacking in a brain although supporting the surname “Brain,” just bought a maroon Chevy Impala with a big engine and three on the column. The owner, one of the Silz boys, Lee, and I—all sitting in the front seat as teen guys did—just finished cruising the Stewart’s Root Beer stand on Route 17. Moving his Chevy in first gear to the exit, the owner waited for the highway traffic to clear, then floored the gas pedal, laying rubber for those girls whom he believed he was impressing. Out we zoomed, the rpms roaring to the limit of first gear, he hits the clutch and shifts into REVERSE! Metal smashing and ripping, the transmission tears apart. The momentum carries the wounded machine to the side of the highway. The owner starts crying while Lee and I struggle not to burst out laughing.

Driver’s licenses allowed us to travel to upstate New York where the drinking age was 18. If we didn’t have a fake id, then someone in the group who was 18 would buy the booze, which we drank on the way back to a party or dance in New Jersey. Every so often, the guys would go into the City, also with a drinking age of 18, to hit the Village, a popular club or to check out a porn movie. My brother, who was in the Navy, sent me an id, which had my age at 24, when I barley looked 17. It didn’t matter, I still got into places upstate and in the City. By the end of my senior year one of my female classmates wrote in my year book, “Remember all the good times we had, but I can’t see how you can remember them.”

She was right. On one occasion, my pal Elliott challenged me to a drinking match. We got the Sliz brothers to come along to the Rainbow Lounge in Suffern to make sure we made it back home later, since we’d be too polluted to even walk. We drank shot after shot after shot

until I looked to my left and Elliott was sprawled on the floor passed-out. The Sliz boys dragged him and guided me into his car, took his keys and drove us home to NJ. They dropped me off first. One of them opened the back door and helped me up the front lawn embankment to my bedroom window. I had left it open in order to sneak back into the house without the parents knowing I was drunk. Everything was going quietly, but as the Sliz boys left to take Elliott home, they started yelling and peeled out in the car, which alerted my parents. The Sliz boys always pulled these kind of antics and not always without consequences to them.

After drinking out our welcome at the Rainbow Lounge, Elliott, the Sliz boys, another classmate and I went looking for other places upstate to get served. One Saturday night outside Suffern, we pulled into the gravel parking lot of a non-descript bar. Inside, the patrons reminded me of the hillbillies who populated the bars in the Catskills during my summer vacations. A couple of summers earlier at 15, a friend and I were playing pool in a bar in Lew Beach until some local chased us out at the point of his hand gun. That time it was my mouth that got us bounced. “What did we do?” I asked, as we ran through a field to get away from pistol Pete. My friend said, “They don’t like being insulted.”

Once inside the bar outside Suffern, we were immediately asked to leave, probably because the bartender thought some of us under age. On the way out one of the Sliz boys mouths off and the hillbillies start after us. We run to the car, everybody plies in, Elliott starts it up, puts it in gear, begins to peel out and someone idiot in the back seat yells stop while I’m sitting next to Elliott yelling at go-go-go. Apparently, Elliott, not wanting an Isadora Duncan, hits the breaks. A hillbilly reaches the car, pulls open Lee’s door and slugs him in the jaw. Lee lets out a yell and we’re surrounded by hillbillies—thank goodness this was before the movie Deliverance and we were all white. Lee apologizes for his verbal insults and the rednecks let us go.

We continued north somewhere up a New York way and pulled into a fancy looking, brightly lit-up club. Inside, the people were dressed up—some in tuxes and the girls in dresses with diamonds and jewelry. We got some strange looks, but they didn't seem hostile, which was a welcome change. The guys headed to the bar while I found the men's room. Inside, some girl walks in wearing a black dress with sequins. Uh-oh, I'm in the wrong bathroom, but then I look down at the urinal I'm using and conclude it's for both sexes. The girl walks over to the urinal next to me smiles, lifts her dress and starts using it. Hurrying back into the bar, one of the guys one says, "They're all queers in here. You can't tell the guys from the girls." "You can in the men's room," I said. This time we kicked ourselves out laughing.

The Great Pumpkin

Goosey night of our senior year, the night before Halloween 1964, the Sliz boys and I were riding around with another classmate looking for pumpkins to abduct and smash. Driving up Franklin Turnpike we spotted this huge pumpkin sitting on the brightly light front stoop of a house. The front door was open, but the outside storm door, made largely of glass, was closed. This allowed the owner to keep an eye on his prized Halloween decoration from inside the house. It was clearly a trap. The owner was broadcasting, "I dare you juvenile delinquents to even try to steal my pumpkin." Not being JDs to ignore a challenge, we stopped the car in front of the house. It was a long way from the road to that Brobdingnagian pumpkin. I was ridding shotgun at the time, so it was up to me to snatch the squash. Closing in on the target, the living room was lit with the TV, so I knew the owner was watching some show. Stealthy my arms reached around it as though it were a virgin and I took-off running for the car—damn it was heavy. One of the Sliz boys had rolled down the front door window for me to push the pumpkin threw. But it won't fit—it was too big! He opened the door and I jumped in with the abduction

on my lap. The car peeled-out with the usual Sliz boys derisive insults shouted at those who couldn't catch us.

We headed to Glen Avenue—a long, winding steep hill with a mailbox at the bottom as our target. Before starting our bobsleigh run, I leaned out the front door window and one of the Silz boys outside the car gives me the pumpkin. He jumps in the back and off we go zooming down the hill. Nearing the mail box, my knee hits the door handle and the front door pops open. That left me balancing on the door with my upper body hanging out the window holding the pumpkin and my legs inside with the other Sliz holding my ankles so I don't end up where the pumpkin was going. No way was I going to abort this challenge. Here comes the mailbox, I let go the pumpkin right on time and BOOM! Sliz pulls me back inside and we speed off laughing.

Free Speech

Fall meant deciding which college some of us seniors would try to get into. I pulled out a map of the U.S., scanned from the East coast to the West coast and said there—Berkeley. It was the farthest away from Midland Park and the parents. Could I get in, most likely. Since the Judge in the grand theft auto case warned me to do well in school—I did.

In applying for college it was necessary to have one of the guidance counselors forward a student's school records and, if requested, private evaluations to the college admission's office. Armed with the papers the counselors needed in order to send my records to Berkeley, I approached them. Not one, not one would send my records to Berkeley. Each repeated the other, "Your grades aren't good enough—don't bother. We're not going to waste the school's time." It didn't make since. They had forwarded my records to schools that were a lot harder to get into than Berkeley. Why the blockade? So I ended up attending the second furthest college

of my choice from Midland Park: the University of Colorado. The guidance counselors had no problem sending my records there.

There are times my own slowness and stupidity amaze me. In early 1965, Berkeley was in the forefront of the Free Speech movement on college campuses that would soon evolve into the anti-war and hippie oppositions. When I was trying to get the guidance counselors to do their job, Berkeley students were engaged in a mass act of civil disobedience. They were demanding the university administration lift the ban on political activities and acknowledge the students' right to free speech and academic freedom. The civil disobedience did not attract me to Berkeley, it was the distance from Midland Park and my Nazi parents. My parents knew I wanted to go to Berkeley and one of them or both had decided to prevent it. They knew if they had outright forbidden it, I might do what my brother did—join the service. So, my father, at that time still the President of the Board of Education, used his political clout to have the guidance counselors prevent me from applying. Even if I had insisted they send my records, anyone of them under pressure from father could have called Berkeley's admission office to deep six my application. Unfortunately, the realization of political interference in my life didn't occur for decades. My buddy Blackie had worked as a high school guidance counselor, and he said that just parents, not even board of education members, had enough influence over guidance counselors to push their children in certain directions. There also ways to sabotage a kid going to the college he wanted and for which he had the grades. That one underhanded, despicable act of the parents changed whatever destiny was mine. As if I didn't already despise them enough.

Driver's Seat

Still in my senior year and as a result of Susan's teaching, I put together somewhat of a philosophy, or more accurately an objective in life after experiencing an epiphany—the only one

I can recall. Late for class, I ran into Susan who had just parked her 1963 Chevy Corvette Stingray with bucket seats and four on the floor.

“Why are you late?” She asked.

“I was just finishing up this paper for English”

“Let me look at it.” I gave her the paper that expressed the philosophy and we went into a vacant classroom where she read it over. She liked it and made a few grammar corrections.

“This is good. Why don’t you sit in on my English class this year? I think you’ll like it and gain some more incite from it.”

I agreed and for the rest of my senior year took two English classes—one with her and one that was a waste of time with some androgynous, narrow-minded clown.

Every once in a while, Susan would give me a ride home from school in her Stingray. Sitting in those bucket seats, every time she shifted gears, her skirt moved a little higher on her thighs. To this day, I still regret not at least trying to put a move on her. Boy was she hot.

As for girls my own age, the only regret is that too many of them said no, and as for the ones that were interested in me, it was impossible to tell until graduation. A few of girls made their interests clear in the notes they wrote in my yearbook. Good grief, why wait until high school was over to tell me. But that’s the way girls function. Since guys can’t read minds even though girls believe they can, guys have to take a shotgun approach by hitting on one girl after another. This results in numerous rejections and hits to a guy’s ego. For instance, my buddy Blackie was hot for one girl who sat next to him in class until the teacher pulled him aside to say the girl complained about him looking down her blouse. If true, she shouldn’t have worn such revealing blouses, but she did in order to attract guys. Problem was it attracted a guy she wasn’t interested in at that point in time. Such is the very basis for Feminazism and its miscarriage the

#MeTooHo lunacy. Girls advertise their charms to attract guys, but when it's the wrong guy, they accuse him of sexual abuse—meaning he didn't read their minds to realize they didn't want him but the other guy. As Phyllis Schlafly pointed out, girls became feminists because they were upset that the guy they wanted to ask them to the Senior Prom didn't.

In 1965, the shotgun approach didn't end up ruining a guy's future. Eventually, he finds one that is interested in him. My date to the Senior Prom was one such young lady. Our Prom was called "Star Dust," which is from where we all came and would eventually go. My date was a smart girl who ended up marrying the football quarterback and the class's financial success. At the end of the Prom, she wrote a little poem in my program:

When the leaves of this page
Turn yellow with age
Don't ever forget
I remember you yet.

Nice, I still remember her.

Little Honda

With a couple of hundred dollars, a 50 cc black and white Honda became mine. Great little bike for tooling around the suburbs but longer trips to the shore or the Catskills were tough. Nice part of those days—no helmets to constrict the experience, and because the seat was small, the girls had to hold on to you—until they got scared and told you to stop.

On one occasion after our yearbook signing party with a little drinking, I offered one of the Waldwick dolls, Connie, a ride to the next party. Since freshman year, my fortunes had improved—I owned a motorbike. She accepted, much to my surprise, and away we went with her arms around me. Okay, so her longtime boyfriend could beat up most of the guys in my class, but he wasn't around having graduated the year before. This night was looking up. We head off, being followed by some of other classmates in cars because I knew the way. Then I

took the corner into the dead end street of the party a little too fast. To avoid wiping out, we went over someone's lawn and through a small hedge. "Stop!" she yelled, jumped off and into one of the cars.

As irony always has it, years later she ended up living on that dead end street where I grew up. Her house once held one of the guys in the gang I palled around with. The gang built a two story club house in his backyard, near the remnants of woods. Nearby housing developers involuntarily supplied us with our building materials. Late at night we'd sneak over to the houses being built carrying our Boys Brigade flash lights. Boys Brigade was similar to the Boy Scouts—only no queers and still no broads. Amid the skeletons of partially completed houses lit only by starlight and our flash lights we grabbed 2x4s, sheets of $\frac{3}{4}$ inch plywood and nails. We avoided moon lit nights—too easy to get caught. The sheets of plywood were difficult to surreptitiously maneuver through the uninhabited hopes of families yet to exist. Two of us could easily handle one, but two sheets—forget it. Over multiple nights we amassed our supplies and built the club house after school and on the weekends. Not a bad job. It never collapsed and provided refuge from our parents and safe keeping for the porno we collected from garbage cans or, as with our building materials, stealing. My passenger, Connie, who bailed from my Honda, never knew the insignificant history of her future home.

The Honda gave me freedom from relying on using the parents' cars. Except for the bugs in the mouth, it was a great way to travel in the warm weather, and meet chicks at parties. Going home late on a weekend night, usually by way of Highland Avenue, took me to a stop sign before crossing Erie Avenue. The middle of Erie bulged higher than Highland. It made for a type of ramp. So well before the stop sign, I'd stop, listen, and then turn the throttle up, shift the

gears for a running start to pull a little Evil Knievel going over Erie Ave. Of course, I wasn't sure whether a car was coming down Erie at the same time—but that was part of the thrill.

Here They Come, The Baby Boomers

Our high school yearbook, “The 1965 Parker,” largely avoided the typical clichés, thanks to Adams. The opening panorama showed us trudging into school with the American flag waving in the background at half-staff. Not an accidental choice, but foresight of our future as the Viet Nam War metastasized through America. My profile on one page while in class shows me wearing a Goldwater button. A number of us set up a Goldwater for President Club not because we were reactionaries, but because we knew Johnson was lying about not going to war in Viet Nam. The draft still existed then, and as avid listeners of Dylan's songs, we knew who the “Masters of War” were going to send to die in Viet Nam.

The only other place my picture appears is the obligatory portrait. Most yearbooks just list the name and maybe a nickname or sports and club memberships. Adams, however, wrote a sentence describing a senior's character. For me, he wrote “Where good and ill, together blent, wage an undying strife.” At the time I didn't get it, but after all these years, he was right.

The comments that a number of friends wrote in my yearbook seemed to express a related insight, “Don't forget the great parties—but I really don't see how you can possibly remember them! Love Lorraine.”

Graduation day in June 1965 meant parties. At one, the guys who during our senior year had gathered in the boy's room before the start of school every day were again gathered. This time for farewells. All through that year, one of the guys from Waldwick would regale us every Monday morning over the girl he had fun with on the weekend. His sexual escapades amazed me and the other guys. At this “so long” party he says, “You know all those times I told you

guys about the fun I had with the girls I went out with? They were all lies!” Nobody punched him, but we were all surprised. Since then, whenever a guy told me about his time with a girl, unless it was his wife, I listened politely, but never believed it. Maybe what he said was true, but it didn’t matter, I always dismissed it as bragging.

A few days after graduation, I snuck up to the front of the high school to continue the tradition of painting something on it and signing “Class of 65.” “May our ideals be high; Only in dreams to fly.” What do you expect for a 17 year old?

With graduation, some of the guys stepped into the real world—Vietnam or Canada. Others, like me, continued the partying through summer because we were going to college. The girls, like always, didn’t have a care in the world, except what color to paint their toe nails and what dress to wear to attract the beau of the moment they were after.

The parties were many in the suburban towns, down at the shore—Ocean City, Long Branch and up in the mountains—New Paltz. More than once, I ran into Adams from the long ball throw singing at a party. He wasn’t in a band, but just step up to the mike and sang—he always had chutzpah.

Our class’s unofficial theme song was “I Can’t Get No Satisfaction.” Often sang when mixed with boozed and always too loud when cursing the parties and hamburger stands. At one burger joint met a 15-year-old girl who delighted in taking daddy’s Thunderbird for a spin with me in it. We had “fun, fun, fun till her daddy [took] the T-bird away.” When he found out, she was grounded.

Drive
(1965)

Before “mothers against their daughters having fun like their mothers had,” the drinking

age in New York State was 18. So naturally us underage high schoolers, who didn't pretend to be as innocent as today's, headed upstate for drinking and fun.

One favorite location for teen drinking was the Brahaus on Route 17 outside of Suffern. At the bar on a Saturday night, one of the girls from my senior class was hustling some older, well-to-do looking guy. Meanwhile, I was drinking too much, as usual, with some guys who were friends of my current girl friend Pat from Allendale, NJ. Pat often pointed out that the only part of her body she liked was between her upper thighs and waist. Does that mean girls are driven more by sex than guys—you decide.

The girl from my class was successful in landing the older guy, so she asked me to take her car home and gave me the keys—big mistake.

She left with the guy and sometime later we left in her car with me driving and one of the guys from Allendale following us in his car. My memory isn't too good about that night, but as we were passing a field in Waldwick east of Route 17, one of the guys says. "How do you think this Corvair will do in the field?"

That brought to mind an incident from my prior summer about a friend driving his car through some farmer's corn field up in Roscoe, NY. Naturally, I made a quick 90° turn into the field. We zoomed back and forth a couple of times yelling and laughing our heads off until the transmission went. We piled out of the totaled Corvair.

"What'll we do now?" One guy asked.

"Leave it," I said. "She should have known better than trust a bunch of drunks with her car."

We got into the car that had been following us and went home.

The girl was ticked and wanted money—of course, or she'd go to the authorities. That would be bad news for me, since I was still on probation for stealing and totaling another car with the aide of my school's superintendent son. One of the Allendale guys told her that if she did, we'd spill the beans about her picking up some guy in a bar and spending the night with him.

Personally, I didn't think that would work. Even in 1965, who would care if she picked up a guy and spent the night with him? No one, unless she did it for money, which was prostitution and a crime. And I had witnesses to provide enough evidence to at least interest the cops—underage high school girl drinking in a bar where she picks up an older guy and leaves with him. It would cause her all kinds of trouble and expenses for an attorney. So my friend's threat worked. She never went to the cops and nothing ever came of the incident.

Don't know what relevance this may have, but decades later Blackie and I did some research into the Wortendyke Inn in our hometown. An organized crime figure from Paterson opened the Inn in Midland Park in the 1950s. As a child, who naturally listened in on adult conversations, the Inn became a big deal among the grown ups for reasons I couldn't understand as a kid. Sometimes, however, I didn't have to surreptitiously listen. Mother often yelled at father, one of the town's political bosses, for coming home late and polluted.

“The political meeting didn't last that long. You and the others went to the Wortendyke Inn again for a good time. I won't have it; I'll leave you!” She even confided in me that she was thinking of divorcing him.

My pal Blackie also remembered talk about the Inn at the time, which made both of us suspicious. So we started talking with guys who were older than us back then. They confirmed the upstairs in the Inn was a brothel. So who would have discount access to the girls—the town

movers and shakers. It was the same old story, although on a smaller scale. The influential or rich older men get the young prostitutes—no one wants an old one, and the wives yell and scream and threaten divorce.

“So where do you think these hookers came from?” I asked Blackie.

“Probably Paterson, that’s where the hood who owned the place was from.”

“You know, I bet some of the girls we were chasing in high school worked there.”

He laughed.

“No, seriously. It was a quick way for them to make money. Most of the girls in school were not from well-off families. And none of them would ever spill the beans when their Johns were the town bosses. I’m not going to be around for the next class reunion, so why don’t you start asking the girls about it?”

“Yeah right, why don’t you come back from the grave and ask them?” He replied.

We laughed.

Road Trip

Towards the end of summer, Bauer, the smartest guy in our class, and I hitchhiked to Miami. Why Miami—who knows; it was his suggestion. We knew our parents would never allow us if we asked, so I told mine I’d be staying at the Bauer’s house and he told his he’d be staying at our summer cabin. We didn’t have much money, so we always bolted from hotels or restaurants. On the way, we learned that eating ice cubes, which were free in motels, superficially curbed the appetite. We both carried knives not wanting to end up the perversion treat for some sicko fags. One time, a couple of guys heading for Viet Nam let us sleep in their trailer. I told Bauer, I’d keep first watch and put my hand on the hilt of my hunting knife just in case. But I fell asleep. So we were lucky then.

Miami was nice, we snuck onto the Fontainebleau beach—everybody was white then and lots of tanned sexy blondes. Our last night in Miami, we went out our first floor window in the Surfside hotel late at night to avoid paying. Made our way at night to a shopping center with a water fountain that had walls wide enough on which to sleep. But every time I feel asleep my arm would plop into the water waking me up. On our way north, we stopped at Cape Canaveral to watch a launch but it was delayed, so we missed it. One 30 something lady gave us a ride with a small boy sleeping on her front seat. She kept looking at me in the rearview mirror saying, “I know you. I know what you’re thinking.” Maybe if I hadn’t been so tired, I would have put a move on her. In New Jersey the State Police picked us up—they had been looking for us since we left, a week ago. Here’s why. The Sliz boys had called our parents pretending to ask for us. With my parents they asked for Bauer saying, “Oh we heard Bauer was staying with you, since he’s not at home.” With Bauer’s parents they’d ask for me. “Oh we heard Roy was staying with you, since he’s not at home.” Our parents got together, realized our trick and notified the State Police.

Summer 1965 was over. The Board of Education had fired Susan. The reason they gave was that she was “teaching her students to think.” Typical of small town, small minded America. From birth until summer’s end, I had been economically and emotionally stuck in Midland Park. My first decision of freedom had been manipulated by the parents, which set my life in a direction it never should have gone. Everyone I’ve met and everything that’s happen in my life since then doesn’t matter—they’re all meaningless.

War of the Worlds

Home for summer and work from a boring year in Colorado, my buddy Elliott came up with a great idea of sticking it to those we called the “ugly people”—narrow minded

authoritarians and the generic fools living where we grew up. In the tradition of Orson Wells, he invented a process for putting together a hot air balloon made out of the same type of plastic used by dry clearness to cover clothes. Following his instructions, our group of rebels melted plastic sheets together using blow torches, used stainless steel wire to make a ring with a sterno can in the middle and attached it to one end of the balloon. A flare was hung from the sterno can with a fuse extending to a cigarette. We'd light the sterno to fill the balloon with hot air and just before launch, light the cigarette. Once in the air, the cigarette burned down to ignite the fuse that then lit the flare. All this happened at night, of course.

Lots of people in Bergen and Passaic Counties got upset, called the cops and the press. Even the Hayden Planetarium and McGuire Air Force Base started investigating. Both claimed it was not a U.F.O. but the satellite Echo I, which was 200 feet in diameter. We laughed at this attempted cover-up. Our balloons were maybe 5 feet by 7 feet. After our two week campaign of ballooning, a growing number of people were claiming that flying saucers were here exploring earth. The Saucer and Unexplained Celestial Events Research Society said, "The objects represented something very advanced and very powerful."

After our success in Northern New Jersey, we decided to try for the big time—New York City. When the weather report had winds blowing from west to east, we went to the foot of the Palisades across from the City and launched the balloon. Next day, we scanned the papers but no mention of U.F.O.s or flying saucers. Then we realized. New York is so lit up at night that no one would see our red light in the sky. So ended out extraterrestrial practical joke. We went back to college and Elliott's unique quality of sticking it to the establishment died when he got married.

Rocky Mountain High
(Summer 1967)

In the mid-sixties, the University of Colorado at Boulder had a reputation as a party school. As with most reputations, they are usually false, as was this one. High schoolers from Midland Park and Waldwick, New Jersey had wilder parties than the predominant dirt farmers attending at Boulder. When Waldwick students began attending M.P. High in our freshman year, the Waldwick girls strutted in with the air of 22 year-olds while we Midland Park guys were at the level of 12 year-olds. It was time to catch up. Craig, my competitor in the grammar school long ball throw, proselytized the attitude of “Wild Man” as a way of living that attracted these babes.

Besides Colorado’s backward dirt farmers, who thought drinking grain alcohol was superior to Jack Daniels, Colorado did have great mountains for skiing and a resort area that attracted a lot of babes during the summer—Estes Park. The Park was high-up in the mountains while Boulder was at the foot of the Rockies. It took about an hour to drive to the Park with the last half hour chugging up the Rockies in a steady climb until you reached the ridge that look down into the Valley of youthful delight, Estes Park.

At the time, I had a VW Beetle with a sun roof, so my buddy, a folk guitar player, and I would drive up to the park and dropped acid. The girls were friendly and we had fun with them and they with us, but the best part was the ride home—stoned on acid. Back then we had a source of Sandoz LSD, no speed mixed with it.

We’d drive up out of the valley to the top of the surrounding mountains, open the sun roof, turn off the motor, and, if the moon was out, off went the headlights. For nearly 30 minutes, we’d whiz silently down the mountains with the stars over head, my portable record player spinning music of the time and LSD coursing through our brains—nice.

Eve of Destruction

College only turned out to be a safe haven for a handful of years. Those of us guys in college knew we were on borrowed time. The periodic news of the death of a prior classmate in Viet Nam who never made it to college or dropped-out or funk-out or ran out of money reminded us every day that the most powerful nation in the history of the world was perched waiting to send us halfway around that world to risk our lives guarding Firestone's rubber tree plantation in the Mekong Delta, or some other U.S. business investment.

By 1967, I had had enough with studying aerospace engineering. It just didn't seem important with my contemporaries dying in a stupid and useless war. So I turned-on, tuned-in to somewhere and dropped-out. But after dropping out of the University of Colorado, I wasn't going to Viet Nam, instead underground with an assumed name to Goleta, California. After Susan was fired, she went to the University of Santa Barbara located in Goleta for graduate studies, so why not visit her. No way was the female head of my draft board going to make me do to the Vietnamese what the British tried to do to us Americans.

Goleta was nice—no oil on the beaches yet, and Susan was a smart person with whom to talk. The War was out of my life temporarily, and I sat in on grad school classes, including one of Susan's. My draft board tried finding me without success, but I knew eventually I would have to return to college for another 2-S exemption. Spring 1968 brought me back to the University of Colorado and the cherished 2-S exemption. There I played center middie on its Lacrosse team and did volunteer work on Bobby Kennedy's Presidential Campaign.

Kennedy or Eugene McCarthy were the last hope within the system for the guys of my generation not to end up prematurely dead, maimed, poisoned or psychologically destroyed in Viet Nam. For the girls, as always, it was which campaign of the rival candidates they were

more likely to meet a guy who would support them for the rest of their lives. On June 3, 1968, in San Diego, Kennedy spoke mainly to us guys, “What we have to offer is the world’s last best hope—youth, not a time of life but a state of mind, a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination, a predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over the love of ease.” The next day, they murdered that hope.

The pronoun “they” is correct. Years later in 1975, Al Lowenstein and Paul Schrade started an effort to re-open the Robert Kennedy assassination case in which I joined. Sirhan Sirhan was convicted in 1969 but it appeared to us that a second gunman had actually killed Kennedy. First, Sirhan carried a .22 caliber Iver Johnson handgun with eight shots, but more than eight shots were fired in the hotel’s pantry. Second, famed Los Angeles coroner Thomas Noguchi’s autopsy found powder burns on the senator’s jacket and on his hair, indicating four shots fired at point-blank range from behind, including the fatal shot to behind his ear. Sirhan was standing in front of Kennedy during the shooting and was not close enough to cause the powder burns. Third, a security guard also carrying a handgun was walking behind Kennedy at precisely the angle from where the shots to Kennedy’s head and back were fired. He has consistently denied firing his weapon although witnesses testified he did. Police never examined the security guard’s gun. Fourth, the police confiscated Sirhan’s gun but screwed up the ballistics testing. A subsequent effort to retest the ballistics required a re-firing of Sirhan’s gun. The problem was that by then someone had run a metal wire brush through the barrel making ballistics impossible. So subsequent investigations couldn’t match any of the bullets from the wounded bystanders or Kennedy to Sirhan’s gun. Fifth, Los Angeles police bullied or ignored witnesses who claimed they saw Sirhan with a dark-haired woman in a white polka-dot dress. At trial, prosecutors brought in a blonde-haired woman with a green polka-dot dress and claimed

she was the mysterious woman in question. A re-examination of the assassination of Senator Kennedy was ordered by the courts but the result was the same—Sirhan remained the escape goat.

Bad Moon Arising
(1968)

My best friend from high school decided or was pressured into marriage by his high school sweetheart and his mother. I kept telling him, “Don’t do it! Let’s get a sail boat as you once suggested and sail around the world. There are plenty of good looking broads out there wanting to take their chance at landing an American.”

But my argument couldn’t overcome his sexy girl friend or domineering mother. His mother really hated me as did his much younger sister of whom I had a fantasy or two. Whenever I walked into his family’s house, I could feel the daggers from those two’s eyes.

When the wedding arrangements were made in New Jersey, he sent a letter to me in Colorado asking me to be an usher. Although I didn’t like it, I said yes. In my return letter, I volunteered to bring along some excellent grass to mitigate his foolishness. Little did I suspect his mother or younger sister was opening his mail. His outraged mother decided that a hippie wasn’t going to attend her oldest son’s wedding. My role as an usher was canceled. I didn’t mind because I knew the troika of females was behind it—not him. Whatever back and forth fighting went on between him and the troika remains unknown to me, but it must have been heated, since just before the wedding, he resurrected my role as an usher.

The ceremony was depressing watching this smart guy with an appetite for adventure descending down the drain of mediocrity. The reception food and booze, however, were enjoyable. I even wrote a little ditty at the reception while sitting next to a one synapse bride’s

maid who actually said, “He’ll get his reward tonight.” To which I replied, “You mean he’ll escape.” She didn’t like that.

Here’s the ditty my muse, the bride’s maid, engendered:

Here comes the groom
Being led to his doom.
Look at his stupid smile
As he walks down the aisle.
Thinking he’s changed his fate
With a suck, a fuck and a cake.
Soon his wife will be humping the milk men
While he’s suffering cardiac arrest in the den.
Wait till he belly swells
And the house is full of yells.
Oh what a cute little daughter
I’ll fuck her when she’s older.

Not exactly what Susan my hot English teacher in high school would approve of, but usually the truth. Unfortunately the truth for my buddy, whom I never saw after that day, was worst. But that story is not until the end of this magnum opus.

Street Fighting Man

In the fall, I started at Boston University and joined S.D.S. Went to demos, helped take over buildings, had nasty arguments with college officials, helped in a Black Panther used clothing drive and lusted after Angela Davis who spoke on campus and my radical seminar professor—boy were those two babes yummy. Almost made it to the Days of Rage in Chicago, but a fellow SDSer talked me out of it. It was always the same old argument of trying to use the system to change it or go outside the system to bring it down. In hindsight, neither really made any sense. Back then the war hawks were running the show, now it’s the PC-Feminazis. Both hate liberty and try to sacrifice you on the altar of their interests. As for outside the system, blowing up corporation bathrooms or townhouses just didn’t seem relevant.

My main objective in Boston, however, was to beat the draft, which kept breathing down my neck. The 2-S deferment didn't last forever, but a little luck and planning did. On the planning side, I found an anti-war shrink who willingly, for an amount of money, wrote letters to keep guys like me out of the draft. The problem was that the draft boards had become suspicious of him, so I couldn't just walk in and lay the money down and walk out with an effective letter. Instead, I started seeing him once a week over more than a year. That meant, I was a legitimate patient. On the luck side, I re-injured a knee originally thrown out while playing Lacrosse at Colorado.

With the knee, I first tried an orthopedist who had been a Marine—no way was he going to help me avoid the draft. He thought I should go over there and take a few rounds for the military-industrial complex and Nixon's policy of Vietnamization. Next, lady luck stepped in with an appointment with a doctor at the University. His son was my age and facing the same predicament that all guys in our age range faced, so he wrote me a great letter for the draft board.

Spring 1970, along with my cane, which I no longer needed but the military didn't know that, we potential canon fodder, early in the morning, are sitting in a room at the draft board. A room filled the doom of morose guys my age fearing the worst. Some soldier comes in and tells us to follow him. I get up and start walking normally toward the door. One of the guys says, "You forgot your cane." I hurry back for it, and start hobbling on it to the door. The rest of the guys start laughing.

As the day wore on, my old buddy Bauer with whom I had hitchhiked to Miami showed as one of the potential draftees. He was now playing in a local rock 'n' roll band. When my name was called, I handed over my two letters to the officers: one stated I was unfit for the military because of a bad knee, the other that I was unfit because of a bad attitude. Midway

through the day, they finally read my letters and called me to a window. The soldier said, “You have been found unfit for military service and are free to go.”

The best words any man in my age bracket back then could hear. But now what to do. Since 1965, when I walked out of high school, to 1970, my life, like those of so many other guys, was ruled by the draft. Some just gave up and went—40 percent of those in Vietnam were drafted, some volunteered because they had no other choice, some were told by judges to join or go to jail for some minor crime, and some were gun-ho. Some even lived in a drug induced illusion day in and day out. In the Boston University dorm Myles Standish Hall, the guys in the room next to me smoke dope all day and night long. Once I asked one of the guys why. He said. “Look at what’s outside. There’s no place else to go.”

He was in part right but also wrong. True there was no place else to go in America but not the world. Even in America the place to go was not a place but a potential future time because the times were changing.

When hitchhiking from Boston back to Jersey a driver left me off at the small shopping center on Franklin Avenue just east of the Grand Union in Ridgewood. Complete with beard and shoulder length hair I stuck out my thumb for a ride to Midland Park. A housewife in her white convertible pulled out of the shopping center going my way. She looked at me with obvious distaste and disapproval and stepped on the gas to get away. Her two young daughters in the back seat, probably around 10, turned, smiled threw me a flower and flashed the peace sign. At the 1969 mobilization to stop the war, beyond the battling at the Justice Department, the sense of the 500,000 people was one that the war hawks of the older generation were in retreat while many in the new generation were moving to liberty, equality and fraternity. Even the girls

seemed to stop playing their stupid games and were willing to help in ending the lunacy of the war.

Then the Feminazis shrilly pushed their way onto the scene with a new con to replace the prior establishment. Not only should men put girls on a pedestal for romance but also for any occupation, economics, law and whatever she wanted to do regardless of her abilities. Just another special interest group wanting preferential treatment, but this one declared all girls should be treated as princesses. At Boston University, a band of Feminazis, Bread and Roses, started putting small stickers around the college saying, "It's not your heart he's after." Obviously, but they failed to address the other side of the same story, "It's not you she's after, but your wallet." Fair is fair, but try telling that to any female who lives by lies and false impressions. I never bought into their ideology except for about 10 minutes when I was trying to hustle this hot looking Feminazi at Boston. What surprised me was all the guys who bought this garbage or pretended to believe it. What once seemed as a bringing together of the two sexes for both their benefits has turned into total war for the past half a century.

After Kent State in 1970, the anti-war movement held another demo in D.C. with around 100,000 protesters. Sitting on the ground in the crowd listening to the speakers, Candice Bergen was introduced. "What the devil is that rich, spoiled broad doing here?" I thought, and stood up to take a look. There she was dressed to the hilt in her Madison Avenue mod. Then I knew the anti-war movement was dead. While some of the old SDSers were blowing up restrooms, others were co-opting their way into the establishment's panties represented by Bergen. I left and went back to Boulder, Colorado.

Started shooting coke, heroin, angel dust and anything else that dissolved in water. One of the hippies in the house where I was living was a hardcore junkie. He'd come into my room

when I was sleeping and search through the dresser drawers looking for dope. Once, after he dropped some methadone, we went to the supermarket. We're at the checkout cashier with him standing in front of me. Suddenly his body starts shaking; he was nodding. So I hit him a couple of times on the back and he straightens out. The hippie culture like the anti-war movement had gone sour.

Early that spring while walking passed the University's rugby team practicing outside the stadium, someone shouts "Hey, Den Hollander." It's my former physics professor with whom I had played Lacrosse for the University a few years earlier. His nickname was "Stick" and the president of the only motorcycle gang in Boulder and the only person I knew who could do a back flip from a standing still position. He also dated the hottest babes on campus.

"Why don't you come out for the rugby team? You always liked to hit the other guy in Lacrosse even though it wasn't allowed. With rugby, you hit the guy with the ball all the time." I thought about two seconds and said, "I'll be here tomorrow." No way I could keep shooting heroin and play rugby, so goodbye junk. The team did fairly well, we made it into the semi-finals with me playing flanker. At Colorado, the flankers did not switch between blindside and openside, but stayed on the same side of the field throughout a half. My coach once told me, "Den Hollander if you were 20 pounds heavier, you'd be the best flanker I ever saw." That was a great compliment and touched on a quality and a problem throughout my life. My quickness, innate anger and reckless abandon gave me the temperament of good flanker, but my 160 pounds made it difficult to keep a scrum from spinning. At season's end, I went back East.

Centerfold

A friend had just graduated from Georgetown and wanted to hitchhike to San Francisco. The city had just started allowing bottomless go-go girls in North Beach. We used to frequent

the topless joints in D.C. when he was in college. Sometimes the girls would come over and sit with us just to talk, since we were obviously college guys and poor. They didn't even bother conning us for a drink or meal even though they were also college girls and poor. Hitting clubs in North Beach where the girls wore no g-strings at all sounded inviting.

Once on our sojourn, a hot, young and obviously rich girl in a red sports car stopped. She said, "I can only take one of you because as you can see my car won't fit you both. So you guys decide which one." Personally, I thought she was just exercising her power as a hot babe to see whether one of us would give up the other. If that happened, she would just speed off laughing. Girls are tricky like that, but it didn't work. We both declined to leave the other, and off she sped.

Somewhere in Missouri, three hippie guys in a van pick us up. Two were our age and one looked like he was still in high school. They were going to San Francisco, so no more hitchhiking. They only had one cassette, however, the Rolling Stones album "Sticky Fingers." By San Francisco, we knew all the lyrics by heart. In Kansas, we pulled into a campsite for the night. The night sky was packed full of stars searching across flat Kansas. More than I ever saw up in New York State. It was just beautiful lying out there under them. In Colorado, the cops busted us and others sleeping in a camping ground. It turned out there was a missing persons report on the high school kid, so we sat in the police station while the cops notified his parents. All the while, I kept hoping the cops didn't search us. Hitchhiking across America with long hair in the time of Easy Rider wasn't exactly safe. So I carried a loaded semi-auto .25 caliber pistol. At least I'd take one or two red-necks with me. The cops never did search us and the kid's parents allowed him to continue to San Francisco, so they released us. In Utah, while cruising by the Bonneville Salt Flats where racers set land speed records, I half mockingly said

to the driver, “Hey, why don’t you turn off and see how fast this thing can go on the flats?” To my surprise he did and we were immediately stuck in porous salt and mud. It must have rained the night before. He tried driving out, no good. We pushed and pushed, no good. We tried flagging down help, no good. The few cars on the highway just whizzed by. Were we to die in this god-forsaken desert lorded over by the Mormons? We finally started thinking civil engineering and put some cardboard and rocks under the tires for the back wheels to grip. With a few more heave-hos, the van was free and we were free to live until another stupid deed.

In San Francisco, my buddy got the two of us a room at some Jesuit seminary, since he had graduated their college, Georgetown. He couldn’t get the van guys in, so they went their own way. The next day, the two of us hit a trendy downtown bar where a friendly older bartender lady entertained us with stories and dancing behind the bar. At night we went to North Beach, stopped in a few topless-bottomless clubs to which I remarked, “These aren’t centerfolds. They looked like the tired, old strippers from the Village.”

Meet Me in St. Louis, Louis

We headed back East. I stopped off in St. Louis for the rest of the summer and my buddy continued home to New Jersey. St. Louis was great. I ended up crashing with an old buddy from Colorado who had a cracker, a black guy—naturally called Rap, and a pregnant girl for roommates in a large apartment. None of the guys were the father. All summer long, she couldn’t decide what to do when the baby was born: keep it or give it up for adoption, murdering it through abortion was not an option for her as it is with so many self-centered females. We were living in Clayton on Southwood Avenue, right next to Forest Park. Forest Park had been the site of the 1904 St. Louis World’s Fair. Across from the park on the northern

side along Lindell Boulevard was a row of mansions built in the late 1800s by the city's millionaires—beautiful houses.

My old college buddy had a younger brother who hung out with a crowd that played softball a few nights a week at John Burroughs prep school in Ladue, a few miles down the road. Ladue was the wealthy suburb of St. Louis. The softball games included a bunch of friendly people, some still in high school, some older than me, such a teacher and another married lady, and a guy who had actually tried out for a pro football team. The group started calling me “Ace” for a reason that escapes me, but unlike my Eastern pals at the time, it wasn't derogatory. When I bought a 54 Chevy pickup truck to get to the games, the DMV required me to put my name and address on the door, so I used “Ace.” Sometimes a car with babes would ride by with a couple leaning out the window, “Hey Ace, hey Ace.” Why were the girls out here so friendly compared to the East Coast?

My buddy from Colorado worked in the public health department and was friends with a married couple who were both doctors. Their sons who played in the softball games had a band and the doctors invited my buddy and me over for dinner. The doctors also had a five-year-old platinum-blond beauty whom you knew was going to break a lot of hearts. Sarah focused on me and said she wanted me to come over the next day and play dolls. From her older brothers, I got the distinct impression Sarah got what she wanted.

After dinner, Sarah's mother said, “You know she expects you to be here tomorrow.”

“You're kidding,” I answered. “Won't she just forget?”

“Not her and be ready to play dolls,” she smiled.

“Do girls really pursue guys at that young age?”

Her mother laughed, “Of course they do. It's genetic.”

Baby sitting was something I had never done and playing dolls was something that never even crossed my mind.

The next day was largely spent playing dolls with a five-year-old doll, which quickly evolved into a friendship, or from her view something more? I took her to some of the softball games where I put her into the care of one of the high school girls with instructions to avoid any brain washing. Also took her swimming in my 14 year-old-girl friend's pool. One time, my girl friend and I were sitting on the edge of the pool dangling our legs in the water when Sarah, held afloat by an inflated tube, paddles over. She looks at my thigh, runs her hand across it as though she's a grown woman, then turns back to being a five-year-old and paddles away. My girl friend and I just look at each other in amazement. Playing dolls and taking Sarah to the softball games and swimming was the closest I ever got to being a parent.

As the softball games continued, one guy and I fell into a home run derby contest, but can't remember who won by summer's end. At least half the players were girls, so reflecting the lunacy of the times they wanted a game of guys versus girls. Us guys said sure, and to make it competitive, we won't use gloves and would bat our opposite ways. Gee, guess who won. As the slaughter progressed, some of the girls got so mad that when they were thrown out at first base, they'd give me, the first baseman, an elbow as they ran by. Somewhere deep down, girls really disliked guys.

My summer of softball, friends and Sarah sitting ended too soon. I thought of settling there, finishing college at Washington University, which was a few blocks away, but went back East to attend Columbia's School of General Studies. Most likely a mistake, but once again, had it not been for parental interference with my college education, it never would have happened. Therefore, in the end, as with everything else, it was meaningless

Derry

Columbia didn't pan out, so looking for something worthwhile to do, I went to Northern Ireland to see if the I.R.A. would take me. Really dumb, thinking the I.R.A. would allow a Dutchman to join. My interest in them started in the summer of 1969 when working in England. The British papers were filled with the "Troubles." England had done to Ireland what it had tried to do to America.

Starting in the 1600s, England created a colony in the northern part of the island country run by Protestants imported from England to keep the Catholics under the boot-heel of the British. The southern part won its independence in 1921 but the north remained tied to England. In the late 1960s, the Catholics in the North began protesting the system wide violation of their civil rights by the ruling Protestants. Conflicts between Catholic youths and the Protestant police resulted in riots and the deployment of British Troops. The Brits sided with the Protestants, so the Catholics created their own paramilitary force the I.R.A. and the Protestants did the same with the U.V.F.

At Heathrow Airport, the British Customs agent gave me a strange look on seeing my ticket to Belfast and asked me my business there. "Just a Christmas vacation," I said and boarded my flight.

Stepping off the plane in Belfast, there were none of the usual waving folks waiting for family and friends, just armor vehicles and British troops carrying assault rifles. This territory was clearly occupied. After finding a bed and breakfast, I heard some explosions, and in the words of a high school pal, set off to find the action. By the time I arrived, the Royal Ulster Constabulary and fire brigade had the area cordon off. It was an explosion at some protestant shop likely set by the I.R.A. Surprisingly, no one was hurt. The next day, I took a train the

Derry. Met an Irish Catholic girl who was upset over the violence. She didn't care about the Brits violating her rights but about a friend who had just been maimed in an explosion.

In Derry, I ran into an American from the Bronx working for the Irish Northern Aid Committee. Us Americans stood out in that place—must have been the accent. He filled me in on some of the history of Ireland's problems with the British and even confided that he was there to deliver money to the I.R.A. collected in the States. I told him I was interested in joining. He looked surprised but agreed to run it by his contacts at the Bogside Inn.

“Take me with you,” I asked.

“No that would be too dangerous for me,” he replied.

While waiting for word from the Bogside Inn, during the night I'd usually walk around the Bogside, which was nearly pitched-black with British check points on its perimeter. The soldiers didn't dare go into the Bogside because the I.R.A. controlled it. Nearing a check point, the Brits would yell, “Halt!” To which I'd respond with some neutral remark. The moment they heard my accent, they knew I was American.

“Are you lost?”

“No, just taking a walk.”

“This is a dangerous place to walk. You may not make it to the end.”

“Thanks for the warning.” But I didn't care.

One day, explosions started going off, and just like in Belfast, I followed the sounds to the action. A group of Catholic guys my age and younger were throwing rocks at British troops in the Creggan Estates. The youths were situated on the side of a road that bounded a soccer field with a house between them and the Brits a short way down the road. On the other side of the road were a row of townhouses. The Brits would fire rubber bullets now and then whenever

someone stepped out from behind the house. Those rubber bullets were a joke. They were easier to dodge than an opposing rugby player. Why'd they even bother?

The Irish youths, as most European guys, can't throw worth a damn. That's understandable; they grew up with soccer not baseball. So, I started giving them a crash course in the long ball throw. After all, I came in second to Adams back when we were kids. Then one guy pulls out a small bomb with a really short fuse and tries to launch it over the house between us and the Brits. He throws a curve instead and blows out the second story window in a row house on the other side of the road. The lady occupant opens her front door and smiles at the group.

Resuming my long ball throw with rocks over the house we were using for cover, I became curious as to the precision of my aim. Stepping out from behind the house and standing a couple of feet away from the metal pole of a street light, I hear a rapid ding, ding, ding. Then I hear the gun fire, hit the ground, roll over the embankment and see the other guys huddled against it in fear. Bullets travel faster than sound. Realizing the Brits were out to kill, the riot was over and everybody dispersed. The British Government had always claimed its troops kept their assault rifles on single shot, but the guy shooting at me had his on automatic and still missed. No wonder they lost the war against America. All in all, it was the best day of my life.

The following day, the Northern Aid Committee guy said his contacts thought me a C.I.A. agent. So back to the U.S. Two weeks later, Bloody Sunday occurred when British Troops started killing youths who were throwing rocks at them. The youths were unable to hit the soldiers, but that didn't matter to the Brits. Looked like I missed my big chance—I could've hit those murderers.

Back in the U.S.S.A., I enrolled again at Columbia, started working in its library to support myself, found a room off-campus and played rugby for the College team during the spring of 1972.

My brother hit hard than that.

One Friday, bored with nothing going on that weekend, my pony tail and I hitchhiked down to Philadelphia to see the friend with whom I had gone to California who was working there. While waiting in the lobby of his hotel in Philly, Joe Frazier walks by with his entourage. Frazier was huge, glad he didn't play rugby.

My friend shows up with his co-workers and we all go out drinking. When the bar closes, one of my friend's co-workers gets in a fight with another drunk in the bar's parking lot. Mayor Frank Rizzo's police force shows up and starts putting not only the fighters but my buddy and his other co-everyone into the paddy wagon. I in my pony tail try to intercede asking, "Why are you arresting them? They weren't fighting?"

The cop belligerently says "You're under arrest too, get in."

In I go, sit down and reply, "You wouldn't be so tough without that tin star on your chest."

Not exactly original, but enough for the cop to blow up. He jumps in the wagon and tries to slug me, but misses, hits the steel wall of the wagon instead at which point I pin his arms to keep the pig from trying again. The other cops pull him out of the wagon with him hitting the back of his head on the top frame of the door. Looked like a win for me.

At the precinct, when we exited the paddy wagon, some cop asked, "Who's the tough guy?" To which I naturally replied, "I am." Pow! He punches me in the stomach—typical pig cheap shot and hand cuffs me behind my back. My friend and his co-workers are taken into the

stationhouse while the precinct pigs gathered into two lines, a gauntlet, through which one pig pushes me. They punched and kicked me to which I almost mouthed off “My older brother used to hit harder than that when we were kids!” But considering my situation, I chose discretion as the better course.

Inside the precinct, they handcuff me to metal bench in a locked cell. Guess they thought they had captured John Dillinger.

When they finally processed me, I told them I wanted to go to the hospital. It likely had a better environment than the precinct. On the way to the hospital and back again, my cowardly escorts punched and kicked me the way girls do when someone can't strike back and with about as much force. These were the famed, tough Rizzo pigs. They couldn't defeat a Girl Scout troop.

They locked me in the drunk-tank that was nearly packed. No one bothered me, must have been the brushes on my face from the gauntlet. Most my time was spent reading the book on Ireland's battles with the Brit that I had brought along to Philly. It had been recommended by the guy from the Irish Northern Aid Committee. Next day, they locked us all in cells. At one moment, someone in another cell started singing “Yesterday.” I laughed. The interesting part of being entombed in concrete and steel was that when you close your eyes, you can see fields of grass and trees. Monday morning, the court charged me with assaulting a cop and resisting arrest. My buddy showed and bailed me out.

The pig's case came to trial just after Thanksgiving, which was dismissed thanks to an A.C.L.U. lawyer. The F.B.I., however, investigated the violation of my civil rights, which was added along with many others to a lawsuit brought by the Department of Justice against Mayor Rizzo and various police officials for committing and condoning “widespread and sever” acts of

police brutality. As is usual with American injustice against the establishment, the case went nowhere.

Four More Years

Walking down Broadway, bored with my life, I stop at a table set by the local reform democratic club, Riverside Democrats. The club was looking for volunteers to register people to vote called "First Vote" and help on the McGovern presidential campaign and Bella Abzug's congressional campaign. Count me in and I signed up. S.D.S. was dead, other than the guys blowing up bathrooms, so reform democratic politics was the remaining opposition to the never ending War. Sure, I had beaten the draft, but I was ticked at that War and the government pushing me around for five years.

The Riverside Club assigned me to doing canvassing during the summer in some of the more dangerous parts of its district. That didn't bother me. They were nothing compared to the Bogside. In the fall, the Club made Frank, an aide to State Senator Sidney von Luther, and me the co-chairmen for its McGovern, Abzug and other 1972 campaigns. Frank was also a former S.D.S.er who helped shut down Columbia with Mark Rudd in 1968 and also acted as Rudd's bodyguard. He brought his roommates into the campaign who were in their last year at Columbia. One a student body senator who led a student strike at Columbia after Rudd and knew how to box. The other, an English major who could knuckle your head before you could count to four.

Our only opposition wasn't Nixon's dirty trick boys. They didn't bother with our area because it usually voted for the Democrats. Our opponents came from the downtown McGovern headquarters run by Dickie Morris. He cut a deal with conservative democrats in the Club to try and push aside our operations, but they were too slow and too dumb. The keys to the vote in the

area and volunteers were Columbia Students. Morris's reactionary underlings focused on old line democrats as well as the fat, lazy and local political leftovers from McCarthy's campaign, such as Jerry Nadler.

Frank and I ramped up the canvassing and started enlisting volunteers from Columbia at the beginning of the fall term. Thanks to a couple of high school girls, we also had an in at the local schools for volunteers. On Election Day we had all the polls covered, the phones were buzzing pulling out the vote, volunteers were knocking on doors reminding people to vote and anyone needing a ride or escort to vote got it.

Morris had funded a store front for his bought-off workers and his chief lackey actually came now to the club on Election Day with a bull horn to try and get our volunteers up to his empty store front. The Columbia student senator grabbed the bull horn and kicked him out. On the lackey's way back to his storefront, we had a surprise for him. The student senator had a twin brother in Boston whom no one knew about. He came down to help us out, so we put him in Morris' storefront to send what volunteers might show there down to us at the Club. When Morris' lackey made it back to his storefront—there was the student senator doing to his volunteers what he had tried to do with ours. He was dumbfounded. How could one guy be in two places at once? At the end of the day, the two twins appeared together outside the store front. Morris's lackey realized the trick and we laughed at him.

The Club won its area 4 to 1 for McGovern, but, except for Massachusetts, the entire country had chosen four more years, which thanks to a couple of reporters and various impeachment movements ended up being only two more years.

Us former S.D.S.ers and the organization we built took over the Riverside Democrat Club at its annual directors and officers election in 1973. We didn't win everything but enough to

exercise control with a few allies. Our big mistake, however, was electing a 22-year-old President. At the time, he was dying of cancer, but the sleaze didn't tell anyone. We felt like McGovern with Eagleton when we found out. Our political clout in the Club and the New Democratic Coalition, which was trying to replace the old line regular democrats from Tammany Hall, lasted through 1974.

In 1973 the Watergate Scandal broke, so our group of now bourgeois reformers, perhaps a little full of ourselves, worked at mobilizing public pressure on Congress to impeach Nixon. We set up the Committee For A 1974 Presidential Election that held forums and debates, won the support of local Congressmen and other government officials, which wasn't hard since Manhattan had supported McGovern, and lobbied the press. Nixon was eventually impeached, maybe we helped a little, maybe not, but it was worth the effort and fun.

The political battle in Manhattan was between us reformers and the regulars of Tammany Hall. One of the battlegrounds was election districts. The Board of Elections drew geographical boundaries for each election district, which usually comprised a block or two. Each district had a minimum of two and a maximum of four Democrat committeemen. The Republicans also had their committeemen, but being Republican in Manhattan usually meant little or no power because there were so many registered Democrats.

The power of committeemen was to select Democrat candidates to fill some vacancies and determine the rules by which the Manhattan Democrat party operated. Victor Kovner, a reform Democrat, political power broker and lawyer, enlisted our group to floor manage the 1974 New York County Committee Meeting. He wanted us to keep tract of the chances to (1) change an old Tammany Hall rule and (2) add a reform rule. The Tammany Hall rule prevented anyone from running for Civil or Supreme Court judgeship unless a district leader okayed it.

The rule the reformers wanted to add was that anyone running for either judgeship on the Democrat line had to be approved by a screening panel. We set up a system of polling the 1,770 committeemen. As the meeting progressed, our polling showed that the screening panel would pass easily while changing the limitation on district leader appointments was a toss up. Kovner decided to sacrifice both in return for some undisclosed deal he had cut with Tammany Hall. This would not be the last time Kovner knifed me and my allies in the back. Eventually, however, I had somewhat of a last laugh.

Our budding young machine of reformed SDSers began to wane. We backed a loser for NYC Comptroller and the Columbia student senator, who was the core of our group, went back to Boston to attend law school and eventually run unsuccessfully for State Senate in Massachusetts. Never understood why he left NYC for Boston.

Talking Union

My job at Columbia University was in main circulation at Butler Library. The jobs in the University's libraries were unionized. Each department in a library had a union delegate. When our delegate left, he endorsed me as his successor and the other employees agreed. As union delegate, I still held my job, stacking and checking out books, but also represented other employees in our department in grievance proceedings with management.

Local 1199 of the Drug and Hospital Workers Union was our union. It represented 500 workers in the libraries, the central mail room, the Computer Center, the Controller's Office, the School of Social Work, and the cafeterias. 1199's contract with Columbia ended June 30, 1973. During the spring and into the summer, the officers from the union downtown and us delegates negotiated with Columbia for a new contract. We wanted a 9% raise, Columbia was offering us

2%, but was willing to significantly increase its pension contributions, which the downtown union kept pressing us delegates to accept in return for a minimal increase in salary.

The four delegates at Butler Library, including me, couldn't understand why the downtown union was willing to sacrifice a salary increase for increased pension funding. Then one of our spies in the office of the Vice President for Personnel at Columbia told us that the union had earlier in the year agreed to push the delegates into a low increase in salary in return for more pension funding. Since the pension funding was paid into the union downtown, it could invest the money as it saw fit. Sounded to us like the Teamsters' pension fund corruption for which James Hoffa and his buddies were convicted.

Our own union was trying to trick us, pushing us into something that benefited it but not the workers. This really ticked me off, so I convinced the other delegates to go for a strike that demanded higher salaries. Simultaneously, I contacted one of older guys at the Riverside Club who had connections with the Transport Workers Union, Local 241. It represented the buildings and grounds workers. With them walking out in support of our strike, it would cripple the University.

On Monday, September 10, 1973, at the beginning of the fall term, we struck. The downtown union tried to stop us, but we had exposed its under-the-table dealings with the University. They had no choice but to go along.

Columbia's Vice President for Personnel, Donald Miller, nicknamed Uncle Donald (he was allegedly black), arrogantly proclaimed that a strike by 500 clerical workers could not shut down the University. He was right, but other cooperating unions, student groups and professors proved his hubris misplaced. With their help, the strike spread chaos across Columbia.

The Transport Workers Union walked out with us for a couple of days until the courts ordered its members back to work. Our political organization from the McGovern campaign had a student group on campus that enlisted other groups to go into the libraries during the strike to take books off the shelves, check lots of books out and return them the next day. The libraries non-union administrators tried vainly to keep the libraries on campus functioning, but had to reduce the hours under the onslaught. The School of Social Work closed, garbage began to pile up, the Central mailroom boarded on chaos, the cafeterias shutdown completely, 50% of security guards did not report to work, elevators broke down and were not repaired, the lack of maids and janitors was rapidly turning the dormitories into health hazards, truck drivers who usually delivered packages to the University refused to cross the picket lines.

Uncle Donald, kept saying the University was “operating smoothly.” So on Thursday, September 13th, we took over his office along with the rest of Dodge Hall. We piled into Miller’s office, but he was at his usual two-hour lunch maintaining his corpulent physique. When he returned, he tried to stare down us strikers in an effort of intimidation, so we announced that his office was now our new strike headquarters. Miller remained in his office doing nothing but complaining about us sprawling on his expensive furniture until his work-day ended, at 5 pm of course. So where was Miller’s “smoothly functioning” University now? With Miller gone, we absconded with the personnel files of Columbia’s 4500 non-union workers and turned them over to an honest union, District 65, to use for organizing them. Columbia had refused to provide District 65 with the information, making its organizing of Columbia’s non-union workers nearly impossible. The purpose of the takeover was to pressure Columbia back to the negotiating table or agree to a federal mediator. The next day, Columbia agreed to federal mediation and we left Miller to his now slightly less expensive furniture.

By Saturday, Columbia agreed to a 6.5% pay raise, which we accepted. We should have held out for more. By December, I was fired with the approval of the downtown union.

One side note, during the takeover the Columbia Tenants Union boss, Bruce Bailey, 6' 4", 250 lbs., showed up trying to cash in on our uprising. I told the union rep from downtown that Bailey was bad news—out for power and money through physical intimidation. Years later, Bailey's strong-arm tactics backfired. His head, absent its body, was found in a garbage can—I laughed.

Going Uptown

Frank, my co-chairman for Riverside's McGovern and Abzug campaigns, got both of us legislative aide's jobs in Albany for State Senator Sidney von Luther. Von Luther represented Harlem and the Upper West Side. Sidney had been active in civil rights and, ironically for me, Local 1199 before being elected State Senator. During King's march on Washington speech, there's a guy standing just behind him and to the right wearing a union hat that I always thought was Sidney.

In Albany, state legislators were treated like nobility. Lobbyists provided free dinners, booze and favors. The locals, especially the young babes, were compliant—guess they wanted out of rural New York. Even though Albany was a city, it had the rural mentality of a province.

One of the heroes of upstate New York at the time was O.J. Simpson, who ran for the Buffalo Bills. He was the first running back to rush for more than 2,000 yards in a single season, which was 1973. The State Senate passed a resolution honoring Simpson for his accomplishment.

Another hero, heroine or whatever of the counter culture in the City was Andy Warhol's movie and theatre superstar and the muse for the Velvet Underground—Candy Darling. Candy

had recently died of cancer. At her funeral Julie Newmar read the eulogy and Gloria Swanson saluted her coffin. Hmm, I thought, Sidney was facing a tough Democratic primary in September. There were plenty of Warhol fans, queers and transvestites, like Candy, on the Upper West Side. Why not pander for their votes by having the Senate honor Candy. After all, Simpson was an entertainer as was Candy. So, I sent a request for a resolution with some notes not mentioning her real sex and a picture of Candy. By her picture, if you didn't know she was a guy, you could never tell. The drafting office was not fooled; they knew who she was. That didn't matter, however, if von Luther wanted to introduce a resolution honoring her. The Senate would never pass it, but boy the publicity over the fight would win every pervert vote in his district—and there were plenty of those. I made my argument, but Sidney axed the idea.

Sidney's opponent in the Democratic Primary was not just one candidate but the political machine of Percy Sutton and Clarence Jones, publisher of *The New York Amsterdam News*. Those supporting Sidney were guys like Pete Seeger who held a campaign fundraiser on the Sloop Clearwater. Seeger was really a classy guy.

Sutton was the long time Manhattan Borough President and lawyer for Malcolm X while Jones was a former advisor and speech writer for Martin Luther King. The Sutton-Jones machine wanted Sidney to use his position as State Senator and member of the Harlem Urban Development Corporation (“HUDC”) to help them land \$30 million in contracts to develop the eastern part of the Harlem State Office Building site on 125th Street. The money for the development and, of course, lucrative profits for the developers of that two and a half acre site would come from state taxpayers by way of the HUDC. Sidney not only refused, but made such a stink that HUDC put off its decision citing the need for further study. So Sutton-Jones

financed and ran Carl McCall, an alleged reverend, against Sidney. McCall came to be known in politics as “Cash” McCall. Frank was the one who came up with the name.

While Frank and others handled the campaigning, I worked with a former English Professor on the negative research into the Sutton-Jones-McCall trinity. The Professor was experienced at digging up dirt on politicians and getting it published in the media. The trinity never built anything, so they set up paper companies with no assets as fronts to obtain the development contracts. One of the future buildings would house Sutton’s radio station WBLS-FM and WLIB-AM. The investigative reporter Steven Bauman at Metromedia TV News (Channel 5) did a series of reports on the Sutton-Jones-McCall scheme and Nicholas Pileggi did an article in New York Magazine titled “Guess Who’s Coming to Gracie Mansion.” Sutton always wanted to become mayor of the City, but this story put an end to that. During one of Steve’s patented ambush interviews, Sutton threatened to get him—clearly a compliment for Steve. Naturally, it was the usual empty politician threat. The muckraking delayed that Haarlem gang obtaining any contracts, but after the election, which McCall won, the trinity was awarded the contracts.

Medium Cool

Sidney’s term in office lasted until December 1974 and so did my regular pay check, but what to do next. The Professor had a good relationship with Steve Bauman who knew me from the Sutton story, so Channel 5 hired me part time to do research.

The first story was a special Steve put together on the City’s dire financial straits that compared NYC to credit worthy Chicago. Steve had me doing research such as wading through the City’s capital and expense budgets for which I got a credit when the special aired. So somewhere in outer space, electromagnetic waves carrying my name with Judy Garland singing

“Chicago” were whizzing at the speed of light into eternity. Nice feeling being commingled with her for all time. More importantly, however, I learned about TV news production.

The next story was working with the Professor to figure out who was burning the South Bronx. The reason was simple—money. But exactly how the scheme worked and who was involved was complicated.

The South Bronx went from being two-thirds white in 1950 to being two-thirds black or Puerto Rican in 1960. Over the next 10 years, it turned into a poverty-ridden area with high crime rates, lousy public schools and Robert Moses’ construction of the Cross-Bronx Expressway that destroyed neighborhoods such as East Tremont. The middle and working classes abandoned their rental apartments for houses and mortgages in suburbia causing apartment buildings to decline in value. Then arson broke out like a plague, sometimes seven large fires a night. Out of 474 buildings, 312 were set ablaze. The politicians, such as Bronx District Attorney Mario Merola, blamed the arson on tenants. “Right,” said our news director, Mark Monsky, “You’re going to burn yourself out of the only home you have. No f**king way.”

Monsky sent the Professor and me to the Registry of Deeds in the Bronx to examine the real estate transactions of the torched buildings. All hot-summer long we spent in the records department. The only break was every so often going out with the Fire Marshals to check on a torched apartment building.

The Marshals said, “The arsonists start a fire on the top floor because for the firemen to get at the blaze; they have to go through the roof. Once the roof is gone, the tenants move out because whenever it rains the water pours through the open roof into their apartments, if they haven’t already been ruined by the water used to put out the fire. With all the tenants out, the

plumbing, copper wiring and anything else of value is stripped. Then the building is torched again to hide the thievery.”

Walking through the torched buildings in a part of America was eerie. They must have resembled Dresden after Churchill’s fire bombing. Amid the smell of smoke and stagnant water, one fire marshal told me, “Don’t go wandering off. You never know what whacko you may run into.” I stayed close to him and his gun.

By summer’s end, we had figured out the arson scheme. Legitimate landlords would sell their buildings to organized crime who got a deal, but the landlords also got back some of their investment and out of Dresden. Organized crime would sell the buildings back and forth among dummy corporations. The sales were on paper only, no money exchanged hands other than the small amount of taxes and fee to register the sales. Each phony sale drove up the value of a building. Then organized crime insured the overvalued building about to be torched. Once torched and the insurance collected, organized crime abandoned the building leaving the City to pay for demolishing it.

What had us stumped for a while was why would an insurance company fall for such a scheme. So we contacted a few and it turned out they wouldn’t because none of the private insurance companies would write any property policies in the South Bronx—too risky. A contact at one company, however, said, “The state had set up a pool to fill in the gap of insurers in the South Bronx. If an insurance company wanted to do business in New York, it would have to contribute to the pool. The pool was in turn required to insure tenements in the South Bronx. Because all the insurance companies were contributing to the pool, anyone company’s losses were relatively small.” Any loses were tax write-offs.

We interviewed the head of the state insurance pool. He knew what was going on, but the pool was required under the law to insure the buildings. In 1974, it lost \$10 million on Bronx fires. The obvious question was did organized crime use its political influence to get the New York State officials to set up the pool so it could be fleeced? Obviously yes, but we were never able to find two sources to say so. Back then you needed at least two undisclosed sources, and they had to be independent of each other. None of this Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein trickery of Christopher Steele says X and tells Yahoo News X, which prints X: therefore, there are two independent sources. So the rest of the South Bronx went up in flames.

One side story of Bronx corruption was that DA Merola never bothered to try an indicted arsonist for torching a building on Washington Avenue. Probably because a trial might start to publicly unravel the onion. Merola told Steve he couldn't try the guy because there was no evidence of arson—meaning no fire marshal's report. We checked with the fire marshals who told us the report had been lost—fat chance, but it kept the story from airing. Sometime later, John Miller found out through one of his sources that the report had never been lost and was still in the files, but the news had moved on to other stories. The arson conviction rate at the time was 1%--gee, I wonder why.

Forty years later, I went back to the South Bronx with Mark to a salsa club. The place now looked like suburbia—no more Dresden. Once the South Bronx was leveled, the politicians set up community planning groups, which employed many of their supporters. The groups obtained taxpayer funds under New York urban renewal programs and the federal Housing and Community Development Act. These community planning groups bought real estate, created plans for development, determined who would rebuild the Bronx and funneled government subsidies to landlords for renting to the proletariat. Given organized crime's involvement with

the construction trades—it made out just fine, as did the politicians who received appreciative contributions from developers and the construction industry. Money to burn it down—money to rebuild it.

Another story of corruption, which I researched for Gabe Pressman, exposed the Nassau Republican party extorting kickbacks of one percent of salaries from Nassau County and Hempstead Town employees. The scheme was simple: you want the job, you want a raise—pay up. The Republican Party actually gave receipts to those who paid the 1% kickback. Even after employees paid up, many were still obliged to serve as serf labor for setting up Republican events. Even Russia did away with serfdom in 1861.

The Republican Party controlled the government of Nassau County and most of the towns in Nassau. The heart of its power and money was the Town of Hempstead the largest in the county. The Party also received kickbacks from construction companies in return for lucrative contracts paid for with taxpayer money. At the time, Hempstead was the highest taxed town per capita in the nation. The Republican Party bosses were Joseph M. Margiotta, Chairman of the Nassau Republicans, and Francis T. Purcell, Supervisor of Hempstead.

Some of the extorted monies helped finance the elections of Republican judges. Who says you have to respect a judge? The Republicans were so cheap that they even issued press passes to political officials who were not reporters with the passes stating the person worked for the New York Times. This way the fake reporter could use the parks and beaches for free. This place was looking more corrupt than the county I grew up in—Bergen County, N.J., where towns were also run by Republicans, such as my father. The U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District, David Trager impaneled a grand jury to investigate the Republican Party's corruption. Years later, Trager did me a big favor as my law school adviser. He was one decent and honest man.

A number of the county and town officials were indicted the following year, 1976, and Margiotta was subsequently convicted for shaking down kickbacks from insurance agencies doing business with the county and towns. A few Nassau County employees also brought a class action lawsuit in federal court and eventually won in 1985. Looked like the news media actually had some power.

Monsky, the news director, liked my research ability and wanted to hire me full-time but the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) required a quota of females to work in any TV newsroom. Back then the FCC had the power to tell newsrooms what to do. Most TV news shows were broadcast over the air. Since the number of frequencies for broadcasting was limited, the law allowed the federal government to decide which stations could use which frequency. That meant a station had to follow FCC dictates or be fined or even lose its license to broadcast. Since the Feminazis were taking over the bureaucracies of the government, they required that girls be hired regardless of their incompetence. But Monsky was smart. He got all the five stations in the Metromedia network to hire one-fifth of me. That way, it never showed on any of the stations’ employment statistics that a competent man had been hired.

My prior boss and former State Senator von Luther came to me with a story involving Medicaid-Methadone clinics. He wants me to meet a couple of people with inside information; fine, let’s go. We end up for a late lunch at “Siricos” in Brooklyn with one of his business associates and Joe Gambino, a relative of the late Crazy Joe Gallo. As we sit down, Joe tells von Luther’s associated that he had taken care of the “punk” who failed to make the payments on the car transferred to him. No, I didn’t ask how.

The group explains that Medicaid-Methadone clinics hand out methadone to junkies in order to keep them off heroin and away from the evils it breeds. Reminded me of the old days of

shooting the stuff to relieve boredom in Colorado, but I never ran into any of the alleged evils. Regardless, the clinics take a urine sample to make sure the junkie is not still shooting-up. The clinics send the samples to laboratories to do the testing. That's where the guys I was having lunch with came in. They owned and ran laboratories that did the testing. Their complaint was that the clinic owners required them to pay bribes in order to obtain the business to do the testing. Since the government had set a fixed fee for doing a test, the bribes came out of the laboratory owners' pockets. It also violated the law.

Monsky liked the story but he needed one of the laboratory owners to carry a wire to record a clinic demanding a bribe. None of these guys would, so Monsky elected me to go around with a wire pretending to represent a laboratory. Von Luther's associate educated me on the business and sales presentation. Channel 5 set up a telephone that Monsky's secretary would answer and pretend to be the non-existent laboratory I represented.

These clinics were located where the junkies hung out—the worst parts of the City. Spent a couple of weeks driving here and there and recording a few of the clinics demanding bribes or as they called them “kickbacks.”

Monsky and Steve had me tell one of the bribers that we had him on tape and they wanted to meet with him. He showed and we gathered in Monsky's office, which overlooked an Eastside brownstone. I took a seat on the side, the only one looking out the back window of Monsky's office

Monsky played the hard-ass and Steve, Mr. Friendly.

Briber, “Well, I was just trying to set up what I thought was your laboratory. I really want to clean up Medicaid.”

Monsky smiled and told him the tape would go on the air unless he cooperated. He whined that he had a wife and two children—didn't matter. He finally agreed to wear a wire to expose a different fraud in which medical clinics and doctors inflated their services when billing Medicaid.

While this was going on, a light went on in the Eastside brownstone across the way. It was clearly a bedroom. A pretty teenage girl stepped up to her window and took off her tank top and shorts—nice tits and ass. She'd change her clothes, walk to her window, take them off again. Did this a few times always turning off the light in between to make sure someone was watching—yes I was. I lost track of the interrogation.

The briber reneged on his agreement to carry a wire after talking to his lawyer. Steve did the story and the District Attorney's men stopped by for their copy. The FBI also started an investigation and the Senate held hearings on Medicaid fraud.

As a result of the story, Steve received a tip about a different Medicaid story. This often happened. One expose on a subject matter would breed other related exposes. The tip stated that people could bribe their way onto welfare at the 135th Street and Broadway office. He and Monsky drafted a wetback girl in the newsroom to wear a wire and try to bribe her way onto welfare. Apparently, they chose her because she would fit in with the welfare office's clientele scamming the system. But she was scared, so Monsky went along and positioned himself outside the welfare office with his two guns waiting and hoping for some action. No action, but the story won a Golden Typewriter award and got seven bureaucrats dragged out of the office under arrest.

Channel 5 had a running investigation into the Stillwell Haven Home in Brooklyn. It wasn't a nursing home but an assisted living residence. That didn't stop the owners from

treating their residents like animals or forging their SSI checks. One of the employees contacted a friend of mine who ran a group that exposed various evil doers in the City. Many in his group worked for the City, so they had access to a lot of information—basically vigilante investigators. The employee spilled the beans but refused to go on the air, so we had no evidence of anything. We did, however, refer the allegations to the Brooklyn DA.

One allegation was that the female owner had forged a resident's signature in order to be reimbursed for clothing she allegedly had purchased but for which she had no receipts. The DA subsequently admitted this happened, but that it didn't come under the forgery statute. So I asked the ADA (assistant district attorney) on the matter, if they had checked to see who had countersigned this resident's SSI check out of which the money for the clothing was taken. No, he said because it was not part of any specific allegations; therefore, "we had no reason to check that signature." Christ, you'd think they have to be hit on the head with a baseball bat. That resident quickly died, which ended the forgery story. Judy Licht, however, did do a story on Stillwell's abuses and other rip offs of the elderly.

Judy was one hot babe but often nervous. When she had an anxiety attack in the newsroom, the paramedics put her on a stretcher but had to wait until a live feed from the newsroom was over. Couldn't have a star reporter being rolled out on live TV.

One interesting story was when I arranged for Harry Reems to stop by the newsroom for an interview with Steve. Reems had just been convicted of obscenity for his role in Deep Throat. The government gave the whore of the movie, Linda Lovelace, immunity to testify against Reems. Reems made all of \$100 doing the movie while the producer made millions.

One tiny story that would eventually grow bigger was my accompanying a young political operative who was buying petition signatures from a couple of small time political

bosses. The signatures were to put Marie Lambert on the Democratic Primary ballot for N.Y. County Surrogate in the 1976 election to replace one of the Surrogates who had been indicted but then died in office before trial. Lambert lost that year.

The highpoint of everyday, assuming Steve didn't get into a physical fight with some crook or corrupt politician he was investigating, was the video feed of stories from ITNA. ITNA would send stories from around the world to various TV news shows that would decide to use them or parts of them or not bother. Channel 5's producer Andrew, one of the anchors John, an assignment editor Joe and I attended. Andrew was the most cutting person I ever met who did a great impression of an Indian, as from India, trying to speak English. In true anti-PC fashion, these three guys insulted everybody, everything, and each other. Generally, I kept my mouth shut except for laughing—they were hilarious. Today, we'd all be fired by some female or queer squealer. For example, Congressman Jerry Litton was running for Senate in the Democrat Primary in Missouri. On his way to the election night party the plane carrying him, his wife and two children crashed—burning all of them beyond recognition. He died not knowing he had just won an upset victory. One of the guys in the feed suggested a tease for the story, “And for Congressman Litton, some good news and some bad news.”

Channel 5 Metromedia TV News was unique in those days because of the investigative stories it did. Monsky, the news director, loved them and pushed them. Often he'd pull out one of the guns he legally carried to imitate blowing away one of these crooks or corrupt politicians. Steve, Pressman, Miller and others thrilled at nailing these ne'er-do-wells pretending to be upstanding citizens.

Steve did a series of exposes on one poverty pimp, City Councilman Ramon S. Velez. Velez, among other embezzlements, was funneling off money from the Puerto Rican Day

Parade. As a result, the State Attorney General's office barred Velez and any of his allegedly anti-poverty organizations from participating in the parade. Steve also exposed Velez receiving government funds for a lunch program in which lunches were not distributed to the poor. In response, Velez sent a group of his wetbacks, who were living off of the taxpayer, to pick Channel 5. They could barely chant in English, instead it was "Channel 5 es un mentiroso. We want nuestros lunches." While entering the building with the producer, I remarked sufficiently loud, "Let them eat cake!" He replied, "Let them drink cerveza!" We laughed. These illegals wouldn't dare attack a couple of young white guys in the news media. Even Italian organized crime wouldn't, which for me paid off later in my life.

Velez also sued the station for \$20 million—it went nowhere. Basically, Velez was a fat wetback spider with tentacles into South Bronx poverty programs and community NGOs allegedly providing services for hefty fees paid by the taxpayer. Velez never ended up in jail like Capone, but Steve's stories lead to the government cutting off a fair amount of this funding.

Working the assignment desk was always tough. You're responsible for knowing what's going on in the greater metropolitan area and getting a reporter and crew there on time. The tension is always on—fear of missing a story on the police and fire radios, which are near impossible to understand anyway, and the truism of Monsky's law, "If something can go wrong, it will and at the worst possible time."

For example, an organized crime contact called to say he and his lawyer had one of the suspects the police were looking for in a Queens Tavern kidnap and murder case. But when the crew shows, the junkie starts going threw cold turkey and could only vomit and groan—no interview there. So we call the cops to pick this low life up. Then the same reporter and crew try to cover a story about a movie theater charging 10 cents to see the original King Kong movie.

But when the reporter shows up, it's not 10 cents any more. So she has the owner put up the 10 cents sign again. The people who lined up thought the movie was 10 cents when in fact it was \$3.50. A near riot ensues with the reporter taking most of the abuse. Good story.

Monsky had just hired a new reporter and put her on the weekend shift, which made me her assignment editor. Stephanie McLuhan was the daughter of Marshal. Very pretty, but a little spacey. One Saturday I had to call her at home to wake her up. She rushes over and is about to head out the door with the camera crew when I notice her sneaker laces aren't tied. So I tied them for her. Didn't want her falling on that pretty face.

Funny things always happened in the newsroom. One day, Gabe got so involved cutting one of his stories that he put his lighted pipe into his sports coat pocket starting a small fire. He quickly drowned it with his coffee and went back to work on the story as though nothing had happened.

One of my contacts gave me a tip about a whore house on the Upper Eastside that was actually owned by Chase Manhattan Bank and accepted credit cards—a new funding for prostitution that previously only took cash. The station aired a nice little story about it.

In the spring of 1977, Metromedia management cut the newsroom's budget 10 percent. It mainly impacted the investigative stories because they take time to put together and are therefore costly. For example, Steve wanted to do a follow-up on the Medicaid kickbacks but there was no money for it. As though that was not enough, management followed up the cut with a memo directing Monsky to kill all investigative exposes and concentrate on just the daily stupidity and disasters, such as airplane crashes, murders, political infighting, etc. So died the only worthwhile thing that Channel 5 did.

After doing the assignment desk on the weekend, one of my regular assignments was to write the Saturday and Sunday night news. This occurred completely by accident. One Sunday, I stumbled into the newsroom hung over and dead tired and the producer tells me the regular writer is out sick so I'm his replacement. I woke up fast.

The anchor, who was different each night, would write some of the stories, and I the other as determined by the producer. One Saturday night the producer assigned me the story about the CIA's Operation Mockingbird. It was a large-scale program that recruited journalists into its propaganda network. The program paid American reporters to gather information during their overseas assignments and twist their reports to further the Agency's less than democratic line. The anchor came over to me and said, "Do you have the copy of the CIA story?"

"Yes."

"Give it to me. I'll write the story." Him being the ultimate boss on Saturday, I gave it to him.

He sanitized the story making the CIA sound like it did nothing wrong by bribing reporters to manipulate their reports and spy. Later, Monsky clued me in that the anchor had previously worked overseas and participated in the CIA's Operation Mockingbird.

One of the reporters left for another channel, so the newsroom was looking to hire a replacement. Monsky told me that if he had his way, he would hire me as the replacement. But, as he said, "Because you're not a girl, I can't." The FCC and management were scared of the Feminazis, so he hired a Jewish broad pretending to be a wetback because she married a Latino.

During one of the production meetings to decide which stories to do that night, the producer summarized a story about smoking causing early menopause and that females were suffering more heart aches, ulcers and other diseases because of their "new" role in society. To

which the wise-guy anchor quipped to the broads in the meeting, “Ya see; you didn’t know when you had it so good.” The guys laughed, the girls didn’t.

Thanks to the FCC, the newsroom had its share of broads who didn’t know what they were doing, couldn’t make up their minds or refused to forgo one of their ideas for a better one. One such incompetent we called “Drivel” was always mouthing her bourgeoisie women’s-lib trash. One of her favorite delusions was that a woman had to be twice as good as a man to get ahead. To which I once remarked, “Me thus think you have confused the numerator with the denominator.” She didn’t get it.

Another of these forced hires we called “Space Cadet.” She was assigned to organize the video tapes that played during the sports section. She kept calling the sportscaster to ask one moronic question after another. Now this guy was known for his cool, calm and collected style, But Space Cadet got to him. He started shouting and screaming, “Who is this broad? What politics put her in the tape room?” We laughed, but sports was a disaster that night. For example, a boxing match appeared when the sportscaster was talking about Pele.

Feminism also gave the show a female producer and Latina script editor while firing one of the more competent male assignment editors for a female who made up coverage that never occurred. The producer and script editor drove everyone crazy with their loud mouths and bossiness. The power went to their heads—or the fear.

One of the exceptions to female incompetence in the newsroom was Susan. A straight laced, preppy type from a well-to-do family. Before becoming the weekend producer, she did the script editing and did it extremely well. She was exact, on time, a little prudish and then out of nowhere she elopes with a guy from ABC sports. Boy was that a surprise. So I nicked named her Suzy Cream Cheese after the Mother’s of Invention song.

The reporters with a brain rarely had anything good to say about the news media. It's a "waste," "go into industry," "get yourself into something substantial," or "go to law school." Well, I went to law school and business school, and what these guys didn't realize was that the news media, in those days, had lots of power.

Strange things, not always unpleasant, happened in NYC during my media days. While taking the subway train to work with my girl friend of the moment, we were talking about the attractiveness of young ladies of which she was one. From across the car comes this pretty little girl, about five years old, staring at me with these wide dark eyes that said "I'm yours." She touches my thigh, but then her mother grabs her hand and pulls her out of the car at the stop. As the little girl left, she gave me a fleeting look of "I love you." My girl friend and I just look at each other perplexed, and I remembered the incident with Sarah in St. Louis. At times, I wondered whatever happened to that little girl as well as Sarah. I know what happened to my girl friend. One of her subsequent boyfriends murdered her.

July 13, 1977, the lights go out all over town. Had to get to work, so I felt my way down to the street. It was pitched black. There was no moon. Looking up and down Broadway, everything was dark. You really had to watch out running into people and deal with the fear that everybody or somebody might go crazy. The taxis were still running, however, so I grabbed one for Channel 5.

The newsroom, lit by candles, was going nuts trying to get reporters and crews out to cover the rioting, looting and arson in Haarlem as well as the insurrection at the Bronx House of Detention. Most of the phones didn't work. Monsky was shouting orders, and the managing editor blaming it on a UFO draining the electrical grid. The cause was actually a lightning strike on a transformer at Indian Point. Mayor Abe Beame called it a night of terror.

The Empire State Building and World Trade Center loomed like black monoliths in the night sky—a kind of Jungian beauty. All of NYC was helpless for want of electricity. Our reporters and camera crews rushed here and there, but as the night wore on, the streets took on an eerie silence in the dark.

When most of the stories were covered, the assignment editor, one of the reporters and me sat in an unusually mellow newsroom lit by the soft glow of two generator lights. The assignment editor said he first thought it was World War III and sat back waiting for the walls to melt. Perhaps, unfortunately, they didn't.

Channel 5, like other TV news shows did what the reporters called “whore” pieces. Their purpose was to push some commercial product such as a particular show or a pecuniary interest of management. Gabe hated them, but the managing editor loved them.

Next to the blackout, the big story of the summer was the Son of Sam—.44 caliber killer. On the one year anniversary of his first hit, the cops were staking out the Bronx and Queens. The assignment editor and I thought the cops were idiots. I said, “Sam's obviously going to hit in Brooklyn or Staten Island.” Sure enough, that Saturday at 3 am he blew away a young couple in Benson Hurst, Brooklyn. But Sam screwed up. He had parked his car at a fire hydrant and was ticketed. The cops back tracked the ticket to an apartment in the Bronx. At this point Sam was just a suspect with the cops undercover outside his apartment. While the cops were waiting for a search warrant, out waltzes Sam with a Thompson .44 caliber machine gun. He was on his way to a disco in Long Island. What a story that would have made, but the cops grabbed him.

One reporter bet me a drink that the Puerto Rican terrorist group the FALN would soon do some bombings in NYC. Sounded like a safe bet to me until they bombed the Mobile Oil building, killing one person, and bombed a Department of Defense office on Madison Avenue.

How did he know they would do more bombings, he wasn't Puerto Rican. Then I remembered. He used to work for the CIA.

The news room had AP and UPI wire machines to keep track of national and international stories. The oversize managing editor, when he was able to get out of his chair, would scan the wires. August 16, 1977, he lets out a yell, "Elvis is dead." Shock, then the newsroom goes crazy trying to put together its coverage. I give Steve a print out from the New York Times data base and off he goes to Memphis. The managing editor digs up old Elvis movies and the entertainment reporter puts together a really good piece. Three days later, Groucho died, which was sadder than Elvis' death.

Monsky and the managing editor started sending out memos criticizing everyone's work and threatening them, including me, with termination. It was the usual bureaucratic tactic to scare people into working longer hours and doing exactly what the bosses say. The sports reporter got one threatening to fire him if he did a certain type of sports story again, which was a legitimate and truthful story. Boy did he blow up, "What the fuck is this? Kindergarten?" He stomps into the backroom where the managing editor is watching TV. After a short while, he storms out shouting, "Shove it up your fat ass. I quit!" And walks out never to be seen on Channel 5 again.

Lola

While working at Channel 5 News, my underage girl friend at the time wanted to go to a fag bar.

"Why?" I asked.

"I just want to see what it's like."

This was well before the current transgender lunacy where PC ideology exalts the perverted. Yes, the “perverted.” Proportionally, fags have destroyed the lives of more children than heterosexuals. Just look at those holdover Catholic priests from the Middle Ages.

“Alright,” I agreed. “It’ll be like going to the zoo, but we aren’t going alone. I’m not about to trust a bar full of people driven by their sexual proclivities.” I’ll get Al to come along.

Down to Greenwich Village in the middle of winter.

As soon as we entered the bar, the fags started staring at my girl friend with her long light-brown hair. “Uh-oh,” I thought, we’re going to get bounced from this joint for bringing in a girl. But no one told us to leave, so we ordered drinks.

The guys in the bar continued to stare at my girl’s every move. Had we gone to the wrong joint? I couldn’t figure it out. Sure, she was pretty, but she was a girl. This was supposed to be a fag bar.

No one bothered us, so we hung out with our drinks.

My girl’s internal engine must have been heating up with all these guys, even though they were queers, drooling in lust for her. She took off her winter coat and handed it to me to hold. Instantly, all those in-heat fags stopped looking at her. Under her coat she was wearing a tight halter top that accented her breasts. In that one move, she had gone from a beautiful young boy ripe for molestation to just another menstrual girl with whom they couldn’t compete. We left laughing.

Undercover Man

The tiny story I had mentioned earlier about the buying of petition signatures had unexpectedly turned into a bigger one. The candidate the young operative was working for had run again in the 1977 Democratic primary for Surrogate and won. Most likely they had bought

petition signatures then as well. The victory meant she would more than likely win the general election. The Manhattan Surrogate's office was notoriously corrupt. The judge appointed lawyers as *guardian ad litem*s whenever someone died leaving behind a child. Didn't matter if another parent was still alive or not. The *guardian ad litem* was hired to watch out for the child's interest. But actually was watching out for his and the Surrogate Judge's pecuniary interests. Guardians would generally inflate their billings, kick back to the judge who naturally approved the inflated billings and in some cases actually looted the estate. Lawyers received fees as high as \$250,000 for little work. The Surrogate also determined in which bank an estate's funds would be deposited along with the brokers used for investing the funds. The Surrogate's position controlled millions of dollars of this type of patronage, which attracted Roy Cohn and various organized crime families. Senator Robert Kennedy had successfully attacked the court for awarding exorbitant fees to lawyers who were the judge's friends. Kennedy's reform candidate won in 1966 and Tammany Hall lost control of the court's multi-million dollar trove of legal patronage.

I regretted not joining the primary campaign undercover for Channel 5, but no one thought Marie Lambert would win. So I stayed at Channel 5, once again trying to get a foot in the door with the IRA through one of the Irish crew members who had connections. Working for the IRA would have provided some great stories and might have led to more involvement with them. But everything went down the drain with management stopping the investigative stories and once again the IRA thinking I was an undercover agent for the CIA.

Channel 5 quickly became a bore, so I left to do an undercover investigative story with the *ad hoc* group of investigators that had provided stories to Channel 5. Through the young political operative who had purchased petition signatures for Lambert, who was organized

crime's candidate for Surrogate, I became the assistant campaign manager for the general election. The group of investigators acted as go-betweens with Joe Conason, the new Running Scare columnist at the Village Voice where Jack Newfield worked. This kept my name secret.

Before the general election, Conason published a couple of Running Scared columns based on the inside info that I provided him via the investigators, who also confirmed much of my info.

Lambert was in reality the campaign manager making all the decisions and telling us whom to shakedown for money. She'd often ranted about what she would do to those who didn't contribute—give them the lowest fees possible and make fools of them in court. As for generous contributors, they would receive exorbitant fees, part of which would be kicked back to her or to political campaigns she supported. She would also turn a blind-eye to contributors looting the estates of widows, widowers and orphans.

The general election campaign pursued two main interrelated objectives determined by Lambert. One was mass mailings to the tune of 600,000 pieces that exploited the bigotry, fears and ignorance of different identity groups. The campaign set up phony committees to send out the mailings in order to provide credibility for the lies.

The other objective was raising money to pay for the mailings and to wash cash through the campaign into her purse. Money from the Mangano/Gambino crime family was disguised by funneling it through phony organizations, such as the Women's Institute for Better Probate and Trust Administration in Fort Lee, N.J. Fort Lee was an organized crime haven, popular with some of the campaign supporters. Over dinner in that infamous town, one contributor told me of his hatred for Castro. The contributor had been partners with Meyer Lansky in a Havana Casino making lots of tax-free money when Castro ended the good-times with his revolution.

“The girls must have been something else down there,” I remarked with a little envy.

“Poor and willing to do anything for a buck,” he said.

The Mangano crime family had the daughter of the founder regularly visiting the campaign and helping out. Toni’s father Vincent, a.k.a. “The Executioner,” had headed one of the original five crime families in New York City and was key in setting up the National Crime Syndicate that divided up territories across the U.S. Toni’s father was no stranger to politics. He set up the City Democratic Club, which was also the headquarters for Murder Inc. Guess politics ran in the blood, but Vincent wasn’t around when Lambert ran. He had disappeared years earlier. During the campaign, bag men, unknown to the staff but not Lambert, would show up at campaign headquarters on Williams Street with cash for the candidate.

Other contributions came by way of Roy Cohn and Bill Shea. Both had various attorneys who practiced in the Surrogate’s Court make contributions or purchase tickets to one of our fundraisers. On Lambert’s instructions, we kept a detailed index file of these contributors so that she could reward them with patronage when elected, and elected she was in one of the most expensive Surrogate campaigns up to that time. Cohn raised a lot of money for her, had his chauffeur drive her around in his white Rolls Royce, used one of his front companies, Tyson Sullivan, Inc., to rent a safe-deposit box at Flushing Savings Bank for storing her illicit cash contributions, and even got Donald Trump to contribute.

Lambert had been opposed by the Bar Associations, numerous judges, newspapers and virtually every organization advocating for competent judges, thanks in part to Joe’s articles. It didn’t matter, however, the mailings conned 55% of the voters into pulling the lever for her.

The election campaign for me wasn’t all snooping, secretly copying documents and listening in on conversations. One of Bill Shea’s partners gave me tickets to game 6 of the 1977

World Series against the Dodgers in which Reggie Jackson hit three home runs to win the series for the Yankees. To a lifelong Yankee fan, that game was terrific. When it ended, we rushed down onto the field. It was a lot bigger than little league and covered with lush grass.

In another sporting vein, the counsel to Mayor Abe Beame was one of Lambert's backers and the counselor had a NYC councilwoman for a wife. They were separated but not in politics—both supported Lambert. She was in her mid-forties but hot, so we started dating. Once her husband threw a fit when I borrowed his City car to spend an afternoon with his wife. What did he expect, giving me a set of keys and saying I could use it whenever I wanted? His wife and I actually ended up living together for a while in her apartment in Washington Heights. The only annoying part of that was her two idiot sons—one in high school and the other a college dropout. The college dropout is one of the best examples of the “Peter Principal.” Decades later, he was elected the Comptroller of NYC. He could barely add $2 + 2$, but by the 21st century, digital computers for math were common place.

After the election, on Lambert's orders, we started organizing fundraisers to allegedly pay-off the campaign debt. In reality, the money would end up in Lambert's pocketbook, and was a way of shaking down lawyers who practiced in the Surrogate's Court—buy a ticket or no patronage. Word leaked out to the press, I wonder how, which caused a furor in the legitimate legal community because it is against judicial ethics for a judge to know who contributes to her campaign and to solicit contributions from those who practice before her. It creates the appearance, which is often the reality, of judicial favoritism and bribery. Pay off the judge and she'll rule the way you want. One Supreme Court Judge said, “It stinks.” And the State Commission of Judicial Conduct received complaints about these fundraisers. The Commission

had recently been created by the State Legislature to censure, suspend or remove a state judge for violating the Code of Judicial Conduct. The Code also regulated campaigning for judicial office.

Lambert told the press she had no idea of who was contributing to help pay off the campaign's alleged debts. Boy was that a lie. She often sat in her campaign office in the back thumbing through the index cards of contributors; telling me whom to contact for more money and others who had not yet given.

Lambert was not about to forego the money from her shakedown, so she got Roy Cohn to take over organizing events such as one slated for Studio 54. Cohn was the co-owner of Studio 54 along with Mafia boss Carmine Galante. Using this new strategy, the campaign staff and Lambert could plead we didn't do it—but, of course, we were involved. On November 15, 1977, Lambert sent the campaign manager and me to meet Roy Cohn to iron out the specifics for the Studio 54 fundraiser. Cohn's law office and living quarters were at 39 East 69th Street. The place was impeccably decorated. The only other place I had visited that showed the same preppy taste was Ted Kennedy's D.C. home. Years later, I caught part of a movie about Cohn, which depicted the interior of his townhouse as garish. Boy did the producers get it wrong—subtle fake history to bias the unconscious minds of viewers.

We sat down with Cohn and his executive assistant in the second floor rear dining room next to the kitchen. Cohn was sharp and courteous as he went over his plans for organizing the event: ticket price \$250, a table for \$2,500, and he showed us a mock up of the ticket—very nice. Cohn went over the rich and influential attorneys he would approach and would also enlist some of them to sell tickets—one was Bill Shea whom he got up to call in the kitchen. Coming back into the foyer after calling Shea, Cohn says, "I can't stand all this negativity." Shea, who also ran a law firm, had succumbed to the legal community's criticism of Lambert's post-

election fundraisers. According to Cohn, Shea agreed to make discrete phone calls but not publicly push the event. Cohn telephoned Lambert about Shea dropping out of publicly pushing the 54 event. Prior to the election, Shea had organized a small but lucrative secret fundraiser at the Sky Club on top of the Pan Am building, so Lambert didn't rant over his present reticence. After talking with Lambert, Cohn said, "Okay, we'll do it without Shea's public support, but we'll get it down." I admired his attitude, but recalled what he and McCarthy did in the 1950s, so Conason received more information from me. The publicity scuttled the Studio 54 fundraiser but not the money it raised—\$40,000. After all the bad publicity over the post-election fundraisers, the campaign did only small secret fundraisers attended by representatives of those currying favor with Lambert. Only Lambert and her campaign manager knew the specifics.

Lambert's election as one of the two Surrogates for Manhattan made her a lot of money and popular among politicians such as the former Mayor John Lindsay who was thinking of running for the Senate. Lindsay requested that Lambert funnel patronage to his friends who would then contribute some of it to a possible upcoming campaign. My, how political images differ from the reality. Even Al Lowenstein showed at her induction looking for Surrogate Court largesse.

Massachusetts

The former Columbia University senator and fellow worker on the 1972 McGovern campaign decided to run for State Senator in Massachusetts in the district that included Cambridge. So while the N.Y. State Commission on Judicial Conduct investigated Lambert, I moved out of the Councilwoman's apartment to Boston.

The girls on his campaign were yummy. There were a handful of blondes and a fair amount of casual sex as was usual for a campaign with twenty-something volunteers back then.

Today, the guys would face the threat of having their futures destroyed even though they did what the girls wanted. The extreme mood-swings that girls experience from the bio-chemical reactions in their bodies would most assuredly have resulted in paranoid delusions of sexual abuse. Today's feminized press and courts would immediately revoke the presumption of innocence for any guy accused by an emotionally unstable girl. But in 1978, Mother Nature and the presumption of innocence still held sway.

My campaign work for some reason gravitated to researching the opponent, Francis X. McCann. He headed the Massachusetts State Senate Post-Audit and Oversight Committee. At the time, there were some leftovers of a scandal in Massachusetts. The Massachusetts Bureau of Building and Construction had awarded a contract to McKee-Berger-Mansueto ("MBM") for supervising the construction of the University of Massachusetts Boston campus. Press reports alleged the Bureau and MBM cut a sweetheart deal. The State Senate then set up a special committee to investigate, but actually used that committee to shake down MBM for around \$40,000. The State senators involved ended up in jail. McCann was not one of them, but the ripples washed up against him as Chairman of the Post-Audit and Oversight Committee.

After writing a summary implicating McCann and his committee as co-conspirators in shaking down MBM and putting all my research into a three inch binder, I handed it over to the candidate's brother who did press for the campaign. He had great contacts up there, such as the local anchor Jack Cole who was looking for dirt on McCann. Cole, also an attorney, was the anchor who once said, "We'll be back with more alleged news in a minute." The candidate's brother, however, promptly threw the binder into the garbage, so I left the campaign only to revisit for election-day when my Columbia buddy lost. Years later, my buddy told me that he and his brother had dinner with an old business friend of their father. The businessman told them

that McCann's committee regularly shook down businesses with the threat of investigating them if they had or were looking for a contract with the state.

Tammany Hall Interrupted

Back in NYC, Lambert, now Surrogate with lots of patronage, and with the help of Roy Cohn, was trying to put together a political machine in the corrupt Tammany Hall tradition. The initiating campaign for Lambert-Cohn's New Tammany Hall was the 1978 race for Civil Court Judge in Northern Manhattan. Lambert convinced a fellow female personal-injury lawyer to run. Lambert instructed the key operatives from her election campaign to manage this Civil Court Judgeship campaign. Since I was back in town, and my cover from the Lambert campaign had not been blown, I joined up and fed Conason information on the campaign.

Lambert and Cohn's candidate, Helen Goldstein, was 46, Jewish with dyed blonde hair—nice looking enough to entertain thoughts of hitting on her. The only problem with that was she had a heart condition. On one occasion, she collapsed in her apartment. One of the campaign staff tried a little CPR and she came around, which avoided a call to 911, which would have ended the campaign. That campaign was denounced as “the dirtiest campaign in Manhattan in 20 years,” because it focused on appealing to bigotry and accused the reform-democrat candidate, who was also Jewish, as pro-PLO, anti-Semitic and connected to Skokie-type Nazi demonstrations.

Lambert instructed us to send out mailings to the district's Democrat voters using the same type of fear mongering and bigotry that her campaign had used complete with phony committees such as the Manhattan Chapter of the Zionist Committee for Israel. If Lambert's candidate won the Democrat Primary, then she would most likely win the general election. The trick in sending the mass mailing was to have it arrive in voter's mailboxes on the Monday just

before the Tuesday election. That way the opposing candidate and the press did not have enough time to expose all its lies and bigotry. Since I was in charge of delivering the mailing to the post office, I sent it out too early—on purpose. It arrived on Saturday, which gave the opposition and press time to expose the corrupt campaign tactic of Lambert’s candidate, who lost.

Lambert and Cohn didn’t give up their efforts to create their New Tammany Hall. In 1979, they used patronage from the Surrogate’s Court and Cohn’s political connections to back district leadership and judicial delegate races by former members and supporters of Lambert’s campaign, such as Scott Stringer (current NYC Controller), and the good friends of Cohn.

District Leaders were party officials in either the Democrat or Republican parties. Their political support was crucial for candidates for Civil Court judgeships to win in their respective party primaries—Democrat or Republican. However, only the Democratic primary mattered in the Manhattan-Bronx Judicial District because of the overwhelming number of registered Democratic voters. A victory for a Civil Court candidate in the Democratic primary meant victory in the general election and a seat on the Court’s bench. Civil Court judges handled civil cases involving amounts up to \$25,000.

More importantly, Democratic District Leaders often decided who would run for the Judicial Delegate positions in the Democratic primary. The Judicial Delegate winners would then decide at the Democrat Judicial Nominating Convention the persons who would run for State Supreme Court judgeships on the Democratic line in the general election. Once again, since the voters in the Manhattan-Bronx Judicial District were overwhelmingly registered Democrats, a nominee running on the Democratic ticket was tantamount to election. State Supreme Court judges handled civil cases involving amounts over \$25,000 and criminal felonies.

Any District Leader or Judicial Delegate would quickly find those aspiring to a judgeship and current judges facing re-election reaching out to him or her, often with bribes in one form or another.

By the beginning of 1979, Lambert and Cohn suspected that someone on the inside had been feeding information to Conason since 1977, which is when Joe's coverage about her began appearing in the Voice. It seemed a propitious time to avoid ending up swimming with the fishes, so when Conason and Jack Newfield asked me to go public, I agreed.

Joe wrote the article and Jack came up with the headline: *Where There's a Will, There's a Way*, February 5, 1979. Now Lambert and Cohn knew who the mole was, but they couldn't find me even though they were looking. A reliable source told me the guy connected with Meyer Lansky and others were trying to track me down for a "talk." The State Commission on Judicial Conduct's investigation of Lambert was well under way at that time as were the legal battles with Lambert's lawyers. Her lawyers, naturally aided by Cohn's law firm, were challenging the Commission's subpoenas of Lambert's campaign workers and the Commission's very authority to investigate her campaign. Lambert argued that she had a First Amendment right to associate with people from whom she raised money, which countered New York's Code of Judicial Conduct that forbade a judge from raising money from lawyers who might appear before her.

Joe kept publishing columns on Cohn and Lambert trying to create their own political machine of corruption by controlling the Democrat judicial nominating convention for the Manhattan-Bronx district. The articles ticked-off Cohn so much that he complained in a letter to the Village Voice editor. Perhaps he complained because Joe had labeled the candidates Lambert and Cohn were supporting as "Cohnheads," which was a takeoff on SNL's "Coneheads."

Cohn actually wrote to the editor, “I have zero interest in Manhattan politics.” Who did he think he was kidding? Since the demise of Senator Joseph McCarthy, Cohn had become one of the major political power brokers in the City, which wasn’t by accident. Lambert also started her own cover-up by rewarding campaign supporters subpoenaed to testify with lucrative Surrogate Court patronage.

The Cohnheads continued on their march, financed by Surrogate Court patronage and Cohn’s connections, to topple the Democrat reformers who had dominated the Manhattan-Bronx Democrat Party for a decade. One district leader in Manhattan said these Cohnheads, “are haters. They’ll stop at nothing and they’re crazy.” Joe wrote in one article

[T]he Cohnheads are dangerous, lacking any political ideology or morality other than desire for influence and patronage. They out-reform the reformers, making unfounded accusations of corruption; they out-regular the regulars, telling old-line district leaders they have the backing of Carmine DeSapio, the mob-linked leader of Tammany Hall. Rarely, if ever, do they raise an issue, and when they do it’s likely to be spurious.

The Commission on Judicial Conduct contacted Conason to see if I’d be willing to testify in return for immunity—the Commission couldn’t fine me either in order to serve a subpoena. Joe and Jack both thought it would be a smart move, as did I, so the Commission granted me immunity in May 1979. The next month, the Supreme Court, thanks to Joe’s February article, upheld the Commission’s subpoenas requiring a number of campaign workers to testify. Lambert had been trying to block their testimony but the new information in Joe’s article caused the Supreme Court to rule against her, so she appealed. There was, however, still the stink of a political fix in the courts. The Supreme Court also ruled that the Commission could not investigate the campaign’s fundraising activities, such as cash contributions under the table.

Another part of the political fix was that the clerk of the Supreme Court refused to allow the media to view any of the files in the Lambert court proceedings before the judge had actually

sealed the record. Guess the clerk knew what the judge was going to do before the judge actually did it, or the fix was in. As Joe wrote, “The judges are being allowed to evaluate and control an investigation of one of their own without the press snooping around to inhibit favoritism.” The judge rationalized sealing all the records because the Commission did not want to turn over to Lambert’s lawyers the names and addresses of those who were providing it with information. Meaning, it didn’t want a source going out a hotel window before he testified. By then, the Commission knew where I lived and worked. The judge used the Commission’s refusal to paint a target on its witnesses on order to keep the press in the dark as to what was going on in court. It made no legal sense, since courts often protect witnesses without turning the proceedings secret. The Commission appealed.

The Appellate Division made its decision in December 1979. The legal battle had been going on for 18 months. The Appellate Court ruled the Commission could investigate the campaign fundraising activities, such as secret cash contributions over \$100, as well as Lambert’s cover-up of rewarding supporters with Surrogate Court patronage. The decision stated that Conason’s February 1979 article convinced the judges to allow the Commission’s probe to into these matters. Beyond the Lambert case, the ruling made clear that the Commission, which had recently been set up, was constitutional and had the authority to investigate judicial misconduct on the campaign trail and in the courthouse. The Appellate court, however, upheld keeping all court records secret. Joe wrote, “So, in contrast to most other legal battles involving public officials, we have no way of knowing the circumstances under which Lambert is being investigated.”

Eyewitness News

While the Judicial Commission’s legal battles with Lambert moved through the courts on

its way to the highest state court, the Court of Appeals, I needed a job. My friend from Channel 5 News, Cream Cheese, had moved over to Eyewitness News at Channel 7. Eyewitness was looking for a political producer/researcher for its politics reporter Roger Sharp for the 1980 election season. Thanks to Cream Cheese, they hired me in January 1980.

Roger was a smart, smarter than me, extremely competent guy who didn't suffer fools lightly of which there were many in the Eyewitness Newsroom—usually females. At 6'3" he had made the Michigan State University football team when they won the Rose Bowl in 1956. That was impressive. When he started out in the news, he had been one of the youngest reporters in network news working for ABC. He had great stories, especially from the early 60s.

In the spring of 1963, Roger was covering Martin Luther King's campaign of sit-ins, boycotts and marches in Birmingham, Alabama to protest its segregation laws. Events started off peacefully. Everyday like clockwork, the SCLC protesters would gather inside the 16th Street Baptist Church and then march out the door down the sidewalk adjacent to the Church toward City Hall. They never made it because Bull Connor, the head of police, had them arrested. The arrests were peaceful, since the strategy was intended to cause the mass arrests of people protesting for their rights, which at some point would grind the city's jails and courts to a halt. This went on day after day with Roger and the rest of the national media covering the protests and arrests. Then one day, the time of the meeting at the Church was changed. The protesters marched out, but unlike the other times, the sidewalk was now in the shadows because the sun was in a different position in the sky. Back then, the media used film, which required a lot of light to record images. Since most the protesters were black, their skin absorbed more of the visible electromagnetic spectrum while whites reflected more. Therefore, the TV cameramen couldn't get useable images of the protesters marching down that sidewalk in the shadows. So

Roger and the other reporters go over to the organizers, tell them the problem. The organizers tell the protesters to cross the street over to the other sidewalk that was now in the sun. The police, however, didn't know what was going on and all hell broke loose—fire hoses, police dogs, clubbings and images on national television that shocked the nation and doomed segregation. Apparently the “medium is the message.”

In another of his early assignments, Roger ended up in Cuba during Castro's revolution, got arrested for being an American spy but was finally released after the U.S. State Department intervened.

At Eyewitness News, Roger, with me in tow, covered the 1980 presidential, senate, congressional and local primary and general election campaigns. Working in the media gave me some protection from the good friends of Lambert and Cohn because organized crime generally avoided harming cops or folks in the news media. The mob didn't like any publicity—period. But just in case, I kept my name off of all the credits and carried a .38 derringer in the inner pocket of my suit jacket.

The Democrat Party presidential primary pitted Carter, an ineffectual President trying to deal with the government hostages being held in Iran, against Ted Kennedy, the killer of Mary Jo Kopechne. Jerry Brown, the Governor of California for the first time and one dynamic speaker, took a shot but his time had already passed. He should have made a serious run against Carter in 1976.

Carter refused to campaign. Many of the political reporters thought this was his wife's idea. Actually, it was common knowledge among the media that Rosalynn was the real president. The nice part of working in news was knowing what was really going on behind the public lies, but back then, such was kept quiet. Now, however, such is made up. Thanks to

Rosalynn, our coverage was limited on the Democrat side to Kennedy's campaign events and interviews of him. Kennedy had a bunch of hot young female relatives working for him and his campaign events always brought out big bosom babes—covering him was a joy.

My role was to keep abreast of what was happening, where and when and getting Roger, me and the crew there on time. Roger always wrote his own scripts and asked his own questions, sometimes with help from my research and suggestions, he also chose the sound bites but left the B-roll and putting the piece together to me and the videotape editor. The B-roll was easy, I'd always put in the hot young girls yelling and jumping up and down.

Just before the New York State primary, which looked like Carter was going to lose; the White House calls and invites us down for an interview. All the other local NYC stations were also invited to interview Carter. That gave me an idea. Since Carter refused to debate Kennedy, why not have Kennedy answer the same questions we'd asked Carter. We could then inter-cut the answers of both in a piece that would simulate a debate. Roger agreed and at the last minute so did Kennedy. We headed over to Kennedy's hotel, and at the door with two Secret Service members standing on either side, I suddenly remembered my derringer in my suit jacket pocket. There was no place to dump it—looked like I was going to jail. These Secret Service guys didn't like me anyway for repeatedly insulting them. Not exactly the story Roger was expecting. The Secret Service, however, didn't search us, probably recognizing us from so many other campaign events. So, Roger did the interview.

The next day at the White House, the NYC local news crews are waiting in the hallway outside the oval office to interview Carter. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Carter's Security Advisor, turns the corner carrying this huge map of Iran, he looks at the reporters and camera crews in shock, almost drops the map and scurries off. This was before the aborted helicopter raid to free

the hostages in Iran. Had we been sharper, we would have realized the reason for the map. Carter lost the N.Y. primary.

Carter pulled the same tactic for the New Jersey primary. He invited at the last minute the NYC local reporters down to a speech he was making in southern Jersey. After the speech, he would do an interview with each station. When Roger finished the interview, we had to get him back to NYC for the 6 o'clock show while I had the interview with his editing instructions beamed to the station from southern Jersey. That way as soon as Roger arrived, he could walk onto the set and do the open and close for the piece live. Roger made it in time and the piece aired. By then it was night, and I went to the airport for a helicopter ride back to NYC. But at the airport, I realized I had no money, and the newsroom had not booked me a flight because everything was arranged at the last minute. What to do—hitchhike? The helicopter company won't take a personal check or personal credit card, but one trusting businessman did take my check in return for cash. They put me in the only vacant seat, which was up front next to the pilot. The helicopter approached NYC from the south where the World Trade Centers with lighted windows loomed gigantic in front of us against the black sky. The helicopter was flying at a height about middle way up the Centers—what a beautiful sight. Carter also lost the New Jersey primary.

Before the Democrat Convention in NYC, the *ad hoc* investigative group came to me with another story. Eyewitness News was not like Channel 5, of course, even Channel 5 was no longer like Channel 5. The U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of N.Y. was investigating the Democrat power broker Pat Cunningham for income tax evasion and other federal crimes. Both the F.B.I. and the Criminal Investigation Division of the Manhattan I.R.S. were handling the investigation. The story was relevant because Robert Strauss, President Carter's campaign

chairman, had hired Cunningham for Carter's campaign and made him responsible for making the arrangements for the Democrat Convention at Madison Square Garden for mid-August.

Strauss's hiring Cunningham raised a lot of political eyebrows. Cunningham had been the Democrat County Leader in the Bronx. In that position he effectively controlled who was allowed to run for Bronx Civil Court Judgeships. Since the Bronx was heavily Democrat, Cunningham's approval virtually assured election, which in political speak meant money. In 1976, the special state prosecutor, Maurice Nadjari, was investigating corruption in the City's judicial system—something that is proverbial. Nadjari's grand jury indicted Cunningham for selling judgeships, accepting bribes and fixing criminal cases. Cunningham beat the rap but was forced to give up his Leadership position to Roy Cohn's law partner Stanley Friedman.

Cunningham and Strauss were old friends, but why risk the bad publicity of hiring a once indicted politician to work on a presidential campaign? The investigation group's sources told us that Strauss was trying to use his political clout to close the investigation. Did Cunningham threaten to squeal on Strauss about something? Did Strauss figure that were Carter to win with Cunningham's help, the investigation would go away?

Strauss was holding a pre-convention press conference at Madison Square Garden that Roger was covering. So at the press conference, with Roger's okay, I asked Strauss about the Cunningham investigation—boy did Strauss blow up. He ranted and railed about media smear-tactics, that there was no investigation, which was a lie, and that Cunningham was an upstanding citizen who had never been convicted of anything. Up to then, that last part was correct.

With Strauss's rant on videotape, the convention about to begin and our knowledgeable sources, there was enough for a story, but the Executive Producer nixed it because investigative journalism was not part of the Eyewitness News image. Two years later, Cunningham was

found guilty of tax evasion, perjury and other federal crimes. Strauss was not a party in the criminal case but did appear as a witness. When the prosecutor tried to question Strauss about Cunningham selling judgeships, the judge prevented it.

At the convention, Kennedy lost, but made the best speech of his campaign. At its end, he said, "For all those whose cares have been our concern, the work goes on, the cause endures, the hope still lives, and the dream shall never die."

Afterward his defeat, Kennedy held an end of the campaign party at his home in D.C. His campaign manager for N.Y. and N.J. invited me along on the promise that it was off-the-record. The house was the most tastefully decorated home I ever saw. But the high point was Shriver's daughter walking around with her leg in a cast wearing short-shorts. Don't remember whether I got to sign it or not, but if I had, it would have been on the inner thigh. She was warm and friendly as young girls are but quickly became bitter with age.

On the Republican side of the 1980 election, the main presidential candidates were Ronald Reagan and George Bush, followed by Congressmen John Anderson and Phil Crane. Anderson was by far the smartest of any of the candidates whether Republican or Democratic. Crane, however, had the best looking campaign girls.

Bush won the Iowa caucus because Reagan's campaign manager kept tight reins on Reagan's appearances for fear of what he would say. Wisely, Reagan fired his manager, since Reagan's attraction was that he would say and do the unconventional providing it further his conservative view of America.

After Iowa, Bush held a press conference in New Hampshire. Roger had sent me there to lay the ground work for our coverage. In recounting his victory in Iowa, Bush says, "What we have is momentum. We look forward to Big Mo being on our side." I thought, "Big Mo?"

What a preppy idiot this guy was. His big mo ended with the Nashua Telegraph debate where the editor of the influential paper tried to turn off Reagan's microphone. Reagan, clearly angry said, "I'm paying for this microphone Mr. Green." Bush looked like the preppy wimp he was in comparison. Reagan won most of the primaries after that, including New Hampshire. At the Republican Convention in Detroit, Reagan made the politically smart move of choosing Bush as his VP.

It was now Carter, Reagan and John Anderson, who was running as an independent with over 20% in some polls. Reagan and Anderson debated each other early on but Carter refused to participate—must have been Rosalynn telling him to stay in the White House again. But Jimmy would not get away with hiding forever. In October, a week before the election, Carter and Reagan were neck and neck going into the only debate they had. Carter looked like a scared little-girl, but his doom was sealed when Reagan asked American voters, "Are you better off than you were four years ago?"

During 1980, the key election in New York State was for Senate. On the Republican side, Senator Javits, sometimes referred to as Jake the Snake, was running in the Republican primary looking for a fifth term even though he had been diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease. Shouldn't he have retired? Some of these politicians begin to believe that the people exist to serve them instead of the other way around.

Javits was a liberal in a party that in 1980 was turning conservative. Al D'Amato, a supervisor of the Town of Hempstead, conservative and implicated in the Nassau 1% kickback scandal, ran against Javits. D'Amato won the primary, but Javits stayed on the ballot for the general election as nominee of the Liberal Party. There was obviously a deal between the

Republican Party and the Liberal Party to keep Javits in the general election so that he would draw votes away from the Democrat nominee Congresswoman Elizabeth Holtzman.

The contest between D'Amato and Holtzman was tight. Roger periodically interviewed both candidates. On one occasion, Holtzman came to the studio for an interview. As with all candidates showing up at the studio for an interview, I'd go down to the lobby to greet them and show them upstairs for the interview. Holtzman shows up, walks through the revolving door, I put out my hand and start to introduce myself, but she walks right by ignoring me. I turn around and she's looking at the lobby's TV showing a clip of her. What a self-centered princess, I thought. When the TV piece on her was over, she deigned to recognize me, and I escorted her to the interview with Roger.

All during the senate campaign the Village Voice had been castigating D'Amato and supporting Holtzman, which made sense—it was a liberal newspaper. Holtzman was the liberal and D'Amato the conservative with connections to Joseph Margiotta. Personally, I sided with Holtzman until she pulled her feminist-princess superiority routine. This babe was not likely to get along with anyone in the Senate where compromise was crucial. I gave D'Amato's brother, Armand, a call.

“Armand, what I'm about to tell you is just between you and me. No one else is to know—not even Roger. Holtzman's campaign pays the firm 'Arts, Letters and Politics' thousands of dollars for campaign advice. That firm is owned and run by Sara Kovner. She's the wife of Victor Kovner the attorney for the Village Voice. Victor carries a lot of weight over what the Voice prints and does not print. There's at least the appearance that the Kovners are financially benefiting from the Voice's articles criticizing your brother.”

Armand thank me and the next day D'Amato issued a press release about the Voice's conflict of interest that the local news picked up and ran. D'Amato won the race with 44.9% to Holtzman's 43.5% and Javits with 11.1%. Did Holtzman's princess conduct toward me lose her the election—who knows, but it didn't help. Reagan on the other hand beat Carter in a landslide winning 44 states.

The next political event was covering Reagan's Inauguration. Eyewitness sent a team of reporters and producers including Rose Ann Scamardella, the inspiration for Saturday Night Live's character Rosanne Roseannadanna by Gilda Ratner. Ratner's character was brash and tactless.

One of the celebrities entertaining at the Inaugural Balls was Patti Lupone who was then playing Eva Peron in the play Evita. Rose Ann had arranged an interview with Lupone at her hotel room. The crew and I show up on time but there's no Rose Ann even though time was running out to get the story on the 11 o'clock show. First, it was yelling through the door at Lupone's maid trying to explain who we were. She finally let us in so the crew could set up the lights. Then Lupone walks out of her bedroom partially dressed, but not so partially dressed to deter her from going into a fit over us guys being in her boudoir. I then realized how she got the part of Eva Peron. If we had been in Argentina, she would have had us executed. Rose Ann shows up—late, what do you expect, does the interview, and I sprint back to the studio, put the piece together with the editor and barely get it on the air.

The next day, Rose Ann's regular producer, a female, and the one who should have done the Lupone story calls me.

“Rose Ann wants you to be at her room by 11 tonight.”

“What's the story?” I ask.

“No story, she wants you to spend the night with her.”

I laughed, and said, “Sorry, I have a date with two college coeds.” Which actually was the truth. I had met them during the run up to the inauguration and agreed to show them around the broadcasting area.

Her producer said, “Are you sure?”

“Yes, I’m sure.” If I had had sufficient foresight, I would have started a guys #MeToo lunacy. Instead I told Roger and we laughed.

After the Inauguration, my contract with Eyewitness News was up, so I went looking for a political job. When Roger heard that Congressman Chuck Schumer had interviewed me for a PR position, he pressured WABC to hire me as a writer, which it did. Working as a writer meant more than just writing copy. Often you put together a story for an anchor and sometimes went out to do the interviews.

Eyewitness was about to celebrate an anniversary, so the night assignment editor sent me to get Frank Gifford’s reaction. Gifford was the sports anchor at Eyewitness before he moved over to Monday Night Football. Gifford was attending an event at the Waldorf, so before he and his wife went into the ballroom, I approached him with the camera crew and asked for comment about Eyewitness News’s anniversary. Always a classy guy, he made a funny but not derogatory comment. Then I asked him, “Could I get your autograph? I remember you catching one handed those bombs from Y.A. Tittle during your comeback in 1962. Just amazing!”

His wife responds, “I don’t believe this!” Guess she thought those days were over.

Gifford signs the back of one of my Eyewitness News business cards, “Thanks!” He was one of the greats, but more important he showed amazing guts in making a comeback after suffering a severe head injury from a tackle in 1960.

Another memorable encounter was with Abbie Hoffman sporting his new face. We talked a little about his anti-war days, but now he was trying to blunt the conservative trend that America was entering under Reagan. I gave him my card and said, “If you’ve got any political stories, give me a call.” Never heard from him. The press reported he committed suicide, but I never believed that.

Writing for Eyewitness News was fun. Studio 54 regularly sent the newsroom free tickets, but considering my past connections with that nightclub, I never attended. Roger did a half-hour special on Israel with me as the producer that was titled “Israel: What Next?” It actually won a silver medal at the N.Y. Film Festival, which I had never heard of. What was a news documentary doing in a film festival—who knows. It didn’t matter because the prize went to the field producer. I kept my name off the credits, once again because of Lambert and Cohn’s good friends.

My tenure at Eyewitness was short because I intended to go to law school. Like an idiot, I thought I could use the law to defend my rights. The news media, however, had a lot more power to exercise—no biased, brain judges with which to deal. Law school started for me in the fall of 1981.

I Am a Witness

The legal battle over Lambert finally reached the Court of Appeals. In July 1980, the Court of Appeals ruled the Commission had the authority to investigate Lambert’s campaign and awarding of patronage to campaign supporters. It also ruled that the court proceedings must be made public.

My testimony before the Commission occurred at the beginning of my second year in law school, September 1982, at the Association of the Bar of the City of New York. Lambert was

present and tried to stare me down, but my juvenile delinquency days easily returned the visual intimidation until she looked away. Her lawyer was James LaRossa, dubbed by the press the attorney for Mafia bosses. During my two days of testimony, the attorneys for the Commission pretty much allowed LaRossa to have his way. Something wasn't right here. The Commission originally wanted my testimony badly, but now they sat back without the usual fighting that occurs at any hearing. Looked like the fix was in again.

A source inside the Commission subsequently told me that the Reform Democrats, represented by attorney Victor Kovner, and the Regular Democrats who had supported Lambert cut a deal. Cohn was probably involved somewhere. Lambert agreed to distribute Surrogate Court patronage to not only her campaign supporters and attorneys connected with the Regulars but also to the Reform Democrats who had opposed her. She also agreed to a private letter of censure by the Commission, which meant nothing. So in the end, greed won out with both Reformers and Regulars feeding off the estates of widows, widowers and orphans.

After my testimony, I ran into LaRossa in the elevators of the U.S. Eastern District of New York Courthouse after an interview with Chief Judge Jack Weinstein who was considering me for a law school internship position. LaRossa somehow found out what I was doing there and called Judge Weinstein in an effort to sink my internship by lying about my role in the Lambert case. It didn't work. My law school advisor, the former Eastern District U.S. Attorney David Trager told Judge Weinstein, "LaRossa is a mob lawyer who cannot be believed." Judge Weinstein agreed to the internship but it only lasted for a semester instead of a year.

Before my testimony, Lambert and Cohn's good friends subpoenaed my law school records. They now knew where I lived. In addition, since the protection provided me by simply working at Eyewitness News was gone, I decided to blow town and transferred to George

Washington University Law School. They couldn't find out about my transfer because after testifying, the hearing judge was not about to grant another subpoena for my records.

The Jealous Mistress

Attending law school in D.C. was a nice quiet life, reading the writings of the best minds in history. Too bad the actual practice of law was dealing with the worst minds in history.

Law schools grade on a curve, so a 90 or above means you knew the subject and didn't get any additional points. If you were lazy or dumb, a law school would usually give you enough points to pass. Sounds generous and communistic or in today's lingo: PC. What's the impact? The better private law firms are not about to pay top money for graduates who would otherwise have flunked out without the curve. So what happens to these, in reality, legal failures—the employer of last resort, the government. For example, N.Y. State judges are paid around \$150,000 a year, which is the salary of a first year associate at a decent law firm. The reason state judges are paid so little is because the vast majority would have flunked out of law school without the curve. So the next time you appear before a state court judge, remember she's probably an F student. Federal judges are paid more, but often the prestige of the position attracts students who didn't need a curve to graduate. The Federal Government also has other positions that attract smart graduates, such as its Honors Program. Students with good grades are hired for a two year stint with some department, such as the Treasury.

In D.C., I took up residence in a suburban house in Arlington within a couple of blocks of the metro station. The subway had escalators and air conditioning, but the preoccupation with cars meant it shut down around midnight even on Friday and Saturday. Lambert and Cohn's boys never found me, assuming they were looking.

To keep myself in shape for the girls, who no matter what they say don't like guys with fat stomachs, I went looking for a rugby team. My mediocre rugby career was nearing its end due to old age: thirty-something. After learning the sport at Colorado University, I played a year for Columbia College, which was nice since the school alums sent the team to Europe. Boys were the people in Paris nasty. A couple of guys almost got into fights, but one of our teammates knew French and diffused the situations. After Columbia, I played off and on for Old Blue, which basically was the Columbia Alumni team. Old Blue was set up as a private club team in 1963 by guys who had graduated from Columbia. What was unique about Old Blue, from the other teams I played for, was that when you stepped on to the pitch, you were confident of winning, defeat was not an option. Sure, the team didn't win every game, but for me the confidence never wavered. One of the original founders of Old Blue was now coaching Washington Rugby, so I joined the team.

The only time in my life when the word "love" came to my mind without some girl friend whining for me to use it was when I'd stepped out onto the pitch, even now when it's just an old boy's game.

Law school is tough. The way I made it through was constantly reminding myself that "Anything worth doing is worth doing badly," and "This too will end," which for me was 1985. Since I did well in school, I applied to the top ten federal agency Honor's Programs, thinking that as a lawyer in government, I could have a greater impact than at a private firm, such as Skadden Arps, which had made me an offer.

At eight of the Honor's Programs, the interviewers and decision makers were girls, for one it was a queer and for one a regular guy with a family. Guess which one hired me, guess which ones did not? All the girls said no, so did the queer, but that didn't matter. Of the girls

who said no, six were in agencies with less prestige and competition than the one that hired me—the Treasury Department with the regular guy. Looked like discrimination.

My first tour of duty at Treasury was in the Interpretative Section of the I.R.S. One of the main purposes of the section was to approve or disapprove requests for private letter rulings. A private letter ruling is when a taxpayer, individual, corporation or other entity, wants to know whether a particular transaction will have any tax consequences. If the section says no, then the taxpayer can carry out the transaction without having to pay any taxes, and the I.R.S. is bound by that determination as it applies to that taxpayer only. It has no precedential value for other taxpayers. Another purpose of the section was to decide whether the I.R.S. should appeal a case.

The group of new hires was welcome by the Associate General Counsel of the Treasury. He told us that “It is my job to make sure that those with hands across the Whitehouse get what they want.” I should have walked out then, but it took me a little longer to realize the I.R.S., as with most of the Federal Government, was institutionally corrupt.

Most of the cases assigned to me involved corporations or wealthy family trusts. One, however, was a federal worker who reported for jury duty, was paid a fee, and the fee was paid over to his federal employer as required by law. The worker didn’t report the fee on his tax return, so the question was whether the fee he never got was part of his gross income. Believe it or not, my idiot boss said yes.

The attorneys in this allegedly elite section of the I.R.S. referred to it as “Club Fed.” No one, except me, ever stayed late or worked on the weekends. It was strictly 9 to 5, Monday through Friday, unless word came down they could leave early then they bolted for the door. Just before Christmas 1985 my boss and I were discussing a case in his office. The head of the section calls my boss to say everyone could leave early because of the holiday. My boss jumps

up, grabs his coat, tells his secretary to make the announcement and tells me, “We’ll finish this after the holidays.” He was the first one to the elevators.

Okay, time off is important, but these federal attorneys worshipped sloth. Many admitted they were just “time-serving” until the taxpayer paid them a pension as a reward for having done as little as possible for the people they allegedly served. Nothing would ever change the indolent bureaucrats of the federal government because they couldn’t be fired, unless they massacred their fellow workers, or committed felonies and maybe not even then. Lois Lerner wasn’t fired, she retired.

Not only were these lawyers lazy but scared. Their fear drove them to twist the law in Kafkaian fashion to reach the result the higher-ups wanted. This made no sense to me. If they couldn’t be fired, what was there to fear, since none of them had any ambition to do something other than live off the taxpayer. This place was eating away at my egoism, so I started looking for work at private law firms in NYC, but didn’t plan on leaving Treasury until finishing my recommendations on one private letter ruling by a family “with hands across the Whitehouse.”

The California family of the late J. Paul Getty requested a private letter ruling as to the tax consequences for breaking up the irrevocable Sarah C. Getty Trust, which by then was valued at \$4 billion. In 1930, Sarah C. Getty, the mother of J. Paul Getty, succeeded to the ownership of the Getty Oil Company when her husband George F. Getty died. Sarah knew her son was a playboy spendthrift, so she put the oil company into an irrevocable trust with J. Paul as the trustee in 1934. J. Paul received the net income from the oil company, but under the trust he couldn’t squander the oil company’ assets on his wastrel life-style. He could, however, add to the value of the trust with smart investment decisions which he did, turning millions into billions over 40 years. Sarah Getty made clear in the Trust deed that its purpose was to preserve the

Getty Oil business, always building it and maintaining control of it as a growth enterprise, never by any means dissipating control or relinquishing any part of it.

The media often listed J. Paul Getty as the richest man in the world, which wasn't true. He was just the trustee of a wealthy trust who received its net income. It was the Trust that owned Getty Oil—not J. Paul.

Sarah Getty set the Trust to end not when J. Paul died but only when all of his four sons who had already been born had died. So with the death of J. Paul's last son, the value of the Trust would be distributed to the remaining descendants of J. Paul. J. Paul died in 1976 when all his four sons were still a live. His son Gordon P. Getty became the trustee.

Up until 1984, the Trust held 40% of Getty Oil stock valued at around \$5 billion. At the end of 1983, Pennzoil Co. offered to buy the Getty Oil stock in the Trust to which Gordon Getty agreed to sell but then changed his mind and sold all the stock for a higher price to Texaco on January 6, 1984. Pennzoil sued Texaco in the Delaware courts for tortious interference with a contract. Delaware courts are the courts of choice for lawsuits involving large corporations because the judges are smart and experienced with such disputes. At the time Texaco was the nation's third-largest oil company with a net worth \$13.5 billion. Texaco's lawyer missed a court deadline that resulted in the case being transferred to Houston, Texas—Pennzoil's hometown. In November 1985, Pennzoil's home-grown jury gave Pennzoil a \$10.3 billion dollar verdict against Texaco, which the home grown judge upheld. The Texaco "man with the star" appeared headed for oblivion.

Gordon Getty's sale of the Trust's Getty Oil stock incurred a capital gains tax of \$1 billion. The Trust's income beneficiaries, remaindermen and even the unborn, who legally had an interest in the Trust, were angered not only at the tax but that Gordon, as trustee, would

decide how the remaining \$4 billion would be invested. They basically thought Gordon was an idiot with little to no business experience. They weren't off base; Gordon spent most his time writing unpublished music. So 26 of the beneficiaries, including minors, unborn, unknown and unascertained, being represented by 10 law firms, sued to remove Gordon as trustee and saddle him with paying all the capital gains tax.

After 51 depositions and 82,000 documents, the relatives decided to settle. The settlement called dissolving the Sarah C. Getty Trust and then creating six independent trusts, each with its own trustee, beneficiaries, remaindermen and investment requirements while payment of the capital gains tax would be spread among all the new trusts. The California court approved the settlement, citing it had the authority under California's Probate Code § 1138.1 (a)(14). The division of the Trust would occur as soon as possible after receipt of a favorable tax ruling by the I.R.S.

On receiving the request for a private letter ruling from the 10 law firms representing the Getty Family, the I.R.S. set up a task force appointing different groups of lawyers to handle different aspects of the transaction. One group determined whether gift or inheritance taxes would be due, another whether income or capital gains taxes would be due. I ended up in the group researching income and capital gains taxes.

Looking over the private letter ruling request, I had a few questions about the settlement agreement, so I called one of the chief lawyers for the Getty Family. That didn't go well, an I.R.S. higher-up forbade me from contacting any of the lawyers no matter what the question. Even my sycophant boss said that was strange.

Then one day, a girl attorney in the gift tax group calls me. In a hush voice, she says, “I hear you have questions about granting the private letter ruling, so do I. A gift tax should clearly be imposed on the Getty’s but my bosses are pushing me to find no taxes. This is not right.”

“I’m going through the same situation on the income and capital gains issues. It looks to me like they should owe both if they break up the trust, but I’m getting pressure to let it go. Why don’t we try to track down anyone else who thinks this case is being pushed through because the Getty’s have political clout.”

She replied, “If I hear of anyone, I’ll let you know. But I don’t want my name connected with opposing what the bosses want.”

She was not the only one who secretly opposed the Getty Family not paying taxes, but the other attorneys were all scared to speak up no matter what the Internal Revenue Code stated. Besides the pressure to give the Gettys what they wanted, what really bothered me was since when did any state allow for the termination of an irrevocable trust before the date set in the trust deed. The law of trusts dated back 500 years to common-law England, which was adopted by every state in the union. The whole purpose of an irrevocable trust was to keep beneficiaries from invading and dissipating the assets for a period of time. The California trial court had approved the termination of the Sarah C. Getty Trust before its time and distribution of the assets to the Getty family. In effect, the court allowed for the invasion of the assets contrary to the trust deed executed by Sarah C. Getty. The court stated it had the authority under California Trust Code § 1138.1(a)(14). The California Law Revision Commission at 1278 described that section as follows:

Division of Trusts: A recently enacted statute provides for the division of a trust into two or more separate trusts upon a showing of good cause and with the consent of all parties in interest. The proposed law eliminates the requirement of obtaining the consent of all parties in interest. Under the proposed law, the trust

may be divided on petition of a trustee or beneficiary where good cause is shown and the court finds that dividing the trust will not defeat or substantially impair the accomplishment of the trust purpose or the interests of the beneficiaries. Division of a trust may be desirable where different members of a family want their own trusts because of a disagreement about how the trust should be administered or because a beneficiary moves to another part of the country and prefers to take his or her part of the trust along.

Sounded exactly like the fact situation for which the Getty lawyers wanted a letter ruling, and exactly what the law of trusts prohibited for centuries and in every state. The section became law one day before the Getty relatives executed their settlement agreement that divided up the assets of the Sarah Trust into six smaller trusts controlled by the different groups of the family. That sounded convenient—too convenient. So I called the California Legislature. None of my higher ups had ever said I couldn't, only that I couldn't talk to the Getty lawyers. After talking to a couple of folks, I was referred to a legislator who had opposed changing the trust law and asked him.

“Why did the legislature change the code?”

“Because the Getty Family wanted it. It's a temporary change that will be on the books for a number of months and then the code will revert back to the old law.”

“California changed the law that every state in the nation adopted from the English common-law on their say so?”

“That's right and that's why I opposed it. You have to understand that the Gettys have a lot of clout in the legislature and the governor's office. Everyone knew this change was to allow the Gettys to revoke the Sarah Getty Trust, take its assets and put them in different trusts so they could do what they wanted with the assets.”

“But that's contrary to the very reason for an irrevocable trust.”

“Right, but that is also why the new law will last for only a handful of months. This section was written so that it would apply to any family which was in the position of the Gettys trying to get at the assets of an irrevocable trust. Of course, they were the only ones in that position.”

“So that’s why the Getty lawyers are in such a rush for the private letter ruling.”

“Right,” the legislator said. “From what I can see, they’re running out of time.”

“So the California legislature enacted a private law to benefit the Gettys because they are rich?”

“That’s the way it works, unfortunately. Any other questions?”

“No not now, thanks.”

Who did these members of one of America’s richest 100 families think they were? Using a state legislature to excuse them from a universal law just to fill their pockets with money. Money that was likely the result of criminal activity, since as Balzac said, “Behind every great fortune there is a great crime.” This really ticked me off, but what to do?

The I.R.S. functions, when it functions at all, based on one key axiom: the tax consequences of a transaction are determined by its substance—not its form. Since the I.R.S. is not bound by a taxpayer’s characterization of a transaction, it should not be bound by a legislative characterization when taxpayers use their influence to get such legislation passed. The California court and the Getty lawyers claimed the six new trusts would simply be a continuation of the Sarah Trust according to California-Getty law. But California law didn’t matter, what matter was how the I.R.S. saw the transaction. The substance of the transaction was that the court approved settlement agreement terminated the Sarah Trust before the Trust deed allowed,

distributed its assets among the beneficiaries who then set up six different trusts with those assets. All of that had tax consequences.

The I.R.S. higher-ups, however, were pushing to give the Gettys what they wanted—no taxes owed. The history of trust law and the I.R.S. tradition of examining the substance of a transaction didn't matter. The Interpretative Section was going to kowtow to this one-percent family with white-shoe lawyers.

So I wrote up a dissent memorandum detailing the Getty Family's "hands across" Sacramento and that under the Revenue Code the transaction would incur regular income and capital gains taxes. Called the Treasury Inspector General's office to report that my bosses were being unduly influenced by the Getty lawyers to give the Getty Family what it wanted despite the law. Talked with one of the attorneys there who said he'd keep an eye of the case, sent him my memo, dropped my memo off in my immediate boss' office, and blew town to work as an associate at Cravath, Swain & Moore. I had enough of the government's Club Fed corruption.

Next stop, the New York Bar exam and working for Cravath as an associate. Passing the Bar was looking problematic, however, since I had no quiet place to study. There was construction going on all day long next to where I lived, so I needed a quiet place after the morning Bar review course. A friend of mine in Governor Mario Cuomo's office at the World Trade Center asked the Governor if I could use the office conference room to study. Being the classy guy that he was—the Governor okayed it. The only condition was "don't drink the water." That was a surprise for a NYC office building, but fine, I brought my own. Thanks to Governor Cuomo, I passed the Bar easily.

One of the small ironies of my ending up at Cravath was that after the Houston court found Texaco liable for \$10.3 billion plus interest, Texaco hired Cravath to save it from

nonexistence. Cravath put Texaco into Chapter 11 bankruptcy, which would protect its assets from Pennzoil executing on the judgment. Cravath then offered Pennzoil \$3 billion, which it accepted in lieu of the judgment. Texaco was saved and subsequently merged with Chevron. As for the Sarah C. Getty Trust, the Family terminated it and used the assets to set up the other trusts. Whether they had to pay taxes on the transaction, I didn't know and quickly didn't care. My focus was on my duties at Cravath working for a smart and cool partner in the litigation department.

Sitting in Cravath's cafeteria for a quick lunch, over looking Manhattan from 50 odd stories up, I often thought, "So this is what it's like in service to the king." Cravath had its benefits. One weekend while sitting at the bar in a nightclub, I started hitting on this young babe next to me. She wasn't interested until I mentioned my employer was Cravath. Cravath turned every one of its male lawyers into prime meat. Another advantage was that most of the lawyers there were smarter than me—I liked that. No more cowardly Club Fed losers who couldn't argue a legal issue or understand the law. Cravath even held a formal Spring Dance at places such as the Museum of Natural History with a cocktail hour in the gem room. The girls drooled and not over their drinks. The best of the three dances was the one where the Shirelles sang. My date was of the same color, but seemed somewhat embarrassed dancing with a true-blooded Aryan to the Shirelles' hit songs.

After three years, I left Cravath. They asked me to stay, but I was a dope and left.

BEEchwood 4-5789
(1989)

After my stint at Cravath, I moved into a new apartment in which the telephone company required me to visit its Haarlem office for some reason. My buddy Al agreed to come along, not as physical protection but the telephone company's nemesis. The company's officials knew him

and refrained from engaging in the usual bureaucratic stupidities with him and hopefully me, since he'd be along.

The office was on 125th Street. We two cue balls walk in while lots of black people were waiting for interminably slow service from overly obnoxious company employees. Those folks looked liked they had been beaten into submission by concentration camp thugs. I couldn't understand it and Al ignored it. He loudly demanded service and right away. Some bureaucrat jumped, did what he was paid for and we left those people still cowed and still waiting.

Third and Fourth Worlds

1991 and my high school class finally gets around to holding its 25th reunion 26 years after graduation. Life was boring at the time, so I challenged an old buddy that I'd go if he did. He was bored too, so we both went—partially as a goof. This one stupid move sealed my fate for the remainder of my existence—thanks of course to a girl. In high school she was one of the “in-crowd”—blonde, blue-eyed, big pillows and a cheerleader while my crowd was purely juvenile delinquents. At the end of our senior year, I'm sitting on the bus waiting for it to leave on the senior class trip with bottles of resealed Coke spiked with rum under my seat. She comes up to me very friendly and starts talking. I'm civil, but the back of mind is screaming—stay away from her. So I did and never saw her again until the 1991 reunion.

She was living in the City, so we saw each other every so often for dinner or a drink. Then she invited me to a barbecue up in Westchester County that one of her friends was holding. Free food and booze in the countryside—I accepted. At the barbecue, I met a professor from Hofstra with connections in the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union was still intact, but Gorbachev was out and Yeltsin was in after the failed summer coup. The professor invited me to a conference in Moscow at the Kremlin sponsored by an organization called Intertraining. It was

the creation of the Speaker of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union—Ruslan Imranovich Khasbulatov, who had backed Yeltsin during the failed coup attempt by hardline commies. It's always hard to tell who is behind what in that country or exactly what an organization's aims are, but they would pay my hotel, and all I had to do was get to Moscow in November over Thanksgiving week, so I accepted.

But first, there was a trip to a place south of the border. An attorney friend of mine from Cravath had turned into an eco-Nazi and was planning a trip to Ecuador. He wanted to expose the oil companies ruining the jungle interior by filming their destruction of the pristine habitat.

“If you want, I'll go with you. I have some experience in filming as a field producer at a couple of local news stations.” He agreed, so we flew south in October. On the plane, I was talking with a lady who seemed to know a lot about Ecuador, so I asked her, “Where exactly is this place?” She turns to her female friend and says, “He gets on a plane to fly somewhere but he doesn't know where it is.” They laugh, to which I respond, “Why not? That's part of the adventure and having the confidence to deal with whatever arises.”

On landing in Quito, some official sees us two Americans waiting in the custom's line and escorts us through, skipping the wait. Apparently South America has changed since Nixon visited.

We found a travel agent and hired a guide and boat to meet us on the other side of the Andes in Coca. The official name is Puerto Francisco de Orellana. That's where the Spanish Conquistador Francisco de Orellana set sail down the Rio Napo which flowed into the Amazon taking his band to the Atlantic Ocean. They didn't know where they were going either.

A DC-3 flew us over the Andes to Coca's one runway airport. The Town's streets were mostly made of dirt or mud when it rained. In town we ran into a couple of American guys—

that was a surprise. One was a retired military veteran living off his pension, and the other was a BS artist from Chicago. The military guy was cool and lived in Quito. He reminded me of a guy I had roomed with in St. Louis in 1971. He told me to look him up next time I was in Quito.

Before heading off down river the next morning, our guide, my buddy and I had supper at an outdoor café. Of course, given the warm weather most shops could be considered outdoor. Right around dessert and right on time, a hot young Latina walking by nearly jumps in my lap. Fine with me. Anney Rosa worked in a beauty salon in town but her home was Guayaquil in the south. She spoke broken English and was Mestizo, a mix of Spanish and native—more native. We agreed to meet after our eco-filming trip down the Napo.

The wooden boat looked like a large Vietnamese sampan with an out-board motor on the back. In addition to our guide was the boat's owner and operator, who carried a .45. It made sense. Can't exactly dial 911 in the middle of the jungle—not that in America the cops ever arrive on time anyway.

There are really no words to describe traveling down a river wider than the Hudson, looking out on a flat expanse of jungle on either side—it was beautiful with a peace that permeated your conscious and unconscious mind. Toward the end of the day, and here the day went from sun up to sun down—no street lamps cracking the night, we took a side tributary to an inland lake. Entering the lake, we could hear the jungle noise at close of day from the other side. It was as if the jungle was welcoming us but also warning to leave our arrogance and human idiocy behind or it would destroy us. For me, I felt something never experienced before—that I belonged there.

Over the nearly week of exploring, we filmed a few oil company helicopters disturbing the quiet and the remnants of a couple of small areas of trees felled by Petroecuador. I told my

eco buddy that there was no way to picture the beauty of this place. If he wanted to convince government officials to save it, he'd have to bring them to visit in person.

One night, we ended up having dinner with a native family in their hut, which was built on stilts to survive the rainy season. And no we weren't dinner. Unfortunately, however, the missionaries had already been here, so the native girls wore tops. Cocktails, if you could call them that, were an interestingly tasting hard liquor. The drinks during dinner were the same, as were the after dinner drinks. Not much variety, probably because there were no liquor stores, except way back up the Napo in Coca. It didn't matter, we drank our fill, had some laughs with our guide interpreting and then stumbled back through the jungle to our tent. Too bad the family chief didn't offer us his daughter or wife, they were rather cute. Back in the States, I learned that the interesting alcohol was masato, which is fermented by the saliva of native females when they chew yucca and then spit it into a bucket. So, in a fashion, we actually tasted the females of that native family.

Another evening, we camped by a lagoon. The presence of a dugout canoe allowed me to paddle around the lagoon by myself in the pitch black dark with only the camp fire as a beacon back to my civilized companions. Before hitting the sack every night a little after sundown, you had to check the inside of your sleeping bag to make sure nothing had crawled in. Never slept better.

Come morning at sun up, we'd take some muddy water from the river and boil it for coffee. The boiling killed nature's poisons but not man's. Swimming was okay even though our guide would catch out of the same place Piranha for dinner. A course I refrained from because of my allergy to anything coming out of the water, except mermaids.

On one occasion we pulled up alongside the bank where I saw some orchards through the underbrush—naturally I wanted to bring one back to Anney. Jumped out of the boat, through the brush, cut off an orchard, turned around to go back—I was lost. Had no idea which way to go. The jungle had warned me not to act like an idiot. Doomed seized me, but then my buddy yelled out, “Where are you?” That told me which way to go. The boat was only about ten yards away, but there was no telling that in the jungle.

Back to Coca with my orchard for Anney, a couple of dates and my promise to visit again for New Year’s Eve.

My buddy and I headed off to another jungle town, Lago Agrio, by bus—actually by the roof of the bus. The buses have small railings on top for overflow passengers who hang on while sitting on the roof and praying for no sudden stops. We weren’t overflow but chose the roof for fun. The bus pulled into a couple of no-horse towns with dirt roads as stops along the way. Some locals sold unknown food to the passengers before the bus continued its route.

Lago Agrio was relatively large, around 40,000 people, and sported one night club still called a “discothèque.” We checked it out, but there wasn’t anyone there except a few rundown prostitutes. Next day, we flew back to Quito and then on to the asphalt jungle—New York City.

Anney didn’t have a telephone, actually nearly everybody in Coca didn’t. The town did have a telephone center where calls and telegrams could be sent. Regular mail service also worked. Anney would call me and I’d call her right back at the center number to save her money or send a telegram or letter. So we kept in touch.

In November, I hopped a plane for the remnants of the evil empire. Landed at Moscow’s Sheremetyevo International Airport, which looked like Newark’s Airport from 1965—the past

still lived in Russia. Had no idea where to go but then hear my name over the loud speaker telling me where to meet my ride into town. If anything, this conference was organized.

Intertraining housed the conference guesses at the Intourist Hotel, a half block from the Kremlin where the conference was held. The hotel was one of the special locations where foreigners were allowed to stay in the Soviet Union—presumably for eaves dropping purposes. Twenty-two stories of grey concrete and glass owned by the Moscow City government, it housed more prostitutes plying their trade than a Nevada brothel. Back then, the government owned everything, including the prostitutes.

The rooms weren't bad by dorm standards and the beds more comfortable than a cot. The Soviet Union was paying for my accommodation, so why complain. Every floor had a dowdy, oversized lady manning a desk by the elevator. Couldn't figure out why until later.

The Conference assigned me a young co-ed as my translator and KGB escort. Not a problem, since I got to pull a 007 by taking her up to my hotel room. As soon as we entered, the dowdy floor lady was banging on the door. My escort answered and sent the floor lady on her way.

“What was that about?” I asked.

“She thought I was one of the hotel's prostitutes who are required to pay her when they visit a guest.”

Of course my escort wasn't a prostitute in that sense but an independent contractor for the KGB. Why should I care? Her body was soft and I had no secrets.

The Conference took place at the Kremlin Palace of Congresses, which Nikita Khrushchev had built as a modern arena for Communist Party meetings in 1961. At the end of a few days of innumerable speeches in the building's auditorium, all the participants were invited

to the oversized banquet hall on the top floor. The Soviets had a knack for the large. Major city streets were as wide as Interstate highways in the U.S. So how did pedestrians ever make it to the other side—they constructed pedestrian passages under the streets.

The banquet hall had plenty of food and vodka, but I couldn't figure out what some of platters were offering—not turkey, not ham, not salami. So I dubbed it “generic meat,” which tasted like Spam. Must have been left over from World War II when the U.S. shipped supplies to the Soviets to help their war effort.

Speaking of shipping, the Conference shipped me off to Kursk with my KGB escort—
“where I asked her?”

“Kursk,” she said. “It is south of Moscow where the largest tank battle ever was fought during the Great Patriotic War.” That’s how Russians refer to Stalin’s bungling of the time rather than World War II. “We defeated the Germans there, which was a turning point in the war.”

“So why am I being sent there, not that I mind seeing historic sites.”

“The Supreme Soviet has decided to dissolve the Soviet Union and replace it with a Commonwealth of Independent States. Russia intends to open its doors to democracy and capitalism, so after decades of isolation, Intertraining wants to establish contacts between current Communist Party officials and Westerners.”

“They want to get in on the ground floor of capitalism.”

“Yes,” she said.

It made sense, but that wasn't the truth. As I later learned through a couple of failed business ventures and various contacts, the former commies, now ardent capitalists, considered business the way the mob does in America. Sucker your partner into investing, then take the

money and run. Or if the joint venture is successful, use the country's warped laws to kick the Western investor out or have him liquidated. It only cost a couple of grand to hire a Chechen hit man or black widow.

Such really wasn't much of a change from the Soviet Union's bad-old days. The Soviet Union had a population of 300 million but only 17 million belong to the Communist Party. They were the elite and the way to move up the Party ladder was to lie, cheat and deceive. For pretty babes, it also included their bodies. The higher up in the Party meant more consumer goods, better food, nicer apartments and dachas and the power to push others around. But now the Party was dead and all those perks were disappearing. So what to do—scam some Westerner, which was the real reason for sending me to Kursk. Power in the Soviet Union had turned on a dime from Party loyalty to the almighty dollar.

In Kursk, we toured a little, played around a little, and I made a couple of speeches about doing business with the West. Nobody understood my speeches, but smilingly congratulated me on my acumen, public speaking and quickly followed up with "Let's make a deal for our mutual interest." That meant invest hard currency in my scheme. I looked at a few, since at the time I had some money before being pink-listed by America's PC-Feminists.

My escort and I were taken to a bottling plant that produced a Russian liqueur. After a few free samples—great taste, nice effect, the CEO asked me to arrange for financing its importation into the U.S. "Sure," I half drunkenly responded. When I got back to the 20th century—America, I checked out the possibility. Turned out the liqueur was banned in the U.S. because the D.E.A. considered one of the ingredients a narcotic. No wonder it tasted so good.

Before leaving Moscow for the U.S., my KGB escort and I were walking passed a post office. Above the door was a digital clock that said 14:10. Seemed strange, but then I

remembered the Soviet Union was on military time. Later in the day on our way back to the hotel, the clock was still reading 14:10.

“Looks like your post office’s clock is stuck.” I said.

She responded, “That’s not a clock—it’s a Geiger counter. It measures radiation.”

“Radiation! America hasn’t started the war yet.”

“I know silly. The Government used to freely give uranium to scientists and some businesses in the hope of moving into the atomic age. But there was no way for disposing of the uranium once it was spent but still radioactive. So they dumped it here and there. One of the newer parts of Moscow State University was built on radioactive land fill.”

“The students must have loved that.”

“Some came down with radiation sickness, which is how it was discovered.”

“Next time I’m here, I’ll bring my Brooks Brothers lead-lined suit.”

She laughed, and we kissed goodbye until my next visit.

Another deal by way of an American lawyer whom I had met at the Intertraining Conference presented itself. The commie bosses of the country’s North Caucasus Railroad, headquartered in Rostov-on-Don and serving the Black Sea, Georgia and those violent insurrection areas of Chechnya, Dagestan and Ingushetia, wanted to computerize their system. The other American lawyer had made the initial contact and even had a client who could do it. The objective sounded reasonable and doable, so we worked together on it. Back in the States, we put together a plan with his client, and on a later trip the following summer, the three of us presented it to the Railroad’s CEO and his staff in Rostov.

The way business worked after the fall of the Soviet Union was for westerners and the bureaucratic bosses, or biscrats, of a government entity to enter a joint venture. The biscrats

would be secret partners in the joint venture. Basically, the bosses of government entities set up private companies in which the bosses are partners and then contracted with the government entity that they controlled. All the bosses needed was for some western firm to provide goods or services to the joint venture of which the western firm was also a partner. The joint venture then sold the goods or services to the government entity for a nice profit. But the deal by Russian standards didn't end there. Once the goods or services were provided the government entity, the bosses in the joint venture would set up a separate company without the westerners and transferred the government contract, along with payments, to the new company. Under Russian law, there was nothing the westerners could do about it. The bosses would then exchange the rubles paid by the government entity for dollars and wire the money to accounts in the U.S. using banks with branches in Russia such as the Bank of New York. Or just carry the cash with them on a visit to the U.S. and put it in a safe deposit box.

On one tour of Russian bankers to NYC that was sponsored by the Soviet American Banking Law Working Group ("SABLAW"), the First Deputy Chairman of Russia's Central Bank asked a bank manager, "How secure are these safe deposit boxes?" "Complete security and secrecy," the bank manager said. Clearly the First Deputy didn't want someone walking off with his ill gotten gains.

In the nineties, all the bureaucrats were trying to fleece the Russian Government, which owned all the assets, and transfer money and themselves to America. An estimated \$1 billion a month flowed out of Russia.

In our deal, the government owned railroad would buy the computers and computer services from the joint venture and pay the joint venture to set up and service the computer system. That way the bosses of the railroad benefited from having the government owned

railroad enter into a contract that secretly paid them government funds through the joint venture. We would also benefit since our company Data Rail was a partner in the joint venture. But then they tried to convince us to send them hundreds of thousands of dollars in computers but no software that would enable the computers in the network to talk to each other, which was necessary for any computerization of the railroad. It became clear they would just have turned around and sold the computers, a premium item at the time in Russia and laughed at the stupid Americans.

Our summer trip to Rostov-on-Don, however, was memorable. One of the executives had us over for a shashlik barbecue and swimming in the Azov sea. The sea was polluted, but when the executive's 15 year-old daughter came out in her itty bitsy tiny weenie bikini, all fears of pollution disappeared. These Russian girls learn early how to manipulate men.

The demographics of Russia generally had brunette and black haired girls in the south, but as you moved north they became redheads, blondes and in Kalingrad platinum blondes with legs that went on forever. Under the commies people had been frozen in place and the southern brunettes and black haired girls probably result from the Mongol invasions that never made it as far north as Kalingrad.

The travails of trying to conduct some type of business with the New Russians in the 1990s taught me that unless they were your friends, they acted just like the con artists in the Abbott and Costello TV show. Businessmen, professors, lawyers and government officials all flooded into the country with vain attempts to establish a new economic order of capitalism under the rule of law. The only result was to massage these foreigners' egos and transfer dollars to the New Russians. Basically the nation was a land of RICOs, populated with robber

bureaucrats. First Yeltsin, then Putin, were the boss of bosses. Someday the Russians may learn that in a country of Machiavellians, even the Machiavellians lose.

With all the lunacy and attempts to separate me from my money, I still liked Russia. Every time I visited or when working there, which was often from 1991 to 2001, I learned something about myself—cheaper and more fun than using a shrink.

In between trips to medieval Russia, or what I called the Fourth World, and my modicum of a legal practice, I returned to Ecuador to see Anney off and on from 1991 to 1993. As promised, in 1991 I headed back to see her for New Year's Eve in Coca—rather a long way to go for a party. My late 20th Century flight landed in Quito, but there were no early 20th Century flights from Quito to Coca, so I took a bus. It was packed with people standing in the aisle, but no one on the roof—too dangerous. Up it chugged along these narrow semi-paved roads of the Andes with steep mountain slopes on one side and sheer cliffs on the other. Boy, I hoped the driver didn't do drugs like some of NYC's subway operators. The bus didn't sound too good, probably built in the 1940s, but it did make it to the top of the Andes before breaking down completely.

The driver told each passenger something in Spanish, which I did not understand having taken only two years in high school that I barely passed. Should have paid more attention to my Spanish teacher, but she wasn't hot like my English teacher—so I didn't. Sitting on a rock along side the now useless bus, the driver came up to me, gave his speech, took my ticket, ripped it up and gave me a few Sucres refund. The message was clear—you're on your own now gringo. Everyone else also got a refund and with some urgency started waving down cars, trucks and buses and negotiating a price for a ride—in Spanish. What's the rush, I thought, it was high

noon, sunny and warm. Did they know something I didn't? My ignorance didn't faze me; I was wearing my Brooks Brothers blue blazer.

After everyone had finally caught a ride, I decided to give it a try. Along came a bus, going who knows where, it stopped, I hopped aboard, opened my wallet for the driver who took out some Sucres and away we went with me standing in the aisle since there were no seats. The bus ironically ended up by late afternoon in Lago Agrio. The same town my Cravath eco-pal had been in months earlier. A Dutch couple on the same bus told me there were no buses leaving for Coca that day. So I stood there on a wooden sidewalk looking at a row of vehicles pulled up as though they were horses in an 1800s town in the West. A guy comes out of a store heading toward his pickup truck and I say "Coca?" "Si," he responds. Somehow we negotiated a fare with me riding in the back in my khaki pants and blue blazer.

By the time we leave Lago Agrio, night is falling. Off we zoom down dilapidated roads surrounded by the jungle—this guy drove fast, guess he knew the roads. Except for the pickup's lights, it was pitch black. What Joseph Conrad would call the "Heart of Darkness," but for me it was inviting. After about an hour the pickup's lights go out and it slides off the road as the driver hits the breaks. Now it's really dark, but I'm still wearing my blue blazer and the confidence of a NYC resident enjoying himself. The driver gets out and opens the hood with me next to him while the engine is still running. In the dark he reaches his hand toward the engine and, of course, the fan clips his finger—only slightly, luckily for him. One of the Sliz boys actually did the same thing in high school after buying booze upstate; he was lucky too.

"Espere," I say and go back to my duffle bag and grab a flash light. With the man-made light, he was able to get the head lights working. We hit the jungle road again. Around 11 pm we roll into Coca, I thank him, turn around and Anney jumps on me. Apparently she was

worried—for me or the future she envisioned for herself. She had spent much of the night wandering the main street looking for me.

New Year's Eve in that jungle town was mark by the natives burning effigies in the middle of the roads.

“What's going on,” I asked.

Anney said, “It's ‘los años viejos’. People make large dolls often of people they dislike with signs detailing their sins. At mid-night everyone lights them on fire. They are trying to forget the bad of the past year and the hope the New Year will be better.”

“Sounds like forgiveness to me,” I replied. “Wouldn't the new year be better if they remembered the past evil of these people so that they could then punish them and get justice?”

“That's venganza!” She said disapprovingly.

“What's the difference?” I replied. That stumped her.

Next day we hitchhiked down the Rio Napo to Primera Vez, a jungle motel on the river's banks. Traveling down the Napo was a breeze. We'd stand on the bank and Anney would wave at a boat going down river. Just like on the highways of America, some passed us by, but one eventually pulled over to the shore. Anney would negotiate our ride and I'd pay the Sucres. Sometimes we'd be let off on the bank of the Napo—no town, just sand to stand on and the ever presented jungle—when our ride of the moment turned down another river. We'd wait for another boat to come along and pick us up. At Primera Vez we ate a pretty good dinner. But on the way back to our hut, the motel's giant pig took a disliking and chased us to the door. To which I responded with part of an S.D.S. anti-war slogan, “Today's pig is tomorrow's bacon.”

On my next trip to Anney in March 1992, I looked up the retired military guy in Quito on my way to Coca. We hit a few nightclubs and he introduced me to one of the 12 guys running

for the Presidency of Ecuador—a lawyer. The lawyer was looking for an idea he could use in his campaign for getting Ecuador out of its stifling debt burden to foreign governments. After my trip, I sent him a paper that basically advised him as President to threaten default, the debt instruments would drop in value, then have Ecuador secretly buy many of them. Afterwards, announce Ecuador’s intentions to honor its debts. That would send their value up at which point Ecuador could sell for a profit to be used to pay off the remaining instruments. Repeat this a few times. He liked the idea but he came in dead last in the election.

In Coca there was a big dance, but Anney was apprehensive about us going.

“They might try to rob you,” she worried.

“I doubt it. The only country I’ve ever been in where people try to violate my rights is America. Go get dress.”

Anney finally came out of my hotel bathroom. There’s something about a dark skin girl with long black hair, fathomless dark pupils and wearing a shoulder-less, short bright red dress. She looked more delicious than a Fanny Farmer chocolate covered caramel.

The Third World Jungle Dance was nice. Not unlike the dances during my high school years only there were no fights or disputes. People arm themselves in the jungle, which creates a unique atmosphere of civility.

Anney needed to go home to visit her family in Guayaquil and give them some of her savings from working in Coca. Third World families use children as capital investments. The children earn money and turn it over to help the family survive. Years later, I mentioned this in class a Columbia University’s School of International Affairs. The Feminazis in the class erupted as though mothers only had children for altruistic reasons. What malarkey, even mothers in the U.S. and Europe have kids to support them and seal a wife’s hold over her husband. The

class descended into a shouting match with the teaching assistant turning his chair to face the wall, hoping he could disappear. Not so for me; I was relishing the confrontation. These pampered American bimbettes should have known better. After all, they wore piercings in their noses, which reminded me of Third World savages walking around with bones in their noses. The bimbettes emulation of the savages should have made them realize that children are often viewed as capital investments.

After class, the teaching assistant told me, “I sorry I didn’t put a stop to that ruckus.”

“Not a problem,” I replied. “Fighting the zealots of ignorance is always a pleasure.” He laughed.

Anney and I took an overnight bus to Quito where we stayed at the Corrion Hotel. She made me rent two rooms—one for her and one for me. Appearances are always more important to girls than the reality—she stayed in my room. She had a little problem taking a shower. She was able to turn the water on for a bath, but didn’t realize that for a shower she had to pull up the knob on the tub spout. What do you expect for the Third World, but then years later while on a road trip in the U.S. with a friend sporting a master’s degree, he had the same trouble. Maybe they were related. Anney was half Indian and my friend was trying to cash in on Indian casinos by claiming he was part Indian. Maybe that’s the real reason Elizabeth Warren claimed she was an Injun.

Anney wanted to go to Mitad del Mundo.

“What’s that? I asked.

“It is the middle of the world. It has ancient meaning for us in Ecuador as where the gods live.”

Sounded as though her native Jungian archetypes were surfacing. The Quitu-Cara culture, which thrived in the area from 2000 B.C. to the Conquistadors, built monuments marking the middle of the world as a special place for their gods. How they knew where the equator was is beyond me.

“Fine, I’ve never met a god. Are the goddesses hot?”

“Stop! You muy malo. Show el respeto.”

We took a bus out to the large stone monument with a metal globe on the top that represented the world. The monument, built in 1980, was supposed to sit on the equator, which the country is named after. But in true Third World fashion, they missed the exact equator by 240 meters.

The place was pretty much deserted—quiet and strangely peaceful. Maybe the middle of the world would be a nice place to live, but what would one do there, if one were not an ancient god.

Back in Quite we hit a disco, and the next day took a plane to Guayaquil. Guayaquil was a port city in southern Ecuador on the Guayas River where it flowed into the Pacific. The city was vast and sprawling with some multiple story buildings in the center. Most, however, consisted of concrete houses without windows, without running water. Periodically a water truck would come around to each house to supply it with drinking and bathing water. The houses did have electricity to play the ever constant Latin music on the radio that blared throughout the ghetto—or in Spanish, the barrio. The music started early in the morning lasted until late a night. I couldn’t figure out why the incessant music. Then one day I awoke to no music. Went out to look around and then I realized the reason. Without the music, this dilapidate, hopeless place of human existence became unbearably depressing. Anney didn’t

seem to mind, she knew everybody having been chosen the “Princess of the Barrio” the previous year before she went to Coca.

Anney had what she called a couple of brothers and a sister, along with lots of aunts, uncles and cousins. Her mother, who clearly disliked me, which was fine, since I felt the same about her, had multiple husbands producing multiple siblings. Anney even referred to family friends as relatives—a classic Third World extended family. Guess it helps them survive. At one of her extended family’s gatherings, it seemed as though everyone played an instrument and sang. Music and dancing were unusually important to them. None of them could understand why I couldn’t play an instrument. That was easy. Mother, a piano player herself, adamantly refused to allow me to take up an instrument in fourth grade. Father, a xylophone player, as usual, backed her up—should have escaped those two loons back then.

Anney’s family found my parents’ forbiddance unbelievable, as did I. But I eventually made up for it by taking a music theory course at Juilliard. Besides, if I can manage to end up in the same circle of Hell as those two parents, I’ll be able to fight them for eternity. This time, I’ll win because now it’ll be an adult they face and one who’s a lot meaner than they.

Anney told me never to leave her house at night. Fine, no place to go in this neighborhood—not unlike the small town where I grew up in New Jersey. We frequently went to the city center and sometimes Anney bought custom jewelry, with my money of course.

“This is very hard to fine in Guayaquil,” she said. “I would like to start a business selling it. Many girls want it because they cannot afford real jewelry.”

Anything to attract a man’s eye, but it set off the light in my mind. “I can fine this stuff easily in America and very cheap. Why don’t we go into business? I’ll bring a duffle bag of it

next trip, you try to sell it and we'll see if such a business makes sense." She readily agreed and I liked the idea of making money to finance my travels there.

Once she took me to a plaza built on the bank of the Guayas River that commemorated a meeting between Simon Bolivar and San Martin in 1822. In the center, was a sculpture of the two shaking hands. These two are considered the liberators of South America from the Spanish. The plaza was built in such a way that a person near a wall on one end need only whisper and a person at the other end near the same wall would clearly hear what was said. We sat on a bench and I dozed off with my head in her lap. But when I awoke, I was staring back in time to the dinosaur era. This five foot long iguana was hanging on a tree apparently sizing me for a snack. That got me on my feet and us out of there. Anney, naturally laughed. These lizards were common place down there. That night we went to a nightclub in the city center with her friends. Not bad, up on the 20th floor looking out at the lights of the dirt poor ghetto.

Anney and her sister or cousin, I could never get the relations straight and I figured neither could she, took a trip to Salinas on the Pacific Ocean. Salinas is a resort town that reminded me of Miami Beach only quieter and cheaper. It's on a peninsula that juts out into the Pacific with a huge semi-circular beach lacking in signs of "Private property, stay off." The water was as warm as a bathtub. Guys along the beach would rent rides on small rafts with wooden planks over oil barrels used for bouncy. The raft operators would peddle us around the bay or we'd just sit on the raft moving with only the waves rolling into the beach. It was quiet, peaceful, and just beautiful.

Back in Guayaquil, Anney and her sister left me at my hotel—no more of the barrio for me. That night, it started pouring rain, never saw the likes of it before. Next day, went out in my Brooks Brothers shorts and Lacoste polo shirt to grab a cab to Anney's. There were none

because the street was two feet deep in water and the rain kept falling. I figured a dam broke somewhere, or maybe the end of the world—but I couldn't be that lucky. It was warm out, the water was warm, so I sloshed around the streets to take in the sight of this biblical punishment or cleansing. Next day, the sun was out and the flood waters gone. Anney explained that such torrential downpours and flooding periodically happen in Ecuador and are called "El Nino."

Anney had to get back to work at the beauty salon in Coca, but she didn't want to go the round about way by plane to Quito and then bus to Coca.

"Let's cut straight through the Orient to Coca," she suggested. Orient means deepest, darkest jungle with natives shooting poison darts that kill by paralyzing your respiratory system. At least, that's what I was taught in my fourth grade social studies class. Now, one of those female natives wanted to take me on a three day trip, assuming I made it to the end, across the heart of the forbidden jungle I had learned about in fourth grade. Our books had depicted the region as dangerous, deadly, pagan and uncivilized. Of course, us guys liked the idea of girls walking around without tops, so it couldn't be all bad.

"Okay," I agreed, "Let's go."

A bus took us to Riobamba in the middle of the Andes. Riobamba traced its roots back to the Inca Empire in the 1500s, and then the Conquistadors took it over. We caught one of the barbarian festivals common in the third world that commemorates a time of wide spread tribal human butchery. The likes of which PCers in the first world ignorantly idealize. The only way to shut up these PCers about the natives is to send them back in time to be butchered by the "noble" savages.

From Riobamba we took a bus down the Andes into the Orient to Puerto Misahuallí. There we stayed in a small hotel, The Albergue Espanol, owned by a French lawyer.

The owner told us that “After I made some money as a lawyer in Paris, I decided to get out of that place. Always wanted to run a small hotel, so here I am.”

Maybe true, maybe not, I thought, but he served a damn good supper.

Anney and I went for a walk in the night. There’s no daylight savings time in Ecuador, so after supper, it’s dark. The only lights came from this small town on the western bank of the Rio Napo where we were standing at the water’s edge. Everywhere else was pitched dark other than a few reflections of incandescent light off the jungle trees on the bank at the other side. There was no moon. We could hear plenty of jungle noise from the living organism on the other side. The visage and sounds were alluring. Not unlike Ulysses’ sirens only more fundamental and deeper. Again the sensation that there is where I belong.

In the morning we rented a sampan with an outboard motor and hired its owner as our guide. We pushed off down the Rio Napo toward Coca. This was still the dry season, so the sun was out, warm but not hot as we followed the current down the Napo. Sitting at the very front of the boat with just the river, jungle, sun and blue sky in sight provided a sense of belonging to the underlying mysteries of nature.

After a while, Anney told the owner to stir over to a small dock on the Jungle bank. She led me a little way into the interior to find a bunch of guys making curare. That’s the poison I had read about in fourth grade that South American tribes use on their darts. Great, why did she bring us here, and how did she know what that dock would lead to? Never figured that out, although I may have missed an opportunity to deal with some of my future enemies back home. Near night fall, we arrived in Coca and went to one of its two decent motels.

While in Coca, I came down with cholera—boy you should have seen how people avoided me then. Anney took me to a doctor who shot me up with the largest hypodermic I ever

saw, naturally in the rear. It must have been packed with every antibiotic made, but it did the trick.

Anney went back to work and I to New York. On my next trip I brought along a duffle bag of custom jewelry for her to start selling. In Quito, before flying into Coca—no more of those bus rides over the Andes, I looked up the defeated candidate for President. He showed me around his floor wide office in one of the downtown office buildings. Nice view, but I didn't see any filing cabinets. Maybe he kept them locked up in a secure room. At his desk, he said, "My wife wants to get a visa to America, so she can go shopping in New York City. Could you stop by the U.S. Embassy to find out what she has to do?" I had a day before flying into Coca, so I said, "Sure, not a problem."

Just then he received a telephone call. Took out a piece of paper, put in on the glass top of his desk and wrote something down. The conversation was in Spanish, so I didn't understand any of it.

After he hangs up, he tells me, "That was a judge in one of my cases wanting to know whether my client was willing to pay him more than the opposing party for a favorable ruling. I told him I'd ask my client and get back to him."

Then he looked over his notes and put the paper through a shredder. That's why there were no filing cabinets because there were no files and why he wrote on a glass top desk—no impressions. Here, the legal practice relied on who paid the most in bribes.

Next day at the U.S. Embassy, I met with one of its officials. "I'm trying to help the wife of an Ecuadorian friend obtain a visa to the NYC. What do I have to do?"

He asked her name, which I provided and then said as though not surprised, “We know who she is and who she’s married to. She’s Russian and he’s a lawyer for the drug cartels in South America. There’s no way we will let his wife or any relative of his into the U.S.”

“Okay, I guess that’s that,” I replied.

“Be careful,” he added.

Looked like the U.S. didn’t want his wife laundering money for him through some New York bank. I told the lawyer the Embassy’s response.

“Thanks for trying,” he said. “I understand you’ll be coming back to Quito with your girl friend in a week before you go back to New York. Give me a call, you two can stay with my wife and me at our house.”

“Will do and thanks for the invite.”

In Coca, Anney and I spent our time traveling through the jungle and hitching rides up and down the Napo. It was great. We finally emerged after about a week in the jungle to immediately take a plane to Quito where I called my Ecuadorian lawyer friend. He and his wife picked us up at the airport in his black Mercedes. His wife was the typical hot looking blue-eyed Russian blonde but looked at us somewhat strangely. We drove to an “elusive” valley of large houses outside Quito. Nice life style. After showering with hot water, a welcome change from the cold muddy water of the Napo, we met the lawyer and his wife in their overly large living room.

His wife said, “You two look completely different than when we picked you up. You look civilized.”

That surprised me. Guess too much time in the jungle can change ones physical appearance and maybe more.

We all laughed and then went out to dinner with a body guard.

After eating, our host leaned back and patted his prodigious stomach saying “the perks of success.” Then there was this loud metal clang on the floor. The lawyer’s .45 Colt had fallen out of his belt. He clearly had enemies.

Next day, he had his bodyguard drive Anney and I to the airport. She was flying to Guayaquil and I to NYC. On the way the driver became suspicious of a car behind us that he could not lose. So he slowed down in order to get up even with it, pulled out his .45 Colt, waived it around in a threatening manner and the car sped off. One way to deal with obnoxious drivers.

The driver let us off outside the terminal; we thanked him for the show and went inside. We hadn’t gotten five feet when a couple of guys flashed their Interpol credentials and took us to separate rooms. No questions, they just searched my luggage and told me where to wait for Anney. It took a while, but she came out boiling mad. They did more than search her bag, they did a cavity search. Boy was she ticked. Apparently someone is keeping tabs on my Ecuadorian lawyer friend and who visits him.

Anney finally calmed down, I went to my gate and she to hers.

The next trip, I again brought along a duffle bag of custom jewelry, but this time at her direction, we met in Guayaquil.

“There’s more customers in Guayaquil than Quito, so I can make more money here.” She said.

“That makes sense,” I replied. “There are more girls in Guayaquil.”

When we finally got around to talking about my 50% share of the profits—there were none. My profits went for this or that alleged emergency. I gave her the new bag of jewelry and hung around for a few days.

At the Guayaquil airport for my flight back home, we passengers walked out onto the tarmac and up the old fashion aircraft mobile staircase into the plane. Another reminder of Newark airport when I first had gone off to college. Just before entering the plane, I turned around to see Anney outside on the terminal the deck waving goodbye, swinging her right arm back and forth. I waived goodbye and entered the plane knowing I'd never see her again and never did. Foolish little girl, she shouldn't have violated our business agreement by taking my share of the profits. From now on, I'm sticking to the Fourth World, Russia, and exploratory expeditions in the asphalt jungle—Manhattan.

From Russia With Love

In Russia, off and on during the rest of the nineties, I wrote a number of articles for newspapers and research papers for a few government agencies, such as the Ministry of Foreign Economic Affairs. Also made a number of speeches. The most interesting was at the Kremlin Palace of Congresses at another Intertraining conference in 1993. One of the officials saw me in the audience and came out to ask me if I had a paper to present. "Sure," I answered. "It's on the problems with foreign assistance." "Okay," he said. "We'll get you a translator and call you to the podium shortly."

They called my name and up to the stage I went where I was joined by the translator. Stepping behind the lectern, I saw it was cover with green velvet—nice, then I realized this is same place where Khrushchev threatened to bury guys like me. The images of him shaking his

fist in the air from this podium were still vivid in my memory. My speech didn't last nearly as long as his speeches and there was no fist shaking.

My paper warned about how foreign aid from Western governments and private loans were conditioned on Russia buying American goods rather than it being invested in Russia's manufacturing capacity. Investment in the means of production (I figured they'd understand that term) would allow Russia to manufacture such goods itself. In addition, the burden of repaying billions of dollars would require Russia to become a Third World exporter of its natural resources because that was the only way to earn hard currency to make the yearly payments on the loans. It couldn't manufacture goods to sell on the world market for hard currency because its manufacturing capacity was antiquated—no one would buy their goods, unless production was modernized. With each new debt, the noose would tighten around Russia's future as a manufacturing nation because greater amounts of hard currency must pay an ever increasing debt service rather than being invested in Russian industries. So, as long as Russia relied on Western loans it would never have sufficient capital to modernize its industries to the point where they could compete with Western industries. In the end, foreign loans would require Russia to sell its most valuable assets at bargain basement prices, eventually drive Russia into default as happened to Latin American countries in the 1980s, and wipe out the savings of average Russians.

The officials sitting in a row on the dais in back of me didn't like my warnings. They wanted foreign loans from Western governments and private entities because they would be the ones to control the money or the goods purchased. They knew they were just going to pocket the funds or resell the goods and then pocket the funds. It wouldn't do the country any good but would make these bureaucratic mobsters rich. The West would write the money off, and no one in Russia could do a damn thing about it because the only enforcement authority in Russia for 70

years was the Communist Party, which was dead. The Chairman, seated above and right behind me started ringing this bell for me to finish and to make it quick. Damn, that was loud and eliminated any possibility of shouting over it. Find, I'll go back to the hot young lady I was with in the audience.

When the conference wrapped up and on the way out, an older Russian official from the audience asked me for my autograph—that never happened before. With my autograph in hand, he said, “It was good to hear such honesty.” A lawyer being praised for honesty—clearly this country was warped. My paper ended up being published by some academic center at Moscow State University. It did no good. Five years later, August 1998, Russia fell into an economic crisis over foreign payments and devalued the ruble that wiped out the savings of most Russians.

When in Russia, I saw a lot of the best ballet in the world. My girl friends changed, two got married, but whoever it was, we'd go down to the Bolshoi or one of the other two excellent ballet companies in Moscow and buy a couple of center row orchestra tickets from the scalpers for five dollars. I tried the box seats a few times, but they were always too far from the ladies in tights or if close enough, you couldn't see part of the stage and would miss some of the dancing.

One of my sojourns to the still evil empire was as part of a group of American professors trying to help the country change to a “market economy,” that is, capitalism. The group had a meeting with the U.S. Ambassador to Russia to help spur their efforts onward. We walked into the ambassador's office and their sitting behind the ambassador's desk was Robert Strauss. Damn, so he's the ambassador, hope he's near-sighted. I fell back behind some tall guy to avoid Strauss, assuming he remembered, recognizing me from his Democratic Convention press conference. The professors asked a few questions, Strauss gave encouragement, apparently didn't recognize me or chose not to, and we all left with me leading the exit.

During the 1990s a lot of Americans were traveling to Russia. Some legit businessmen looking for a new market, others out for a good time with the young-pretty Russian girls more than willing to sell themselves for U.S. dollars. One retired businessman from Prudential was doing both. On a number of occasions he invited me and others down to his house in Princeton. The same house where Woodrow Wilson had lived. Nice place, even complete with a ballroom. On one occasion he had a New Russian and his young wife over. So while he and the New Russian lied to each other about how they could make a lot of money together, I gave the wife a tour of the house. We played around a little in the ballroom, then went back to the two bloviating drunks upstairs.

Private Eyes

My efforts to make money in the U.S.S.R. weren't going so well, as with most foreigners, but I was still alive, which some of the others weren't. Thinking Columbia University's School of International Affairs might help I enrolled. One of the girls in my study group was Muslim from Morocco and nice looking. So I asked her out. "No," she said.

"Why not?" I asked.

"Because you are an infidel!"

This girl was attending a modern American University, but she was still ruled by the idiocy of the 700s.

The School of International Affairs was a joke. The entire program was academic pretentious nonsense that had nothing to do with reality, so I transferred over to the Business School and concentrated in finance.

An MBA should help land a job with a Western investment bank in Russia. While the dollar is king in America, in Russia it is a god. Columbia was a strange place. It didn't grade

with numbers but had a system of H, HP and P, LP—high, high pass, pass, low pass. No one flunked-out because the school was trying to dumb down the smart people who worked hard and pull up the dumb and lazy people. Sounded like commie Russia. The school also pushed this team concept where the collective made decisions without dissent—also patterned on commie Russia.

The Human Behavior class indoctrinated the concept of everyone kowtowing to the dictatorship of the group. Everyone in the class was part of a group. Each group was required to create a videotape on the subject of its choice for a class project. Our project was on “power” and we fought back and forth until its completion—no commie consensus here. When all the video projects were submitted, the professor had the members of each group fill out a questionnaire on the process each group went through making its video. We got a HP or B and asked the professor why not an H or A. She said, “Your video was by far the best I ever saw teaching this class. But it involved too much dissention and disagreement, which was shown in the questionnaires you answered.” So by Columbia’s standards, the result didn’t matter, just that it was achieved in a sheep-like manner. More commie Russia thinking.

After graduating in 1997, again with honors, I headed back to Russia looking for an investment banking job. Interviewed with a number of firms, but they weren’t interested due to my advanced age. Then I saw an article in the Moscow Times about the Kroll Associates office in Moscow.

In America, Kroll Associates was the modern-day version of the Pinkertons, a private detective and security agency founded in 1850, or the real-life corporate version of Spade & Archer. Back when I was doing research in the media, Kroll was referred to now and then as conducting various investigations. On a lark, I sent my resume to Kroll’s manager, an American,

and we met. He said Kroll was looking for someone to market its services in Russia—not to Russian companies but to Western Companies. That was fine with me and after going through the firm’s background check; I was hired to start in July 1999.

So what exactly did Kroll do in Russia? The company provided information to its Western clients on the Russians its clients were thinking of doing business with or entering into joint ventures. The information, essentially anything you wanted to know about a person or organization in Russia, came from government officials in return for U.S. dollars in cash. Kroll kept its own slush fund for paying officials. Kroll also provided security for Western executives, such as protecting them with moonlighting militiamen, Federal Security Service members or military men, usually toting machine guns. Part of the security protection included sweeping offices and apartments for wire taps—a favorite of the Russian government for gathering information. On one occasion a Ford executive’s apartment had listening devices implanted in the walls. Boy, did that tick him off.

Physical

Russia and Ecuador weren’t exactly civilized countries and the airlines flying there won’t let a passenger pack a gun. So how do you defend yourself in a dicey situation in these places or even Manhattan? A friend of my girl friend at the time introduced me to the owner of Gleason’s in Brooklyn.

He told me, “If you’re interested in learning how to box, stop by the gym, I have trainers willing to teach white-collar guys like you how to defend themselves.”

The owner assigned me a trainer who used to fight as a heavy weight and eventually opened his own gym off Wall Street, which was a smart move. He realized there were lots of professionals looking for a good workout—training as a boxer was the next best thing to playing

a sport. He even started the trend of girls not only training at his gym but helped establish professional women's boxing. I didn't hold it against him.

My trainer, now an entrepreneur, hired his son Junior and one of Junior's friends, both trained boxers. They'd put his clients through a session that included rounds on the heavy bag, the double-under, pads and, if you wanted, sparing for three rounds. Once I did the sparing. But when a punch landed to my head and I felt my brain bouncing back and forth inside, I declined entering the ring again.

These boxing guys were really great—civilized, but scary as all get out, huge and mean looking, which gave me an idea. Life is filled with jerks or bullies who think they're tough and can get away with violating your rights. Lawyers, like me, often come across such bozos. So on a couple of occasions, I hired the boxers as enforcers. They didn't break legs or engage in such violence, all they had to do was show up, flex their fists, maybe or maybe not say a few words. The bullies, who are always cowards, got the word. On one occasion, they scared the bejesus out of a one of my neighbors in a Ridgewood court with whom I had a dispute. The guy was so scared that he didn't go home after court, fearing we would be waiting for him, which we were.

After my trainer closed his gym, I moved over to martial arts while in business school, which lasted off an on for 20 years. The two best were taught by an instructor at Hunter College and a Krav Maga school. Mark, the Hunter instructor, and I became good friends and often chased girls together. He'd be my front man for hitting on black chicks, and I'd be his for hitting on white chicks. He'd often say, "If you can't defend your life, you own nothing." Mark turned into a venture capitalist, so I took up Krav Maga until an old rugby injury prevented me from doing the kicking. The old injury, however, didn't interfere with boxing. Junior's friend, who was one of my trainers from the Wall Street days, had started his own gym, so I went there. No

better feeling than a good workout. At the end of every boxing class, I thanked the gods for those guys.

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