Beyond a Damaged World

"Life as an Inhaling Addict"

Book 2

Revised Edition

The Autobiography of Timothy S.K. Raynorx
AUTHOR'S NOTE

During the shipping of the last book called Damaged World there was a problem with it getting there, and if you have tried to read this book then you will now know that it was damaged beyond readability thus this prompted me in having to revise this book.

This being the case and for reasons that were beyond my control I had to decide what to do about this and in doing so came up with this revised edition of Damaged World.

This edition now called Beyond A Damaged World will bring you back into focus of the story for it is in fact one and the same book that was damaged, so you will not miss a single tittle or comma in this version of the book and hopefully in a lot better shape than the first book was when it got to the publishers.

With that I now leave you your reading of this revised edition which will lead you to the third and final book "The Strangeness Of It All" that will soon be following this one.

Timothy D.V. Bazrowx
Damaged World
"Life as an Inhalant Addict"

This is a book on the way my life became addicted to inhalants and substances that are not made to be consumed by humans. These are the stories of my life, and I hope that you reader will read about my life, and what I hope to do is give someone a tool to see the way a life can get even though the substance may not seem all that bad considering the other things in this world that a person can become addicted to.

If there is any misspelled words and or grammatical errors I have nobody to blame but myself. I do not consider myself a writer but I do feel that this is a story that needed to be told.

Other Books by Author:

Journey Into Addiction Book 1
* The Strangeness of It All Book 3

* Coming Soon.

At this time I am incarcerated in a Texas prison, but if you wish to contact me and ask any questions of me then feel free to do so. My contact info is as follows:

Timothy D.V. Bazrowx #1438402
Wynne Unit 2 Dorm 18
810 PM 2821
Huntsville, Texas 77349

Cover Art designed by: Timothy D.V. Bazrowx
Damaged World Completed on: April 11, 2014
Introduction

This is the second book of a three book series and I am hoping to take the reader deeper into my world of addiction and the insanity of the life that I led because of this stupid addiction that nobody said that you could be addicted too.

This is a continued story about Inhalant Addiction. I do not know what kind of life that you are leading but I will tell you that addiction is an addiction, and the way it controls a person's life is the same.

Addiction steals your life and as far as I am concerned it is the devil itself.

I do believe in demons and I believe that this had demon written all over it and the way it controlled my life is something I wish to bring forward in this book, and the life thereof and how it will destroy your life and those that love you.

In this book I will be picking back up from where I left off in "Journey Into Addiction", and I will take it as far as I can before reaching my limit and having to start the final book. This book reaches into the midpoint of my life, and will cover my trying to be normal when there was no way to be normal because this life is insanity at it's best.

I did a lot of things that I would have never even thought of doing without using this stuff. I do not know if it made me crazy and I am lucky to even have a memory of the things I had happen in my life. Alas though my memory is not all together whole either but for what it's worth I would like to see anybody that has inhaled over 10,000 cans of paint keep all their memories intact too. I am not bragging it is just fact.

Please understand I do not write this book or the others just to glorify the use of drugs. this was just my way of life.

The reason I am writing this book which has now taken me over two years just to put the raw data down before I ever typed the first word is this. You may know of somebody that sniffs glue and or paint thinner, or another substance. and most people think that this is just a fad and something that they will grow out of, and I did too but I got stuck in a time warp and over 40 years has now passed and my life continued on with this addiction, so
do not under estimate this type of addiction or any other, it will destroy your life like it has mine.

What I am hoping to show in these books is the fact that there is a God and that He does keep you safe in all things and that although when He allows you to make some crazy choices He is still watching and protecting you His children. There is no way I could be here even in this prison had God not kept me under His wing. For those that have loved ones that are using Inhalants and think that there is nothing that can be done, guess again there is always something that can be done, and my story is here to let you see what the side effects can be and what you need to be looking for if the person you love is involved in this killer.

Be reminded that this story is told from my perspective and the way that I was seeing things while on these inhalants. To me this was my world whether it was real or not. For my mind knows no difference between what was real at this time or not. To me these things happened and I suffered from the way these things happened. This is why I do not realize what was happening to me at times and it is because my rational mind tried to come in and make sense of this insanity and couldn't wrap it self around what was going on.

With this I start the book Damaged World and you will see that this is truely is the rightful title to this book.

Timothy D.V. Bazrowx
CHAPTER 1

Now, to bring everybody up to speed. I had been hanging around in the grave yards once I had ran away from the wonderful State Mental Hospital and even now I was still hanging around the grave yards, but of another kind, I was now in an old car wrecking yard where the cars were forgotten from another time, and here I was wondering just why I existed and why I was where I was.

I had decided that my being here was the direct results of some dude that my brother had hooked up with and had let us stay in his house, and upon our second time of staying there we were accosted by the cops and now split up, for I had been committed to a nut house because of a slight mishap with a full can of paint that my brother had poked a hole in and it sprayed all over us and this guys house. I couldn't understand why he had been mad, but anyway Kevin had been sent to a Boy's home or Youth Prison I guess, I don't know because I never got to see him after he went away. I had a couple of friends that knew where he was and so now after I was away again from the nuthouse and wandering around I now had the idea to go find this guy and get even with him for doing what I feel, or felt at the time was mess over us and if a person did this they got hurt. That was my chain of thoughts.

Maybe hunting somebody wasn't the right thing to do, but I had a focal point for my anger, and I would use it too. I knew that I had to find Chyhue and Lucky they should have found out something from Kevin by now since they knew how to get in touch with him.

The best place to find these two decadents was around Trina's house, for since they had moved to North Grand Prairie they hung out at an old Mom and Pop style Laundromat a lot. I didn't mind that because they helped keep an eye on the girls when their Mom, and Dad were on the road. It also gave them a place to hang out, for they too were like the wind they were here one minute and gone the next. That's why I liked them we had a lot in common, and we looked out for each other in whatever way we could, and this was no differant,
so to Trina's I went, and it was still early, but not I guess, for it was around 8Am, and I had came from the pink church that was by, or across the street from an apartment complex. This is where I would go whenever I had came from the lake and I wanted to sniff paint before going to Trina's for this way I could watch and see if her parents were home or anybody else.

The church sat on the upper bank of a canal that had weeds taller than me, and in these weeds was a manhole that was above ground about 4ft. I could sit on top of it, and sniff paint, and look around, still not be seen because of the weeds. By this manhole is where I would stash my paint when I went to Trina's, for I knew that it was real and that I could find it again.

As I started to Trina's which I could see from there I saw a dude leave there, and start to walk toward the store that I would go to sometimes a block from Trina's. As I got to the parking lot the edge of it mainly that was still by the road this dude saw me coming up the road, and as I got closer could see he was a Mexican fellow.

I had never seen him before, but undoubtedly he knew me, and as I came to the parking lot he met me at the corner of it by the road, and he spoke to me, and asked me if my name was Tim? I told him it was, and asked him why he wanted to know? He then told me that he was Trina's new boyfriend, and she didn't want me hanging around, and that he surely didn't.

Well this wasn't really a smart thing to tell me and I'm not trained to deal with idiots, and I wasn't in the mood now or anytime for somebody to tell me something like this. I just told him, "is that so", He just punctuated it with a big wad of spit that I turned aside from, and it missed me.

Well that wasn't a very nice thing to try and do. And I told him so, and then the dummy dropped a piece of pipe about one inch across, and a foot long which he automatically reached down to grab up off the ground, well this seemed like a good time to bring my knee up into his nose with a little more help with my hand on the back of his head.

Well I will tell ya this. The nose is not made to take an upward thrust of a knee, and he came up with a busted nose, and closed eyes, and then I came around from Arkansas with a left handed hay maker that knocked him off his feet. He was fast though, for he came up with his pipe which did him no good, for I just blocked it, and used a little hand to hand combat training with an elbow to the chin, and a kick to the knee. I tried to break it, but
failed in that although he was hurt, then at that time a pickup slid to a stop and a door came open, and Chyhue, and Lucky jumped out! Where they got a pickup I don’t know, but it was good to see them.

They had seen this dude go over to Trina’s, and talk to her at the door, and had seen him this morning confront me with this pipe. They were into fighting, and since this fight was in broad open daylight in public that the cops were probably called already. This was before the good ole 911 where you had someone waiting to take your call.

This dude seeing that now Chyhue, and Lucky had arrived, and coming toward him too, decided that it was time to run/hop on out of there with the threat that he was going home to get a gun. I told Chyhue, and Lucky to give me a knife that I was gonna gut this punk, but all Chyhue did was laugh, and hustle me on into the truck, and Lucky took off. I’m the kind of person that gets madder after the fact, and I was steaming not only at this mexican, but now at Trina too this two timing "Beyotch"! It didn’t make any difference that we had broke up when I had got back, we still saw each other and had actually the same type of relationship we had as before.

We drove around a little and followed this dude some till we lost him between some houses. After we had the all clear, and saw that no cops were around we parked by the short wall at the end of the Laundromat’s parking lot. The wall was only about a foot tall, and dropped off about 3ft. to their property which then led straight to their patio.

Chyhue and Lucky and I went up to the patio door, and saw little Timmy, Trina, Debbie, and Tammy’s little brother, and he came right over, and let us in. He was probably about 13 years old, and he liked it when I came over because he knew that I would hook him up with cig.s Timmy called Trina, and of course she was up. This must have been the weekend because Rod Jr., and Steve were there too. They were my old Army buddies. The weekends were the only time they came in from Ft. Hood, and we partied hard always at the base, and at home.

Rod Jr. was about 6ft. 3 inches tall, and Steve was about my size 5ft. 9 inches. I hadn’t reached my full potential yet which would be a half inch short of 6 ft. Everybody liked Chyhue and Lucky who are usually are two very quiet dudes. Not today though it was like a family reunion, and they were very talkitive. We sat down to coffee, and the smell of food being cooked
they must have been recently to the store because they had plenty to eat. Chyhue, and Lucky started the rendition of what they saw that morning, and I included the dudes story about he was now Trina’s boyfriend, and relayed the shooting threat he gave me. Rod Jr. said it sounded like the guy that he had ran off that morning because he didn’t want him around. Trina said that he had been stalking her from High School, and that because she had talked to him at school now he had a fixation on her, but that she no way liked him.

I told her that was a good story, so how did he know who I was if he hadn’t been in her house, or she had told him? She said that she had one of the pictures I sent her when I was at Fort Polk LA., and it was on the inside of her locker door at school, and he had asked her who I was? They had lockers close to each other it seemed, so about that time Debbie came out of her room, and heard us talking, and she confirmed what Trina had said, and added he had come over a few times, but that they kept running him off.

Rod Jr. said that we needed to have a word with him, and Debbie for some reason knew where he lived. The plan was that we would drop by his place about supper time, or shortly thereafter.

Trina assured me that there was nothing going on, and so I told Rod Jr. and Steve that we would be back later that we needed to go score as well as take care of other business. Trina and Rod Jr. asked us not to go over to this dudes house, and I said that we were about other business, and that we would stay to the plans that we had, but we had to go and do something else.

While we had been riding earlier they had told me that Kevin had been in touch with them, and that they had found out where this dudes parents lived, and that this dude’s name was Larry.

I wanted to see where this dudes Mom & Dad lived, so using Trina’s as my reference point we went to this dudes nerdy parents house. We got there easily, and although it was a few miles from Trina’s I would have no problem finding this place again stoned, or not.

When we got there Chyhue, and I and Lucky all got out of the truck, and went to the door. I knocked on it, and Larry’s Mom answered the door. We asked if Larry was there, and after she kinda looked to the side she stated he wasn’t there, and asked if she could give him a message? I told her yes,
that I would like to know why this dude had me and my brother arrested after he told us that we could stay with him a couple of days, and that I would like to have a face to face with him so that we could talk, and he could tell me man to man why he was such a piece of crap? She asked if I was gonna hurt him? I just wanted to find out what he was thinking, and we'd let the chips fall where they may.

We told her we'd be back, or see him soon. We then left. Chyhue thought that it was funny, and I told them that I wanted to keep tabs on on his whereabouts and that the car that was parked on the street that was his.

I knew that this guy was there, so I got my message out and that was what I wanted. I was in rare form today, and it wasn't over by a mile yet. Of course Chyhue, and Lucky were right in tune with all of this the damn hoodlums, so we went to score some weed, and spend the day at Trina's talking, and ironing out the situation with Trina; later that day Rod Jr, Steve, Me, and Chyhue Lucky. Debbie all went to pay this dude a visit. Rod, and Steven both had pistols Chyhue, Lucky and I didn't, for we really didn't need them. Debbie showed us where this guy lived, and we piled out of the car. Rod told all of us to just wait at the car as he went to knock on the door, this dude must have been missing a few bricks out of his wheel barrel, because he came strolling out of the house like the cock of the walk, that is until he saw all of us leaning up against the car, then he snapped that this wasn't gonna be a good situation. Steve had went to the side of the house, but came out and slipped in behind this dude, for he had a pistol in the back of his belt that he pulled when he saw all of us. Steven just put his gun up to the back of his head, and Rod Jr. took the pistol away from his limp hand.

Now you might have figured that this dudes number was up, for I alone had mess up his morning even when he had a pipe. I walked up to him, and Rod handed me the pistol which I stuck in my belt. Rod told him point blank not to ever come by the house, or stalk any of the girls ever again. Debbie told him that Trina, nor any of the others liked him, or wanted to see his face again, well I couldn't let them do all the talking, so I signaled Chyhue, and Lucky, and they came over to where I was, and all together we stood in front of him and I told him he wasn't gonna get off so easy with a busted nose, and black eyes. I told him there wouldn't be any more warnings, and we all knew what he looked like now, and all of us were going to be watching
for him to come around and when we saw him it was on.

He promised to not come around, or bother Trina, or the girls anymore, and we left him like that. I gave Rod Jr. the pistol, and that was the last that I had seen it.

I don't claim to be Bad Bad Leroy Brown, but me and the dudes I ran with at times could wreak havoc when needed. and they too were half burnt out paint sniffers too, and they were unpredictable like myself.

That's how you get in trouble though in life because even though you know better you throw caution to the wind, and act without thinking in most cases.

This is a pattern that effects all addicts. It's about the using, and ways to use more, and steam roll over any that got between you, and your drugs, or anything or anybody that you wanted.

That's what it was like for me, it was all about the using, and I thumbed my nose at death, and positioned my body with petro chemicals, and thought I acted like a normal human being. You can see even though I would be deep in the effects of my drug of choice God still allowed my mind to think. I could feel emotions, and pain, I may have had some pretty messed up thinking, but I did think even in my zombie trance like states. That's why these drugs among others are called mind altering they absolutely alter not only your minds, but also your life.

Well after all that mess I spent the rest of the day there with Trina, and her family. Chyhue and Lucky went off again without a word. They were like that quiet, and secretive, like ghost they were cool people, and I liked them, and would do anything for them. I didn't have many friends, but those I had like these two brothers they and I were alike, and we accepted the way we were, and we didn't try to change each other.

The next day Trina and I was driving out towards where Mom, and Milton lived, and we spotted Mom, and some of my sisters comming up behind us in her Caddy. I was driving Trina's Mom's station wagon, and she saw us, and saw me. She started flashing her lights for me to stop, but I had no need, or want to talk. I took off, and even though the 383 cubic inch in this Fury wagon was fast the car wasn't good at handling. I tried to take a road too fast, and went thru a fence almost hitting a telephone pole. Well since it was on a corner I politely punished it, and made a new exit in this fence, and back on the road. This guy that owned the property I guess didn't like
what had happened. and had for some reason go* in the middle of the road with his arms spread out like he wanted a hug trying to get me to stop. or thinking I would stop. Well I guess he thought better of it when he heard my sock go into the big four barrel carb. and he heard the roar of the motor as I punched it. He gracefully dove off of the road into the ditch. and our chase continued.

Now Trina's car had a strand of barbed wire dragging off the front end of the car. and the weeds I had went thru that all fell off as I drove. Mom had taken the turn at a more sedate pace but the big 472 cu.in. in her caddy soon was able to catch up with us. Mom just didn't realize she could not beat me in Rat Racing, and she didn't know all the roads like I did. for I had traveled these roads constantly sniffing paint, and knew the ins and outs of all of them.

We headed for South G.P. High to the new edition that Trina and I used to skip school. or at least a couple of classes anyway at a time. There were no houses yet just roads and empty lots. We hit this area together, and as Ma got behind us I got on an empty lot. and did a couple of dirt donuts stirring up a huge cloud of dust. and dirt, and since Mom had a convertable this was the thing that stopped her from chasing us any further. I straightened the car out, and headed to the lake.

Mom I guess was telling me that I was #1. for the last time I saw her she was giving me the one finger wave. Come to think of it so was my sisters that were with her. I guess they all thought that I was number 1! I guess that when your number one then everybody acknowledges it.

We got to the lake of course then Trina was freaked out. and not so much with my driving. for she was pretty use to that. but when I had went thru the fence I had flattened a short fat pole that had hit right in the middle of the nose of the hood. It wasn't too bad. The hood opened without a problem. There was a few scratches. and a piece of wire that I took off. but other than that nothing else. It still caused Trina some stress. but since she had just started driving she would later tell her Mom that she had bumped a wall. so I took her back home. and I decided it was time to go find my paint.

I went to Randy's that night. and after getting me a slab of cheese. and paint from the corner store by where Randy lived. I didn't bother Randy.
and his Mom, I just wanted to be close by someone I knew, so I went to the corner lot where there was again tall weeds. They were about 3ft. tall not like the ones by that church that were over my head. Anyway I planned to spend the night sniffing paint in these weeds. this worked out well until about 2Am. when I raised up above the weeds with my head as a cop was driving by. His lights must have reflected from my eyes, for he stopped, and I had laid down hoping that he would go away. Well I was high, and the cop wasn't so easily fooled. He picked me up, and again I gave the cop my real name, and again the hospital had an A.P.B. out for me, and again I was taken back to the hospital the next day. That was sure starting to get old now.

I spent another week trying to get some breathing room, so I could take off again. Once I was able to leave the ward I went to look up Barb, but found out that the crazy dude I first left with and was picked up with in the woods had ran off with her in a mad dash to start a life together. that kinda ticked me off for some reason because I didn't like this guy, but I did like Barb. I never saw her again, or that dude.

There were other gals that I talked to from my ten key class, so I looked up one named Lucy. She liked to talk too, and we sat by the volleyball court in the shade on a bench, and she was just someone I could talk to.

One night I was up talking to this dude that was the orderly on our ward. He thought it was funny to call a nurse in and give patients a strong shot of Thorizine. This he did to me after I had went to bed because I had called him a homosexual. He didn't take too kindly to that.

After I was asleep this ole "Erma Bomboeaker" type nurse woke me up by by stabbing me in the arse with about a million milligrams of Thorizine. this put me in "WaZoo Land". It also pissed me off too! I got up later, and even though I had a high tolerance for drugs it wasn't high enough to keep me from passing out in the restroom. and smashing my numb head into the tile floor. That woke me up! I was helped up, and staggered back to my bed. By golly I stayed in it the rest of the night too! I even think that I slept that next day away, and went outside, and found Lucy on the bench with a couple of other gals. I told her what had happened, and showed her the goose egg on my noggin, and she said she had heard about that guy, so anyway while we was talking I saw my Mom's caddy drive up to the ward I stayed in and she and Milton got out of the car. I couldn't help myself I wanted to find
out what they were here for. I had spoke to either of them since they had had me put in this place. I had a few things that I wanted to tell them too!

Upon getting there I was told that the doctor wanted to talk to me, and wanted to know if I wanted to talk to my Mom? I said "sure". Well I was led into a room where the doctor was with my Mom, and Milton. The gist of all this meeting was to see if they could keep me committed longer than what the court had ordered, and the doctor said no that because I was 18 I could opt to stay, or not once my time expired there. I told Mom that they needed to butt out of my life and to quit trying to have me locked away.

Mom tried playing her trump card by telling the doc. that I had been running off, so the time I spent away from the hospital should not count, he said that it did, and that the time started, and ended at point "A" and point "B", that he had no control over that. That's all I needed to hear, and I already had my plans to leave again. This would be the last time for sure!

Once this meeting was over Mom tried to talk me and to explain why she had done what she did, and I just told her she has no idea what she did. I told her that we didn't have anything to talk about. She told me that she and Milton was going to get a divorce, and I told her that I didn't care, and got up and left the room. Once I got back to the ward which was in the same building I went outside to sit on a bench. Mom came out to see if I would talk to her again, so as I sat and lit a cig she tried to explain herself again. I told her that what she did goes way deeper than my sniffing paint with all the weird men she's had that tried to rule me, and my sisters then sending me off to war because of some tramp that I had proven I had nothing to do with, so this brought on a tirade of goofy reasons, and just how she was looking out for us.

I told her that this sounded good to her, but it was plain B.S. and that had this been an issue that she would have stayed with my Dad instead of leaving him for a rich rice farmer then leaving the rich rice farmer for an ex-con etc...

I told her I might have melted a few brain cells from paint, but I wasn't crazy enough to believe that crap! I also told Mom that I loved her, but she needed to face the facts that one of these was that she was just an ole bar fly tramp, and that she had now a bunch of screwed up kids to show for it. I was in a nut house. Kevin was in some detention house, my sisters were getting married at 14 years old just to get away from her, and these screwed
up relationships that she was so lovingly getting us into, so I told Mom
that. and she told me that she had the control of our lives, and that she
had brought me into this world, and be the one to take me out of it, if she
so pleased.

I told her that, that too was B.S., and that once I sprung free from
the womb that my life became my life not hers, and that her taking me out
of this world ended when she didn't opt to abort me. I then told her I
that I was done talking, and got up and left to wander the nut house compound
like the rest of the nuts, and drug addicts.

When I finally came back she had left. People may think that I am a meany
to speak to my Mom in such a way, but you would have just had to have walked
in my shoes, before bringing forth your judgements. What I told my Mom was
the truth, and although the truth was hurtful it was still the truth. That's
like facing your own demons. you might 've glossed over the things you've
done in you lives, but the truth of the matter is you can't lie to your self,
and when somebody, or even yourself gives you a reality check you can't help
but to accept it regardless of your denial to others, or yourself.

Addicts are world renown for denying all the drug use, or other flaws
in life, and as a matter of fact it seems to be a human trait in general
for nobody wants to claim that they have flaws. In my family it is pretty
much every man, and woman for themselves, but family should stick together
no matter what happens in this world, or what flaws we have, but the sad
fact is it ain't that way.

Adrift in my own misery the next day I went out of the ward, and made
a complete round around the hospital grounds then went thru the main Admin.
Buildings breezeway waved at the gals, and headed toward the front gate.

What I was hoping was that these gals would call the gatehouse because
I was daring them to confront me. This didn't happen, and I left just like
before, and never went back.

The store I always went too, to steal paint, ham, or cheese, and cigs.
knew me by now, but weren't fast enough to catch me, for by the time they
figured out who I was I was already gone.

Again I headed to the graveyard to spend some time sniffing paint, and
reading the head stones. There was a national guard post next to the store
that I had gone to for paint, and started to think that I could get a jeep,
or a staff car without any trouble. Then in my paint muddled mind I started thinking about a tank, and so I decided that was just stupid, and hit the road before I got into a wreck with the law again.

There was nothing eventful about this trip, and I went back to Grand Prairie, and went to Trina's where again I met up with Chyhue, and Lucky, and was told by them that this dude that had started all of this mess had left town.

I then spent about a month living a life on the fringes of society. I lived in old abandoned houses. It was winter, so I tried to find shelter whenever possible. I stayed in dog houses by displacing the mutt that lived in it in most cases. I lived under bridges like a troll, or stayed in treehouses old falling down barns, or cabins in the woods that were barely standing.

I went to my Aunt's in Arlington, Tx., and found out that good ole Mom had went to San Antonio to live with my sister Kathy taking Patty Jean, and Nessa too. I didn't think much of it because Mom was always doing stuff like this, so I stayed with my Aunt Mona Sue, which was my Mom's youngest sister.

This only lasted a few days though because of her sugar daddy ole "Booger Bear", that's what "they" called him anyway. I say they too because what is weird about this is every member of my families matrional women have all slept with Ole Booger Bear, and let him spend his money on them. I didn't call it their having a sugardaddy I just plain called it whoring. You might think that I have said it in the wrong light but when your Granny, Mom, Aunts Pat, Mona Sue, Mary have all slept with the same man and none of them was married to him, and they all knew about the others sleeping with him, then that is just nasty whoring.

Well he decided that he was jealous over me, and told me that he thought it was a good idea that I leave. I told him that he had no say so on when or where I could visit my Aunt, and told him he needed to go take care of his wife instead of sleeping around with my family members. This caused him to pull a pistol, and he threatened to shoot me, and I called him a punk, and my aunt jumped in, and stopped the altercation from getting worse. She asked me to leave also because ole Booger Bear was paying her rent, and that she couldn't afford to pay it on her own. I then just told her I appreciated knowing who's side she was on, and that I couldn't believe that all the women in my family were such whores. I left with these parting words to ole Booger.
I told him there would be a day that I took a dump on his grave, then decided to exit stage left.

This seemed to be the way my life was going, and I was being blown from here to there like a single leaf in a wind storm, and I had no plan for my life except to find another can of paint.

All I wanted to do was forget the pain of rejection and to belong someplace that nobody could tell me to leave from, but like a cur dog I kept getting ran off from everywhere I went. Could it have been my smell? My looks? My anti-social behavior? I couldn't figure out what it was, so could it have been a combination of all these things? Was it my fault? Mostly Yes! Being an inhalant addict, or any addict is something the so called straight folk don't want to be around. Do you know why? Because nobody is immune to addiction and fallibility in our lives, and it reminds them of their own shortcomings.

You can believe this too, for everybody has some type of shortcomings, and there was but one person that lived a perfect life, and He was crucified, and we aren't Him! One problem with us is denial. Nobody likes to admit that they aren't perfect, and if your one of those people that do think that, then that it self is a flaw, so addicts bring themselves into self imposed exile.

This is something we as addicts must except, for we live to use, and use to live, for we feel that we gain subsistence from what ever drug we are doing, and feel it gives us our self worth although that is a falsehood, but we believe it.

I was the kind of person that felt he had to use to live, and to be able to understand life. There were lots of questions about life that I was unable to answer, so I used thinking that the answers would magically pop into my brain if I could just reach a higher sanctum in my mind that only L.S.D., or sniffing paint could bring me to, while all along all I wanted was to be part of life. I rejected the life that was normal for a life that was full of pain, and hurt of rejection because that's really all I ever knew with the broken homes, and Mom's bad judgements of partners that she so claimed were people that were there to help us grow up.

I, opted for the pain because the pain understood, the rejection is something I never got use to. Sure my paint use could have been set aside, but why wasn't it? Because just like other addicts that couldn't, I was, and am an addict people just like those that do the fancy drugs, the meth, the
heroin, the crack, the ice, or "X", you name the drug you can be addicted to it don't you think that you can't.

Again I wandered around the wooded areas, why not find a job? No not at this time that would have put me in the world of the squares plus it would have took away from my fun life of using, the dry heaves from not eating and my body rejecting the chemicals I ingested. It would have kept me from damaging my heart, my lungs, my kidneys, it would have kept me from having a bloody raw throat that was being ate by the caustic fumes. I couldn't have that! I liked waking up in the middle of the night, and woods with ice crystals all over my clothes, so stove up from sitting in a lotus position all night sniffing paint that I couldn't even walk till the day warmed up a little.

I lived the life of the homeless only I did so out in the fringes of life like those you see living in the city. Those people that you walk by like they too are invisible. What I am saying here is, I guess is that addiction no matter how silly it may seem to a person that's not addicted to this type of substance doesn't realize how serious it is to those of us that are addicted to silly things. No matter how silly it is addiction rules your life in some way, and that's what most people don't realize.

So anyway I'll get off my soapbox, for I am nobody, but an addict, and it's way of life. Yes I speak of addiction as an "It", for it is, and it has a life of its own. It's an evil entity all to its self, a demon my friends is what it is, so yes it does have a life all it's own, one that we feed, and that helps it grow into the life ruining monster we as addicts well know.

That's what an addict deals with.
CHAPTER 2

Again I was living in the woods after being sent on by ole Booger Bear. My Aunt’s sugar daddy, pimp or whatever you wanted to call him. I found me a nice quiet creek within a small wooded area close to the apartments that my aunts lived in, and did what I always did, and that was sniff paint, smack on cheese.

I was surprised by a couple of my cousins by my Mom’s sister auntie Pat. This is who my sister Patty was named after, so being my first cousins we were pretty close not like brothers, and sisters, but close family none the less, well where I was it seemed like a good spot because my cousin, and his friends came there to get high too. Yes, I got them at least the oldest David to sniffing paint on a regular basis even a couple of the others like Danny, and Diana would sniff paint now and then.

The funny thing with this batch of cousins is all of them have names that start with a “D”, David, Diana, Danny, and Daniel the youngest. so anyway David, and Danny came to smoke a couple of joints, and so of course their older cousin “me”, was already there sniffing paint, so we all just melded together getting high on weed, and sniffing paint.

I didn’t like sharing my paint with people since I sniffed so much 1-3 cans a day, but with David I shared, I was a good cousin huh? We talked of nothing in particular, but I asked them where my Mom had went? They told to San Antonio some place. I asked don’t you know more than that? David said “she was staying with my sister Kathy, and her husband that was in the Air Force and stationed there”. He also stated that they lived on a road that had an Indain name. Now folks this is Texas and every town you go to has roads named after Indians! That was San Antonio and there was going to be a lot of roads that had Indain names. I didn’t know anything else about where ole Ma went.

After they left going home, or some place I sat there, and this kept running thru my head. I asked myself why would I care where mom was? I figured that Ma had thought that she could give me the slip so I would show her. I don’t know I guess that no matter what happens a man has some ties to good ole
Mom. Maybe it's the bond we built when nursing for back then hanging off a teat was the status quo of the time.

The next day I would be on the move. I had sniffed paint most of the night and had went to sleep sometime in the early morning as always. I woke up and after getting my fix I wandered to the nearest big store which was a Stoggs Albertson, and got my travelling supplies of smoke and paint and such.

You might notice I don't say a lot about drinking water and that's because I rarely did, and when I did I was thirstier than a camel!

We didn't have much bottled water back then. I wish that I would have come up with that idea. That's so goofy put tap water thru a simple filter and put it in a plastic bottle, and people went crazy over it! Of course back then you could always get a drink from a hose at a gas station that they used to fill up a car's radiator, before all these self service places that now charge you for the air and water that you use.

Anyway the water tasted funny most of the time when I drank it out of a hose, so I didn't drink a lot of water.

I took off, and hit the byway in the general direction of San Antonio. I had looked at a station map to get an idea of just where I was going, and started hitchhiking. I basically spent over 8 hours on the road walking, riding, and only sniffing paint for an hour, or so while I was resting my dogs, for I did a lot of walking.

On the outside of San Antonio I caught a ride with a VW Micro Bus full of Hippy's and even had to have a gal ride in my lap Yeah that was fun! Hey! I liked gals sitting in my lap, so smoking dope became a good past time as we went thru San Antonio. I paid basically for my ride by rolling joints almost non-stop since I rolled so good. It was a chore with this gal in my lap, but we seemed to work it out ok. They asked me where I was going? I told them beats me, that I was just coming to San Antonio to see if I could find my family. They asked me if I wanted to go with them to some ranch, or commune, but I said no because I was on a mission.

They let me out almost in the middle of San Antonio, and being high as a kite, and it was starting to get into the late afternoon I started to think of places I could stay the night. The ideal place would be some place close to a big store with woods, or an old vacant building, or buildings close by. Heck even high weeds would work, or a batch of bushes that I could get behind. Shelter? Who needed it! I just needed a place to get out of sight!
I reached inward toward my imbued ability to locate things, or areas I wanted to go, or so I thought. It's just a feeling that I get that says one direction is better than the other. I was more in tune to it I guess, or I had tried it out more with good luck, so I excersised this skill. I felt the direction that I was going in was the best, so started walking again.

I hadn't walked ten minutes, and wasn't even walking with my thumb out when a car stopped with a gal about my age with a tricycle motor (a kid) in the back seat. She asked me if I wanted a ride? Sure, I told her, and off we went. As we talked I explained to her about the Indain named streets, and she said she knew an area like that not far from where she had to drop the kid off. She had been baby sitting, and was bringing the kid home, or something like that. I explained that I wasn't from here, and she said that she would drop me off at this little store by this area in south San Antonio, and that I could look around, and see if I didn't find them, or wanted to wait and that she would be back, and take me around to a few places to help me look.

I may have messed up a good thing here by not waiting, but hey that's me I make poor choices a lot! I did tell her that I would wait for her, but that I was going to look around a little, while she took the kid home. I secretly didn't think she would get back there, but of course she had offered to do this on her own, so she might have come back.

I was dropped off at this store, it was getting late, and I had no prospects of a place to stay out of the way for the night, and I didn't want to be a dummy and wait around till the store people ran me off, so I headed down the street next to the store. I figured that it was a straight road going into this neighborhood, so if this gal did come by she would also most likely come down this street since it was straight as an arrow.

I could see an open field about 5 blocks down the street maybe seven all together from the store, so as I was spotting a tree line also across the open field I figured I could find a place to hang out till the morning also.

I decided to look down each street as far as I could while heading to the end of this road. Hey! any plan when your shooting in the dark is better than none! This gal had been right too, these streets were Indian names, so I had a plan and off I went!

I passed a couple of blocks, and about the third, or fourth block I just
so happened to see a gold 66 Deville convertable Caddie just like my Mom's. You know there's just things you know are so, and since I never have seen another gold 66 like my Mom's I just knew it was hers. To be sure I headed to it, and sure enough it was her car! The white cracked leather interior, the bumper sticker I stuck there of the Army Emblem yep it was Mom's car alright.

It was kinda freaky, I took it in stride because I just felt that I knew where my family was, so before I went to the door I figured to go check out this field at the end of the road to find a stash for my paint, and bags. This I did as I also looked over a place to come later to sniff paint. I kinda felt sad because I was hoping to see that little gal that had picked me up, but this sense of direction, or finding people I am out to find is uncanny, so finding a stash I headed back to the house where the car was parked.

I went up to the door, and gave it a knock, and I saw Patty Jean look out of the side window by the door, and heard her screech, and run to the door to open it. Everybody was wondering what in the world was going on, but they soon figured it out when Patty liked to 'ave bowled me over with a running hug! Patty was always glad to see her big brother! She didn't care who knew it she was always very huggy with me, so after everybody got over my popping in on them, Kathy as well as the rest could tell it had been a few days, or more like a couple of weeks since I had seen a bath, so it was off to take a bath first thing! Since I traveled with only the clothes on my back Kathy got some of Gary's clothes who was in the Air Force at the time, and married to Kathy. We were also somewhat friends he always tried to hang out with us to be cooler for he was somewhat kinda nerdy, but I would talk to him, or 'ang out some. He wasn't a paint sniffer, and too straightlaced for me. My shoes went out the door, and Kathy wouldn't allow them in the house. They smelled like 5 day old road kill, and of course my poor ole socks had rotted pretty much from the constant wearing of them.

While I was in the hot bath Kathy washed my tennis shoes because they were stinking up the front porch, and I think they were drawing stray animals too, and I think I saw a buzzard or two flying over the house now too. Hey when I say they smelled bad I wasn't kidding!

Gary, was finally home, and we got caught up with what was going on, and
Gary wanting to show off his car, and the base took me around to see some of the sights. He was a Security Police in the Air Force kinda like the M.P.'s in the Army I guess I don't know because what he did had the word police mixed with it and I wasn't too interested in what he did, anyway he took me around as I mapped the layout of the closest big stores close by his house were, so I could get more paint, and this was all I was really concerned about.

I stayed at Kathy's, and Gary's about a week, or so I was bought a few tee shirts by sis, and I got my few pounds back by eating a little food other than cheese, and ham that I stole at local stores.

I decided to move in with Mom, which had moved to a small rental house close to the Air Force Base where the big planes took off. You could sit on the side of the hill, and watch them all day long. These weren't like the fighter jets that I wanted to fly these were what was called Galaxy C5A's the the largest cargo planes in the world at the time. Mom, and Patty, and Nessa stayed with her, and I just hung out mostly.

Mom, got this boyfriend (shocking huh?), anyway she had this skinny alcholic ex-marine as a boyfriend, who thought that he was just too tough. He didn't like me much because I was ex-Army, and a long hair paint sniffing freak. He use to talk about how tough he was, for at one time he claimed that he was a bull rider too. I basically told him that I didn't believe him. He was too light in the britches for even I weighed more than he did, at approx. 150 Lbs.

This dude and Mom becomes regulars at a couple of local bars. Actually this dude was already a regular at these places. One of these places was like a resturant that served beer too. I helped this guy replace the roof on the beer joint, and got screwed out of my share of $500.00 dollars because he made a deal with the owner to take it in trade with free booze. I don't like booze even though I will drink at times.

I wouldn't have anything to do with this dude after this, and Mom kept a shaky peace between us. I did odd jobs, and gave Mom the money to help feed the girls, so Mom didn't have to go into my sister's little bit of money that they had from Poodle's dying. That was another mess up my Mom had done. I wasn't the only one that got messed over by Mom.

My sister's were the sole heirs of their dad's holdings. In the old cajun
families like theirs which were some of the founders of China. Texas, they left the land and holdings to the oldest son. Well Poodle had only Patty Jean and Demessa, so he left it all to them. The property at the time was worth about $1,75 Million Dollars, and that's not counting over $100K worth of cattle, the rice crops and the beer joint, and farm equipment - trucks twenty Quarter Horses used for cutting cattle, etc... All together Poodle was worth aprox. $3.75 Million. His only sister, and his Mom filed a forged fake will, and threw all this into probate court. To make a long story short Mom and her lawyer that she had got me also. Pete and Ted waved a carrot in front of Mom by getting her a $40,000 settlement $20K each for my sisters which she would control, and signed away the rest of the holdings that they had worked a deal with aunt Melba, Poodles sister, and them selves, so all my sisters got was $40K with a promise of $300K later, but that went to Mom's lawyers too. Anyway they lived on this money which was going at a pretty fast rate. Mom moved often because she thought that she had an unlimited supply of money, and had my sister's living in poverty allowing strange men into their lives, so at least I could help keep an eye on them, and this is another reason that I hung around and went to San Antonio.

Mom, and this dude was sitting in the small kitchen that they had, and I was drinking coffee with them when this dude went on, and on about his riding bulls. He was trying to talk down to me about being a hippy, and scared to do the things that he had said that he had done. I told him that I wasn't afraid of no bull, and that I would ride one in a minute if I knew of a place to ride.

Well that was the wrong thing thing to say because now he bet me $20 that I wouldn't get on one. I told him you have a bet knowing he was all talk. Wrong! This dude was also a regular at some small redneck rodeo arena called "Kicker's Korner", and I had put my foot in my mouth!

Well he wouldn't have got me to back down for nothing. My little sister's thought that this was a great idea! They too would get to go to the rodeo, and dance, and I couldn't take that away from them. But also I wouldn't back down because of Army Pride, and never would I let an ex-skinny marine say I was yellow!

We had a couple of Air Force friends. They was a married couple that I used to get high with that wanted to go watch me. and John the husband just
so happened to have a set of chaps, and a nice cowboy hat I could wear to ride in. Yay!, so it was on for the weekend. To psych myself up I spent a few days sniffing paint on the side of the hill watching the big planes take off from Lackland A.F.B. I really didn’t need to psych myself up, but that is just what I did, and that was sniff paint.

This dude had a tradition of going to this small restaurant of which everybody knew him, and would eat a steak dinner for free when he told them he was gonna ride which he now got me as we all sat there, and speculated how the ride would go, and I actually liked the attention this brought, and of course I love to eat too.

I told Mom’s boyfriend whom I can’t even remember his name now that I didn’t have spurs, or rigging which he assured me would be no problem to find, so show time came, and I had a bandanna holding my hair down, and was wearing John’s hat. We were all there Mon. Patty, Nessa.Kathy, John & Sherri. Of course Mom’s boyfriend was known there, so maybe he had rode before. He talked to a couple of guys. and found a pair of spurs, and some rigging. I didn’t know what hand would be the best to be strapped down with, and didn’t know that there was a difference with a piece of rope. Well there is that I can say for certain. This one dude about my age kinda showed me things that I needed to know like stretching, and putting sticky rosin on your gloved hand then strapping on a set of spurs so tight that you can stand on them oh! that hurts too! I was raised around cattle, but I had never rode a crazy assed bull that was pissed off because he had been hit with hot shots an electrifide cattle prod, and of course having someone strapped to your back and another rope that is strapped in an area that would make me buck too!

I was over with the cowboys getting set up, and had already paid my entry fee “a big five bucks”, no pun intended. I drew a bull called "Double K", a black bull with a white face, and a set of horns about 10 inches long on each side. He wasn’t too big which suited me probably about 1700 lbs. or so.

I looked back at my sisters who were just having a blast. Patty, was so neat as a sister, and a lot of fun too. Patty had snuck some beer from somewhere and was hee hawing with other gals. and guys.

I had to smile. I saw Mom John, Sherri, and Kathy all sitting in the stands and they too were happy. of course me John, and Sherri had burnt a joint on the way to this Kicker’s Korner. so I knew why they were happy. I looked
the arena over, and saw nothing special there, so I watched as the bull riding started up. This isn't a big fancy rodeo show, for it mostly has families and people that just liked to ride, and the others that liked to watch.

They had Bronc riding, and bull riding, and sometime sheep riding, for the little kids, but tonight this was all about the Broncs, and Bulls.

I was impressed with their bulls though, and had got to see them before the rodeo. They ran them out into the arena, so that you can pick the bull you want, so you don't really draw a bull as I stated earlier. I had been told "Double K", was a good bull, and that's why I got him.

There was some huge ones there, but nobody wanted to ride them, so they ran them back into the holding pens. The bull riding was going well, and I was watching when Mom's boyfriend came to tell me it was time to stage up.

I already had my boots, and hat on, so I strapped on the chaps. I guess that they were suppose to help you grip the bulls sides when riding, so I was cowboyed up now, and Will went with me and helped me get on the bull then told the guys it was my first ride, so they gave me instructions as they they strapped me on this things back.

Now this is a weird feeling as you see this bull in this tiny chute totally enclosed on all sides, and he fills this place up pretty good, so you have to climb down onto his back, and slide your legs down both sides, and as he feels your weight he bets madder. He's already throwing his head trying to hit you with his horns, but you got cowboys pulling on his ears trying to keep his head still, then you have others on the outside of the gate, and others above you tieing the rope pulling it tight etc... lots of things are all happening at the same time, and this is just a few seconds in time as all of this takes place.

Once you sit on the bull's back, you have to stick your hand thru this hole that is in the rope that they will tie you down to the bull's back with. You lay your hand palm up thru this hole, and you line your little finger up with its spine then about 3 or 4 cowboys pull this rope tight! Talk about hurt!, and tight! It's so tight you can't move your hand, or fingers, and have to close your hand, and fingers with the other hand. and that's why you use rosin, for as you close your hand with the other one you make it stick to the rosin in a tight fist by pounding your hand closed. this really sticks your hand closed too.
You then turn your feet outward, and hook these spurs that are locked rowels so that they don't spin like they do on the Broncs. with bulls you want them to bite as deep as you can get them, and don't worry about hurting the bull this isn't gonna happen, but if you come off at the wrong time, then he won't have a problem hurting you. Once all of this is done then you give the signal, and the gate flies open!

There's no need to tell you that the bull is ready to get out of that chute, and this is what ole Double-K did. This dude took off so fast that I came off right in the chute! That's right after all of that, and the bull left me sitting in the chute, dirt, and talk about hurt! The ground had been stomped so much in there that it was like concrete. Everybody thought that my rigging had been put on wrong they didn't know that I had no idea what was gonna happen, or how it would happen when that gate opened.

I know why cowboys seem to limp now when they get up after a bull or horse throws them off their backs. They limp because when you land on your ass, and tailbone it really jars your teeth out, and it really hurts too!

I was no different. I limped out to get the rigging, and climb the fence when I heard the announcer say I would get a re-ride as soon as they could catch the bull, and get him back into the chute. I wasn't real happy about that, but I had to save face, and climbed back up on the fence to wait.

I needed that time they took to catch this bull too! My arse bone really, really hurt! Will the dude that had helped me with everything so far came to the fence and joined me there, and he was in a good mood, he also gave me a couple of more pointers that should have been given to me the first time I got on this thing. He stated that once I was tied down to put my elbow into my stomach, and sit up, and on top of my hand, so otherwords get your hand right up in there close and personal with your boys as if being strapped on the back of this bull wasn't unconfontable enough. the reason for this is it makes you lean forward, and this will compensate for the bulls first lunge out of the gate. for he will throw you backwards when he leaves this chute, and this was my mistake. I was sitting up too straight, and the second thing was not to tell the guy to open the gate, for the bull believe it or not realizes when your ready, and if you yell to open the gate he has been warned and when the gate opens he puts you into another time zone from zero to pretty dammed fast in the blink of an eye! They told me just to nod the
and the gate comes open, and surprises the bull. You don't realize how fast all of this happens, it's only a few seconds. I told Will that I had wished that he had told me this crap the first time, and before the bull had left me in the dirt of the chute, because I was really hurting from busting my ass in the chute.

My bull was caught and loaded up, and was slobbering mad. He looked even bigger the second time I climbed on board. A 1700 lbs bull doesn't look too big, but get on his back, and things don't look the same any more. I went thru the same thing as I did before when they first tied me to this things back, and again I swear it felt like they raised the bull off the ground as they pulled the rope tight.

Now as the gate came open just like Will had said the bull was surprised, but then again so was I, and the bull took off, and all of the sudden your riding this fright train and it is slobbering, and bucking and jumping off the ground with all four feet at the same time, and then there is the other things going on, the clowns are throwing their hats at this bull, and the chaps that I was wearing were flapping, and beating me to death. I lost John's hat, and the bull stepped on it for good measure, my hair was flying, and I looked like a wild Indain to top it all off.

Out of all of this confusion, and noise. I could hear my Mom yelling louder than everybody in the crowd, and she was saying "Ride Timothy!" Oh! that was it. after about the fourth buck, and trying to figure out what the heck I was doing on top of this crazy beast it was time to get myself off this creature.

I heard no buzzer, but got loose of this rope some how, and did kinda like a backward flip off this bull, and landed in a heap! I had no idea where the bull was, but was glad when I felt hands help me up, and half carry me out of there as I tried to get my bearings. Once they pointed me towards the fence I was on autopilot, and took off. I wasn't hurt I was just kinda in shock, but I recovered pretty fast once I figured out that my feet were under me!

I can say this. What a rush! That was some threwed-off stuff. I couldn't believe what had just happened. Well that was fun, and I gave all the gear back to the guys that I'd borrowed them from, and met up with everybody.

They all thought that was cool, and I thought that it was crazy, but actually enjoyed it except I was really sore!
After the show they had a dance which I didn't attend. You have to realize this place was a redneck haven and nobody really went out of their way to talk to me. A Hippy had invaded their world, and rode a bull no less! It wasn't that people were mean to me, but a person knows when they are not wanted. Patty found another beer, and brought it to me, for I was sitting in the Caddy listening, and talking to some gals on the C.B. that I had put in Mom's car. I think that the gals were at the rodeo because they sounded close.

Patty, and the rest were having fun dancing, and she tried to talk me into coming over there, but now smelling like bull literally, and my butt bone hurting I opted out. I wanted to go find my paint and go A.W.O.L. for a day or two. That's an antisocial attitude, but I was antisocial, so this was normal to me.

This wouldn't be the only time I rode, and my next bull was called "Snarzan", he was a tiger striped looking bull. So over the next few weeks between sniffing paint and riding bulls on the weekend I went thru a few bulls.

I rode ole Double K again and Snarzan, and one called "Slipdisc", and got tired of them pretty fast. Slipdisc was a big bull, but slow. He was a pretty good bull if there is such a thing, with a buckskin tan hide color.

Before each rodeo they let the bulls out into the arena as noted before. and there was one bull that nobody rode, and his name was "VP-2". I asked somebody about him and they told me he was an ex P.B.R.A. bull (Professional Bull, Riding Assn.). Championship bull. They had retired him because he was to mean, and he liked to chase down the cowboys, and gore them with his twenty or so inch horns. They had been tipped, or blunted but still very dangerous.

He was a Brahma Bull, and huge at over 2000 lbs. maybe even 2100 lbs. To emphasize this point ole Slipdisc had got too close to him. and VP-2 rammed him. and knocked him down, clean off his feet. Slip disc weighed every bit of 1900 lbs. Needless to say nobody rode him that day either. but I had decided this would be my next bull. I still wasn't talking to a lot of people there but talked on the C.B. a lot there.

During the next week I had told Will. and a couple of dudes that rode that I was going to ride VP-2. They thought that it was crazy, but all gave me tips on what to do which was basically when I came off to be sure to come off and land on my feet. I am sure that they couldn't wait to see this dumb hippy try to ride the meanest bull that they had there, and they were more
than happy to tell me what I needed to do, but they them selves weren’t about
to get on this bull!

I didn’t think that comimg off on my feet was even possible, for I had
come off of these bulls every way but that! I psyched myself up all week
by snifing paint. I found a big patch of cacti close to where John, and Sherri
lived, and decided that I would go into this big patch of cactuses, and sniff
paint there, for I was sure that nobody would bother me in them, and I was
right! I was surprised to find a small clearing in the middle of them. These
aren’t small plants either for they were as tall as I was and taller. So
this was a good place. There was one problem though, and that was the fact
that I had found that a big rattlesnake liked this place too, for I had found
a huge rattlesnake skin, with out the snake which I was very happy about
for I would have surely tore my bag of paint trying to get back out of there
post haste had there been the snake in the skin. This made me very wary anyway,
but I had a job to do, and paint sniffing overruled my senses, and I made
myself at home, and sniffed my paint. I had a problem though and that wasn’t
just the fact that there was thousands of long big stickers that were everyw
where, and would reek havoc with my plastic bag with paint in it, but there
had to be millions of these small red hair like stickers too, and they stuck
everywhere! The good thing is though they didn’t seem to go thru my bag,
so I was ok.

This is where I spent the week contemplating my next ride on this bruiser
of a bull. At the next rodeo when they let the bulls out I watched the other
bulls as they brought them out which was more like just letting them out
of the holding pens, and they just ran out into the arena.

There was no doubting it now, the other bulls were avoiding VP-2, and
he was really a mean ole cuss too, just like I had seen, because now I had
a vested interest in this bull, so I had a close eye on him. He seemed to
watch me watch him, so I told him he was mine tonight! He threw some dirt
over his back a couple of times with his hoof letting me know that he was
all about buisness, and he was telling me that he would charge my ass if
I even got close to him. I could just see it in his eyes, and he had this
devil may care look in them if that makes any sense?

I paid the entry fee, and told them which bull to pull for me. They asked
me if I was sure about the bull I wanted since they knew that this was only
my 5th. ride. They thought that maybe one of the other cowboys may have been pulling a fast one on the ole hippy boy.

I had sniffed so much paint over this ride, that there was no way that I wasn't ready mentally, and that is because I obsessed over this stuff as I sniffed paint, and it was like I had already rode this bull a thousand times already. Now all I had to do was do it! The way it felt is like when you have had a dream that played, and replayed in your mind on those nights that you just couldn't get to sleep, well that is what I had done all week since I was more in a dream world than reality at times.

I had told people that I was going to ride him, and Army/Hippy pride wouldn't let me back down now. I wouldn't back down even when these people gave me discreet outs, and I could still save face, so I was committed, and once everybody saw that I was serious they started giving me the same advice that everybody else had been giving me during the week. That was to come off on my feet. I started to wonder about my deciding to do this, for it seemed that the thing to do with this big bastard was to come off on my feet. I wonder if they were trying to tell me something? Well we would find out what ole VP-2 was made of shortly.

I did find out some more information on this guy though that may mean something, and that was this bull loved to take off for the center of the arena, so that he would have time to get turned around and get after the cowboy. I knew that this big slobber machine would be coming out of the chute madder than a wet cat in a toad sack, so I needed to be on my toes with this bull.

The rodeo progressed that night, and I did the ole pre-ride stuff like stretched and loosened up as much as I could, I got my rope rigging ready and rostined up my glove, and was as ready as I could be.

They then chuted VP-2, and since he hadn't been rode in months, and months he was really pissed about being in the chute, and was raising hell it self in the chute! The cowboys had lots of trouble with him, and their hitting him with hot shots (electrify cattle prods), he really didn't like that.

When I climbed to the top of the chute they told me again to just let him go, and they would get me another bull, but I said no, so the ride was was gonna happen. I then climbed down into the chute in this very crowded tiny chute I might add! This is a chute filled to the gills with over a ton

-26-
of snorting, spitting mean hamburger meat with I might add horns over 20 inches long on each side of his head.

This bull is really mad, and he's hitting the gate with his horns trying to get to the gate handlers that he's looking at thru the slats of the gate.

Then I sit on his haunches, and tried to get my legs down around his sides, for they had already snagged the rope from under him, and were setting the rigging in place waiting for me to stick my gloved hand into the loop, and as I did it felt like they were trying to raise this big guy off the ground. This glued my hand down to his back, and along his spine then he decided that he didn't want to stay in this chute any more, and proceeded then to try and climb over the top! Now this ain't a good thing because there is barely room enough in this chute when he was standing still as he would, but with the both of ya in there you couldn't let this guy move around. Of course you don't want to be sitting on one of these things either when they decide that they want to get out of the chute either! There was no getting off now; because my hand was already tied to his back and all I could do was throw my feet up and they cowboys hooked my spurred feet across the top slats of the chute, and held them there while this bull went crazy. If I didn't do this then the bull would break my legs, and if I fell off in the chute with him he would kill me. My feet being hooked out of the way all I could do was hold on, and there were cowboys everywhere now trying to get me off the bull, and trying to get this bull to get down from the gate.

All I could see was the faces of these guys as they came from everywhere, and I could only see the sky because this bull was halfway out of this chute and he was taking me with him where ever he was going.

They couldn't open the gate either with the bull trying to climb out, and so they were smacking his nose, and hitting him with hotshots which didn't help the situation because it just made him madder. The cowboys were trying to get my hand lose, and trying to keep me from falling too, as this crazy bugger tried to get out. I was beginning to wonder if this might not have been a crazy idea? Finally it seemed like forever now but the bull was forced to get back down, and as soon as he did I slid up, and dropped my feet down his sides, and locked the spurs on his sides, and gave the signal all at the same time, for I was ready to get off of this monster, and if you have ever read where I might have been making a poor choice then this just might have been one of those times for sure!
The gate opened, and out we came. I was not wearing the chaps, or cowboy hat that I had worn the first time I rode, for they just distracted me, so as always I had on a bandanna wore like a headband to keep the hair out of my eyes.

Once the bull comes out of the chute you have sensory overload. Your on top of an iron mountain of flesh that is doing everything it can to get you off of his back. There are clowns throwing hats at it to distract it, there are men on horse back, guys snapping pictures, people yelling in the stands, and why I could pick out my Mom's voice in all of this chaos I don't know, but I heard her yell for me to let go! It wasn't a matter of letting go because I didn't even feel my hand there was so much going on. What I was watching was this big bastards horns which were getting closer to my chest as he bucked, and my body went too, and fro with the force of his jumps.

As always the bull did as predicted by the guys that had seen him run before he headed to the middle of the arena, so he could chase me down, and I was still on his back! I finally had my left spur dislodge, and I started to come off of his back. (Now you might wonder how I remember everything like I did? Well everything is in slow motion at this stage believe me you just ain't gonna forget being on over 2000 lbs. of mean!) Anyway I started to come off, and he was turning away from the stands, so the crowds couldn't see what was happening as my leg was trying to clear this things huge rock hard hump. My hand was still in the rope, but was comming loose, but my leg wasn't going to clear the hump, but he bucked again, and as he came down with his front feet I started clearing his hump. The bad thing was he was throwing his head back, and I looked this devil right in the eye, and could see, and feel his hate as he tried to hook me with his horn.

I had caught the last buck (kinda like catching the bounce on a trampoline) my leg cleared his hump, and barely cleared his horn, and spun me around in the opposite direction from the way VP-2 was going facing the stands!

I felt my feet hit the ground, and my knees bend with the shock, but I was on my feet, and that too was a shock! All I heard now was everybody yelling run! I didn't need to look back to know that this dude had me in his sights, and was charging my backside with his head down, horns pointed to the bullseye that must have been painted on my arse by some demented cowboy so I did what I thought best. I lit a shuck, and let this bull see just how
fast a bespurred, boot wearing hippy could run! I left that dude in the dust my boots stirred up. I looked like a rail dragger leaving the line with a full blown Hem, and headed straight as an arrow towards an 8 ft. tall square cross tie that the fence was hooked too in front of the stands. I hit the wire fence about five feet above the ground, and scampered up the fence like a monkey to sit atop of the square post as the bull raged below, and dared anybody to even look like they were going to try and come in there, or make fun of him in any way. The horse cowboys, and clowns all came up to get this mad hombre away from the fence, and back to the pens. This wasn't too hard because he found new targets to chase and I think ole VP-2 should have had a sign stuck to his side about that that said "CAUTION: I Flunked Anger Management!", because as soon as these guys came up to him, away he went after them now! He didn't care who he chased, or hit with the horns on his head as long as it was someone! Well he had missed his chance with me for the night. Talk about a Wild West Show! They got their moneys worth that night!

On a side note: As my spur came loose, and I was parting company with ole VP-2, the buzzer had sounded! All this had happened in less than 8 seconds and my spur had dislodged just before the buzzer, but either way it was a good ride. Man that is the longest 8 seconds you have ever lived when you are on the top of a mad bull like that!

Patty Jean, was the first to get to me since I was basically on the fence post right in front of all of them, and they helped me get down because it's harder climbing a fence with spurs, and boots coming down than it was going up with a bull on your arse! For some reason he was a good motivater. I saw Patty started to cry as did my other sister Nessa as I climbed down, and people started to crowd around me. Patty was looking at my shirt pulling it this way and that looking for the hole that she knew must be there somewhere. The reason for this was because there was blood all over the right side, and front of it, but we had found out that it was only from a few deep scratches I'd gotten from VP-2 as he was trying to climb out of the chute.

Once everybody was satisfied that this hippy wasn't hurt, and that I was just awesome and that they was just going to have to deal with it, then the rodeo went on. Patty the ever resourceful person that she was had found a beer, and gave it to me.

I talked to a few people, and got a few atta boys, but when the dance
started I still didn't hang out with the ropers.

These guys, had at least started to talk to me more, but I still felt the animosity that rednecks, and hippies had towards each other, but of course I may have been the antisocial one because of my self imposed exile from humanity, and my aloofness, and paranoid ways of always thinking that people were always pointing fingers at me for being a paint sniffing freak. Why I thought this was a wonder, but I feel that as an addict, and living on the fringes of life I didn't want to get hurt again, nor hurt others which I seemed to do without an effort.

Patty and a few others did come, and ask me to join them, but I had declined because I said I was sore from the ride which wasn't entirely a falsehood.

I wanted the night to end, so that I could sneak off, and sniff paint. I had seen my fun for the day, and that was all I wanted to allow myself.

Oh yeah, good ole Will had paid up on a $20.00 bet that we had made too, but now we didn't get along because he had never had the guts to ride VP-2 which I thought was funny.

He claimed age, but I stated that I had only rode four times when I opted for my 5th. ride to be on him, so that should have made up the difference so my taunting him didn't help.

I had decided to ride VP-2 again the next week, and this aggravated this dude too. This would end up being my last bull ride ever, and although it wasn't as dramatic as the first ride it was still a good one, and got a lot more exciting when I came off. The bull again took me to the middle of the arena, and dislodged me, and I came off with a kinda backward flip, and landed rigid arm trying to stop my fall which cracked my wrist. I again heard my Mom out of the chaos yell "get up Timothy!", for as I tried to get up my arm collapsed under me, and I fell back down, and saw this bull turn, and see me then he started his charge, but I had already got up with the other arm and headed straight for the fence again in front of my family, and again got up the fence before he got there. Needless to say you can move pretty fast with 2,000 lbs. of bull on you arse! This again drew a lot of atta boys.

There was no blood this time which was a good thing, but my wrist hurt. I could deal with that though, and when the rodeo was over, and the dance started Patty talked me into going to the dance by saying some gals wanted
to meet me. Being a poon hound that I was this sounded like a good plan, and so I broke the social barrier that night. Lot's of guys bought me a beer, and I talked to lots of gals, and had a good time re-counting the rides on VP-2 which got a lot of laughs. I never danced but I had a good time. It seems that most of the people there wanted to talk to me all along, but they didn't want to intrude when I went away they didn't know where I had went, but the gals that I had been talking to on the C.B. back then had been at the rodeo, and had got to know me some from those talks, but the main thing is the fact that it was I that was causing myself to be alone.

I only went to one more rodeo where I again hit the fence, but this time I was in the arena with a dude that was getting action shots of men coming out on bulls from the chutes. I would tell the dude when the bull got close because he was looking thru the camera, so couldn't tell how close the bull was.

One bull took off after me, so I hit Warp-8, and the back fence which was wooden slats, and went over the top never touching the top plank! When I climbed back up the fence from the other side, and stuck my head over to see if the bull had been ran off people started to clap. I guess that it was a funny sight to watch to see what the hippy would be doing each time I came to the rodeo, for they knew I would be up to something that wouldn't keep them from being amused. One thing they knew though, and that was the fact that this hippy could outrun these bulls; if they got behind me!

I too think that it's funny now seeing all of this in my minds eye, and this long haired freak out running a bull as well as going over a fence. I don't care who you are that just had to be a funny sight!

I am sure that back then there were times common sense was so rare with me that if I used it it would kinda have been like a super power! I gave up bull riding after this trip to Kicker's Korner, but I would always have these memories.
CHAPTER 3

I wouldn't be in San Antonio much longer. Mom, and ole Will had called it quits after one day when Will and I had a serious confrontation.

I had been laying on this old shabby couch with a German Shepard pup that I had picked up as a partial payment for baby sitting this gal, and her husband's couple of kids for a couple of hours. That's right I've baby sitted once or twice. Of course there wasn't a lot of watching either, since it was during their nap time too, because the mom, and dad just needed someone to be there while they ran some errands.

Anyway since I was paid this time with this big club footed german shepard puppy needless to say that I didn't sit for a living. I felt that I got a pretty good deal though, and I did get a ten dollar bill too, and I ate just about all the left overs that they had, and I found out something that was very informative and that was you don't nuke an egg in a microwave because they do blow up in the oven! This was at a time when people were just buying in on micro waves mostly they were in stores, and since I wasn't in stores very long for some obvious reasons I hadn't had the chance to use them too often.

After a hard night of sniffing paint on the hill side watching planes at the A.F.B. I was laying on the couch with Francis my pooch, laying next to me (I like dogs), Anyway my sisters were, or had been taken back to my Auntie Pats in Arlington at some point, so it was just us there.

Mom was sitting in the kitchen drinking coffee, and smoking a cig. and I was asleep yet not. I was thinking of getting up to smoke and drink a cup of "Jo", myself when ole Will came out of the only bedroom this low rent shack had, and he sat with Mom to drink, and smoke too. When he looked over at the couch he said to Mom, "What is that S.O.B. doing here?". Well that wasn't something I took too well because even though my Mom wasn't the cat's meow where Mom's were concerned I still didn't like the fact that he disrespected her as well as me since he wasn't nothing but an Alky good for nothing piece of crap, so I told him that he was the S.O.B. in the room, and that I was sleeping, and if he had a problem with that then he could do
an un-natural act on an unmentionable piece of anatomy, as well as impossible act that most men find disgusting. Well this might have not been the nicest thing to say, but when a man's body is, or has been pumped full of petroleum chemicals for days, and was still full of them along with now needing my fix, then I wasn't in the mood to make nice.

Plus we have to remember that he had disrespected my Mom, and myself, and that wasn't going to go unanswered. I also had to deal with a lot of these nobodys in my life, and I was now a man, and had to hold my own in this world.

Well after telling this dude that he stood up, and pulled out his little pocket knife, he was always bragging about his Marine Knife fighting skills. Me I didn't brag about mine since I really was a knife fighter, and had, had to prove it more than once on the streets, and in the gangs I ran with.

Now that this dude had pulled a knife, I think that he may have figured that this may have been the wrong thing to do at this time, because I came up off the couch in one smooth move, and was on my feet facing him like we was two gun fighters at high noon we looked at each other, he had his knife out, and told me that he would be glad to slice me up if I said one more thing.

This guy just lacked one important bit of information, and that was the fact that I also carried a knife, and it wasn't a little pocket knife, it was an Elk Horned German made hunting knife that I kept razor sharp, and I kept it hid under my shirt, slid in my belt. I have a bad habit about calling a person's bluff because I wasn't in the mood to deal with idiots Mom knew that things was fixing to get real dicy, and when she heard the words "Do it", the last time that she had heard those words was when me and Milton tore up the house when he beat me with a metal pipe spring thing a couple of years ago before when I was 16 yrs. old. When I hooked the shirt over my knife, and put my hand on the handle he saw that his day was fixing to end real bad, and it had just started!

Mom, knew that I would cut this dude, and begged me to just let this guy get his stuff, and leave. Will was letting Mom do his talking because as I've quoted before hell had come to breakfast, and since I had now been acquainted with death myself Mom knew that I had changed, and there was a killer lurking inside her son, for the paint sniffing effects causes a Dr.
Jeckle, and Mr. Hyde effect, and since I still had these chemicals in my
brain I was in that mode.

This guy could see it too I guess, and he could also see that I would
take a couple of slashes just to cut his heart out, that's the things you
have to weigh, and accept when your dealing with that type of situation.

I guess that this ole boy thought that Mom had a good idea, and decided
to leave. Mom shielded him by staying between me, and him as he went by me.
I never took my eyes off of him, and he took off. This would be the last
time that I would ever see him which might have been a good thing for us
both.

Mom had already decided to move back to Arlington, Texas since the girls
were up there, and she couldn't legally spend their money unless she was
with them, and Patty, and Nessa wanted Mom to get a studio Apt. in Grand
Prairie close to Irina's since they were all friends, so Mom was heading
back there to do this.

I felt that I had done Mom a favor, and as far as I was concerned since
I had ran him off I felt that he wouldn't be back which left Mom free to
pursue life always seeking the golden egg laying goose. The problem was Mom
was seeking the same thing, and none of them could find it in the bottom of
the bottle.

After this dude had left Mom decided that it would be a good time to
leave, and in fact had already started packing the caddy the day before.
There was no big stuff just a few bags of clothes, her guitar which was a
big ole Martin Dreadnought Acoustic.

Mom still had visions of grandure of becoming a recording artist, and
even had cut a record once that she had her 3rd. husband finance. Lewis was
a train engineer, and I think he thought that he was either Elvis, or Johnny
Cash, or a mixture of the both of them.

I decided that ole Mom had everything well at hand, and she was going
to leave the next day, and I knew she was going to spend the day with Kathy
since she, and Gary, and her daughter Mandy was staying because he was still
in the Air Force.

I rounded up Francis, and went to my paint sniffing spot where I had
a can of paint to deal with. I really hadn't decided yet whether I was
staying yet because I hadn't seen the Alamo yet, and still wanted to do this,
so this took some thinking on, so the best way to do that was sniffing paint. I had an excuse to sniff paint on every finger, but really didn't need it I just lived to sniff paint really it had that kind of hold on my life.

After feeding my pooch, and myself I headed out to the hill that was more like a mesa that we had this rented house on, so it was kinda flat on top.

That's why I sat on the hillside in the tall weeds by a tree. It gave me a good vantage point to watch across the countryside out of sight of cars on the road below, but I had a clear shot of the A.F.B., and airfield, and you couldn't miss the huge planes that landed, and took off there, so that's where I went to "think", about staying there I just had no idea about where I'd stay, or how I'd take care of my dog. She was a good dog, and already minded good, and she was smart too.

I spent a few hours melting my brain while Francis checked out the area. She would be a good warning system in case of rattlesnakes, or a person, so I watched her antics.

She was losing her milk teeth, and would gnaw on my hunting knife for hours, and never cut herself. How? I never knew, but she loved to chew on the razor sharp blade.

Being high my mind wandering I saw a gulley that came out to a road below, and I decided to look for it because I thought that I had saw a ten speed bike laying down there, and wanted to check it out. Why? I don't know that either, because me, and ten speeds didn't get along too well. Francis and I headed out, and on top of this flat hill was a washed out gulley that actually did go down to this road running down by this hill. It looked like a ramp, and was about 12ft. to the bottom, or maybe 15ft. who knows? My perspective was sometimes not too swift. This ramp like gulley went all the way to this road.

I sat there on the edge of the gulley with my feet hanging off the edge and watched for any type of movement, and looked to make sure that there wasn't any rattlers out sunning theirselves in the sun, for they really get pissed off if they are messed with while they are napping. I didn't plan to mess with one of these guys, but I sure didn't want to jump down on top of one of these bad tempered buggers for they surley wouldn't understand.

Being the whiz that I was at making wonderful choices I did while I was
high on paint fumes. I figured that jumping down into the gully would be faster than climbing down which does have a certain truth to it, for it was faster.

I tossed my can of paint down just to be sure that no snake struck at it. (As you might have figured out by now it looked really snaky), anyway now I faced forward, and followed my can, and that was really the wrong thing to do, for when I hit the bottom not only did the bottom slope downwards towards the road, but the bottom wasn't a flat surface either! It had a 45° tilt to one side that I couldn't tell from up at the top of the gully, and I landed flat footed, and fell forward severely springing my ankle or cracking my right ankle. I had fell forward from the speed of falling the distance I did, and my weight hit full force when I hit the ground! Talk about get hurt! Oh My God! That is one way to get sober instantly! There is nothing I can describe the pain that went thru my foot, and leg!

As I lay there facing the sky and trying to catch my breath from the pain I could see my dog laying with her big club feet over the edge, and her ears up, and pointed forward as she tilted her head this way and that as I made animal noises holding my foot and rolled around down at the bottom of the gully.

I told her to stay, but that was redundant, for if she could talk you could bet she was calling me a dumbass! You could also bet she was saying "no-way buddy I ain't jumping down there because I have more sense".

My leg, and ankle started to swell inside of the boots that I wore all the time bull riding, for they had high tops and were good snake boots too.

I knew that I needed to get the boot off before it had to be cut off. I also had to get out of this gully, and the only way to do that was to climb out. Well that was a tougher thing than I thought, and after a couple trys and adding a few new words to the english language I was able to get out of the gully. I am sure Francis was wondering what these new words were that she had heard, and she didn't try to say them, which is a good thing because nobody likes a cussing dog no matter how cute she was!

Of course she was glad to see me and as I was trying to hang on to some little root, or something and not fall back down to the bottom of this wash, she decided that as I came over the top that this was a good time to lick my face all over and since I wasn't able to stop her she thought that it
too cool that I was allowing her to lick my face off. Of course this is one of those times that she knew that she could get away with this, and yelling "get away you mangy mutt!" wasn't going to work. She wasn't mangy anyway, and she knew this so I figure that she thought I was talking about some other doggy.

I finally was able to climb out and I wasn't being blinded by a wet tongue anymore, so now I had to see if I could fight this boot and get it off. I could feel it swelling, so now I had to see how bad this was. I fought the boot until I got it off, and could see that there was some damage there.

My foot was turning blue now. I hobbled back to the house which wasn't too far away, and was sitting there smoking a cig when Mom showed up. She asked me why I was sitting there, and I showed her my foot, and of course nobody in my family are saints, so Mom had a few choice words of her own to spill from her lips.

I guess that she was afraid that I was going to want to go to the hospital which I didn't, so she chilled out after that, and brought me some ice in a baggie so I could get some of the swelling down.

It hurt like hell, but I could deal with it as long as I didn't move it too much, or try to walk on it, or do anything else with it either.

I have to hand it to ole Ma she had her mother instincts as questionable as they were at times that had kicked in, and she tried to look out for me.

We left at sun up the following day since I had figured out that I was heading back to Arlington now. It pretty much was decided for me upon the point of no return inbetween the time I left the top of the gullies edge to hitting the bottom of the gullies floor, so much for the Alamo, I was how do they say it? Otta There!

It was a good thing that Mom had decided to go the way that I was going because it would have been real tough hitching a ride with a bum foot, and a club footed pup.

I keep calling Francis club footed that is my way to say she had big feet for a puppy, not that she had anything wrong with them, she was going to be a big dog.

My Mom smoked weed too, so providing that I would furnish it Mom as any of my family would smoked like a freight train, and thus we had a good time driving back from there.
We got to Arlington and Mom and I went to Aunt Pat's at a big apartment complex, and of course this was the same apartment complex that Aunt Mona had lived when Booger Bear had asked me to hit the road. She was now living some place else now.

My cousins helped Mom unload a few things from the car (mainly me). Mom had kept the car fairly loaded up, for she was going to go looking for a studio apartment for the girls (that's who she said it was for anyway) the next day.

Patty, and Nessa (Denessa), was running around with my cousins whom all where all the cool people was, as well as the acid freaks, and dope smokers were which was a good thing to know because Mom had smoked almost all of my weed. Also it was good to be among dopers again, and not ropers as I was down there.

It was also a good thing that my cousins were there, so that they could vouch for me because when your in an area where there are a lot of dopers they get freaked out pretty easy when a new person shows up. Of course I had been seen around there off, and on, but only like a ghost, for if you looked off I would be gone when you looked back, for I was always just passing thru. They had small patches of woods around there, and I would go hang out in them and do my thing, so people rarely saw me for long. Well that wouldn't be a problem now since I was basically grounded because I could barely walk, and when I did walk it was only to hobble short distances.

I was introduced to lots of people by my cousin David, and my sis Patty who both always had older friends. I was introduced to a gal named Marie that lived in a house close to the apartments.

Trina and I had now finally decided to go our own ways for good, for we had just drifted apart, and since I was living the life of a nomad I guess that was ok.

Since my Army days I just wanted to get around, so anyway I liked Marie, and she liked me. She liked coming over to hang out since I wasn't on the move with a busted paw. As you might have figured my paint sniffing suffered, and since I'm addicted to this stuff I was always looking for something that would take my mind off of not using.

David my cousin was a good supplier of a joint now and again, or acid which helped, so being pretty much homebound it was good to have company.
when Marie came over. I stayed outside as much as I could, and me and Francis enjoyed that.

My Aunt told me that my pup was going to have to go because she was going to have to pay a deposit if she stayed, so I found someone that would keep her for me while I healed. Once that was done, and I could take care of her, I could get her back. She couldn’t stay at Marie’s because they had no fence to keep her in the yard, and Marie lived with an alcoholic dad, and as old Mom with her brother. They also live next to a road so that too was not a place for Francis.

Marie’s Mom, and dad had children later in life (probably not planned), but that was that. Marie’s older brother was like ten years older, or more than her. Marie, pretty much helped take care of her dad, and Mom.

Marie lived on one of the corners of the very busy road that I use to wreck on nightly when I rode that evil demon possessed ten speed bike. I think it was Davis St., but I’m not sure now. After Francis was gone I saw her once while she was being walked by the guy I had let hold on to her, and he had told me how much his kids loved her, so I told him that he could keep her since I hated up-rooting her. She was a good dog, so she deserved a good home. That was the last time that I ever saw her.

I was still hobbling around, but my ankle was still in a bad way. The weather was warm, and the swimming pools had water, so I figured that swimming would bring the swelling down, and help the ankle. This was a good excuse to spend most of my days, and some evenings in the pool, so this is what I did, and at first it killed my foot, and it hurt to gently swish my feet back, and forth as I held on to the edge of the pool. Once I got use to this the pain started abating. I started doing this daily, and was able to walk better each day. I guess that the daily soakings, for a couple of hours at a time is just the doctor ordered.

Marie liked coming over in the afternoons, and we would pool together and talk the afternoon away.

As I was now able to get around better after a couple of weeks of this treatment I was able to get back into my addiction which I did at first opportunity. I would stay away at first a few days then show back up. Marie wanted me to stay at their house, so since her old man liked me too I decided this was cool.
Her dad was in his own world, and didn't say much. I never ate there, so I don't know who, or what they cooked there. I'm sure that they ate I just don't remember how they really got along.

I got a job at the gas station across the street which did a lot of buisness but it was still kinda slow after a few hours.

Marie would come over, and hang out, and since there was a 7-Eleven behind the place she would go get us a few munchies since of course we smoked dope now, and again. You didn't think I would get a job where I had to do a straight 8 hours being straight huh?

Life as it was back then, these things happened all the time. I was looking for, or talked to a temp service during this time also, and they came thru with another job at a place between Arlington, and Grand Prairie called "Gilbert's Marking Systems". they were on Greater Southwest Parkway, in which is an area all to it self. This is a big buisness park.

Marie would take me to work daily, and I unloaded trucks on the recieving dock, and gave the girls there clothes in each of their stations on a chain trolly to be marked with tags going to K-Mart, Dillard's etc... Sears wherever. Each big store wanted so many hundreds, or thousands of pairs of pants, or shirts, dresses, and such. They would all come here from a major manufacturer, and then get tagged, and shipped to differant stores.

That's when I found out that there was really at that time no difference from products (clothes) at that time. When you went to your favorite store and paid 20% or more for a pair of pants that you could have got at another store for half the cost because you wanted that brand from that store then you just got duped, so anyway there was a lot of women working there, and a couple of Vietnamese that worked there that I wouldn't even talk to.

These guys most of the people there liked, and weren't N.V.C.s that had been our bane, and had killed my friends, and almost myself, but of course that made me no differance, and I had a real dislike for Vietnamese for many years. You see when you fight a war and have been trained to kill these people and see them as less than human. You know I can't say who it was that was shooting at me when I was being shot while in the helicopters, and who is to say that one of these guys hadn't taken a couple of shots at me too. I don't know and I didn't care because even a freindlies bullet would kill you had they pointed the gun at you and fired.
The work was hard, and unloading semi truck trailers hold lots of clothes. The gals in my care always had clothes to mark, and they got their quotas with no problem which kept the dock mgr. off their backs. As a matter of fact I didn't like him either he was black, and when I first got there he use to come, and jack with me, and the gals I unloaded the trucks for. There was about ten girls that I unloaded trucks for that I was personally responsible for getting them their clothes to them for.

I in no uncertain terms told the dude that all he needed to do was let me know what truck to unload, and the girls quota's, and leave us alone.

You have to understand I don't play by the rules, nor do I like certain things, and since this dude saw that I handled up on my end he left me, and the gals that worked with alone which they appreciated too. There's a way to work with people and a way not to, and since I wasn't the type that liked being told by a blackman what to do I let it be known.

Call me a racist I don't care, for more people need to be honest, and speak their minds. Do you not hear blacks play the race card every chance that they get? Well just listen sometimes.

That doesn't mean that I couldn't work with this dude, or others, or even be friends with blacks since my best bud Burse that was killed in our chopper was also black it's just if I don't like you. I don't care what color you are if you abuse your position on me, and or others that I work with I'll tell ya.

I would pick up the orders when I got to work, and round up my gals, and we would deal with it. You might be wondering where I got the power to do this well I was the asst. dock mgr., and I also use to be a Sgt. in the Army and know how to delegate things this way. It also seems that the dock mgr.'s main boss boss the plant manager had made me his asst because her office was above the docks, and she liked the way that I worked with the people, and worked getting the work completed. There were other sections and they always had some type of problems with the loaders, and unloaders, but my section ran like clock work, and there were no complaints coming from the gals which was also important. You see I am not always a hard case, and this plant manager talked to me all the time. She was an older woman in her 40's, or so which was older to me back then, but I liked her. It's too bad that I didn't stay there long as was the case with most jobs
back then because I had the wanderlust, and probably A.D.H.D. (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), or something because if it didn't hold my interest I would be gone pretty soon, and if it crimped my paint sniffing style I would be gone soon also.

I was helping Marie's Mom with some bills and Marie, and I were a hot item. She had the addictive nature too I found out that she loved Jim Bean Whiskey, and loved getting sauced on it, and then having sex in different places. That was fine with me, but she was a mean drunk, and that I didn't like. I had too many problems I had to deal with myself being an addict even worse than she did.

We did a lot of speed back then, and acid too. When I was sniffing paint daily which was almost always it would take me 3 four way hits of acid to get off, so Marie and I did a lot of acid which she was mellow on, but give her some Jim Bean, and it was on!

I started staying gone more and more because I got more and more involved in my addiction, and wouldn't get around people. I finally went back to my old stomping grounds in Grand Prairie. Mom had an apartment over by Trina's.

The apartment was right in front of a pink church I use to hide in the weeds by which had the raised man hole with. It was across the street Patty, and Nessa were still friends with Trina, and Debbie, and Tammy, so this is why they got a place there.

Upon finding this out I also found that Kevin was out, and now had a 64' Chevy that smoked like crazy on one side of the duel exhaust, but it was good to see my brother again.

It had been a while since I had seen him. He had bad news though as I would soon find out. Upon finding out that Kevin was now out of the pokey I found out that he had been locked away for about 6 months. Myself had been locked in the nut house. I told him what was going on about that dude that messed us over, and he told me that because he knew that I was after him he had left town.

Kevin, knew this guys parent's pretty good, so was able to extract this info from them. That wasn't the bad news though, the bad news was that Chyhue, and Lucky had both been shot at the Laundromat by Trina's. It seems that Chyhue, and Lucky had a 19 year old dude scared, and this guy had told his dad, so one day this dude went to this Laundromat to confront them because
they had hung out there a lot. They had been sitting on a low wall that butts up to where Trina lived. When this guys son pointed them out the Dad rolled rolled down his window, and called then over, and as they came up to the car the guy pulled his pistol, and shot Chyhue right in the chest thru his heart, killing him instantly where he stood, and then he shot Lucky in the leg before they took off.

This news devestated me, for these guys weren't just my friends they were my brothers, and if there was anybody I wanted to get now it was the dude that killed Chyhue, and shot Lucky!

I asked Kevin where they were, and he said that they had went back to the reservation in Oklahoma. Chyhue, and Lucky were both sons of a tribal Chief, or elders, and Trina, Debbie, and Tammy all three went to the funeral.

He was decked out as the young warrior that he was, as he should have been. He was given full honors befitting a Chief's son, and Lucky was there all decked out, and on crutches.

I wanted to scream, I wanted to howl at the moon like a wolf, my pain was so great! I wanted to go to Oklahoma to pay my respects, but couldn't figure out exactly where they were, nor could Kevin, and we couldn't even try to depend on Kevin's crazy car that he had.

If you ran his car long enough to warm up you couldn't start it again with the starter because it had to be push started as long as it was warmed up.

Of course Chyhue, and Lucky's people weren't real happy with whites either, and Debbie, Trina and Tammy were only able to attend this funeral because of Lucky. I believed Kevin, and I wouldn't have a problem though also being part Cherokee ourselves, and close friends with them.

We couldn't keep our minds clear long enough though to devise a plan to go there. We kept up our paint sniffing on a daily basis, and did "our thinking", at the lake.

I wanted to exact retribution on this dude that shot Chyhue, and Lucky, but he was out of reach being locked up for capital murder that was pre meditated. We couldn't do anything to the 19 year old because we didn't know him, or anything about him, so we had to deal with that fact that we would never see our friends again. Of course the way that we did that was sniff more paint. That was our answer for everything.
Things get a little weird here as if living a life on the fringes of society sniffing paint wasn't weird enough. Kevin, and I kinda split, and went our separate ways although we still hung out when we ran across each other.

Kevin, and David our cousin started hanging with each other, and I again become the loner.

I at this time bounced back, and forth from staying at the lake, or at the manhole by the church across the road from where my sister's lived in their apartment. I just wanted to be close to them. Life again was just living to use, and using to live.

I lived like an animal grungy, stinking of chemicals, and only being seen like that of a phantom. I was the cur dog that everybody hates, and always throws sticks and rocks at to try to get it away from them, and so if you saw me at all you was lucky.

I couldn't figure out why life was this way I hurt, and didn't know why. I used, and didn't know why. I wanted to belong, but couldn't bring myself to get around people, or stay around them very long when I did get around them.

Sure all of this came from "my" putting a bag to my face, and all I needed to do was not use. You see this is the part that people don't understand about being an addict, you can put the stuff down, but then again you can't because you keep using, and using, for those that aren't addicted it's easy for them to sit back, and say don't use this, or that, or they say that your responsible for your actions when your brains are oozing out of your ears, and your mind is in an altered state. What a crock if that was the case there would be no addicts!

Do people think addicts want to use a needle they found in the garbage, or die with a needle still stuck in their arms. Do people think addicts like to use? That they like to live on the streets, to prostitute to buy drugs, so that they can use some more? Do people think that gals and guys like giving oral sex for a crack rock, or in my case want to stick a bag with chemical fumes that burn thru a plastic bag, and burn my lungs, and my throat, or cause my kidneys to fail, and kill millions of brain cells? No. Addicts use because they are addicted, and their own bodies override good sense with it's need to feel the high, or effects of their chosen drugs. It's insanity people
just like it says in A.A., or N.A. and that's why people use and keep using, so use I did, and I hated every minute of it because the paradox of all of this is you use then you wonder why you used?

I know that it is dumb, but there it is. That's why it's better to never use in the first place. As it was I kept using, and wanting to stop.

One day, or semi day it was getting dark, and I was sitting on top of the manhole that was about 4ft. above the ground along the banks a canal in tall weeds. Because these weeds were over 6ft. tall this manhole was on an angle of the banks, and it was perfect for sitting on, and not being seen because the weeds were still taller than me sitting on top of this manhole.

I could sit there sniff paint, and watch everything. I was always careful to come up to this manhole from the canal side of the manhole, so as to not leave visible signs of my passing thru these tall weeds, and this was why there was no trail leading to my hideyhole perch in the tall weeds.

I saw Kevin, and David go by, and then pull into the parking lot of the apartments, so I decided to go see what they were up too. I left, and found my way up to the road after stashing my paint at the bottom of the manhole base. If I didn't leave stuff where there was a big prominent landmark I would forget where I put stuff. It was bad enough coming out of the fog of a paint fume induced trip only to have to hunt around to find the paint can you swore was within arm reach, and then finding out that you must have been blacked out, and wandering around the woods, and then find it on a stump, or some other place.

I went to the parking lot, and Kevin and David were in the car sniffing paint when I walked up on them, and knocked on the window. Kevin looked at me all wild eyed, walled eyed is more like it. I say this because when you are high on this stuff sometimes it seems like your eyes look in different directions.

I told him that he needed to keep a better watch on what he was doing. I asked him if he knew where he was at? The funny thing about this is you don't ask somebody to think when they are fried. He might have known where he was initially, but the question threw him a curve ball, and he started looking around all wild, and bewildered, and ole cuz David was no help either. He was a light weight when it came to paint sniffing, and as a matter of fact not anybody I knew could hang with me and Kevin, as if this is something to brag about, but what it
does show is the depth of the addiction.

People think that you hit it get a buzz, and go on about your buisness, but with us it was like we needed the paint fumes to survive like you need a breath of air to survive, and that's how bad it was for us.

I got Kevin to set the paint down long enough to smoke a cig. This simple act itself can be deadly if you're not careful, and haven't cleared your lungs for a couple of minutes to clear the fumes, or delute them with air, for as you light the cig if you breath out the fumes they can ignite, and follow them back to the source, and as you gasp the "fire", will follow them back into your lungs basically searing the delicate tissues in there if not acting like a gas bomb, and explode leaving you to die like a fish out of water either way.

We never worried about such stuff, for finding our cigs was like finding our paint they never were where we left them, so once Kevin, and David lit up, and got a little sense back they told me that they had got a fifth of Vodka from some place, and wanted to drink it which even though I didn't drink a lot decided what the hey?

Sounded good to me, so since neither Kevin, or I liked the taste of booze we would not mess around with it and we just killed the brand new fifth at the back of his car. This took basically less than a couple of minutes for me being the oldest, and at the top of the pecking order, s: I broke the seal and downed a third or more of this Vodka straight. Kevin was next, and he did the same leaving what was left for my cuzball David.

The bottle now finished, and we smoking another cig to get the taste of booze out of our mouths were talking, and waiting on the effects of the booze to hit. Ouz David decided that he needed more, and he told us that his Mom's boyfriend Cooley had a brand new bottle he could steal. This sounded good to us also, and so we pushed Kevin's car off, and they took off to get another bottle. As a side note can you see how all of us had the same addictive nature? We all came from a family where boozing was a way of life and all of the people that was in my family that was an alcoholic, was also an alcoholic in the rest of our family.

Since this was going to take a little bit and I now killed the paint smell on my breath Mom, and the others would be proud of my drinking and not sniffing paint, so I decided to go in and see my sisterpoohs. Mom had
took to the bed even though it wasn't real late, or so I thought. It was about 10 pm. because the days were getting longer, but that didn't matter to me. Patty hooked me up with some cold chicken from a chicken place "Churches, or someplace like it", so I ate up most of the leftovers since I hadn't ate in a few days.

Patty and I were sitting on the couch when Kevin drove up. The effects weren't as bad on me since I had ate something, but I was plenty drunk.

I had seen the headlights of Kevin's car, and headed out to the parking lot where Kevin was parked. Again they had a bag stuck to their faces sniffing paint, and again I walked up to them. This time I just climbed in the back seat. This freaked them out, but they got over it. We got out of the car, and both of them were pretty drunk, and I had almost decided not to drink anymore. Of course when it came down to saying no I wasn't good at that, and again to not look whimpy I again downed a third of this bottle as did the others.

I did all of these things before I knew anything about alcohol poisoning, or would even care providing for the fact that with all the chemicals my liver, and body was processing (like a petro refinery) a little alcohol seemed like childs play to us.

Now this second bottle kicked in even faster, or had the first bottle caught up to us, and had hit all three of us like a ton of bricks? It made no difference now what would be, would be, and now it was getting late, but we decided to go to the lake which wasn't far from us and we would sniff paint there.

Well Kevin, and David were falling down drunk, so since I could still walk somewhat I told Kevin that he was too drunk to drive. Now that was like me calling the the kettle black, for I was super drunk myself, but of course since I was cool and considered myself less drunk than my cohorts the most prudent thing for me to do was be the designated driver. Well we know that common sense is like deodorant. The people that needed it the most never use it, and this was my case of brain farts going on at this time.

The task now though was starting this stupid car, I swear this is one of those cars the courts would be proud to own because it hates drunk drivers. As a matter of fact it hated everybody! The car was a standard which wasn't a problem with me, so I tried to start it in the parking lot by pushing the
clutch and trying to start it in reverse. Not enough room though, so Kevin, and David kept trying to push the car out of the parking lot now.

It took about an hour to get it out of the parking lot, for it seemed like David, and Kevin would forget to move their feet after the car rolled, and they would both fall when the car moved out from under their hands. It sure was a good thing I had decided to drive that was for sure! I couldn't stop from laughing because this had happened so much. I figured the road was now the place to start the car since it was a long hill outside the parking lot.

Once we finally got the car out of the parking lot and on this very quiet road, and pointed in the right direction I might add, we would only have one shot to start it, so I put it in 2nd, this time, because I wanted the motor to spin faster to start it better, and I yelled for Kevin, and David to start pushing after they had got their breaths, and the car started to roll, I popped the clutch, and started the car Yay! Now the trick was to keep this smoking monster running till everybody climbed in, so I kept the motor reved a little, and slammed on the brakes then opened the door.

I leaned out of the door almost falling out of the car so I held on to the steering wheel, and I yelled at these two knuckleheads to get in the car before we fogged up the entire neighborhood with this smoking car.

When I looked to the back of the car I saw Kevin, and he was laying down by the back wheel, and I told him to get up, and get in the car, but you see he couldn't because the rear wheel was sitting on top of his elbow, and arm, and he was yelling for me to get the "F-ing Car off of his arm!!" Now I'm not equipped to deal with idiots, so I had, had enough of this so I put the car in reverse instead of just letting off of the brake and rolling off. I let off of the clutch and spun the tires because I forgot that I had the motor reved up just a little bit. Well my spinning the tire on his arm didn't make Kevin any happier for sure! Believe it or not he still wanted to go to the lake and sniff paint, but now since I had ran over my brother, and it had taken us almost an hour or so just to get this car out of the parking lot and onto the road I decided that we were just too drunk to drive anywhere, so I brought the car right back to the spot that we had taken it out of and parked it back there.

Oh yeah this is so stinking funny now, because we are both laughing at
Kevin who is so stupid mad, and drunk that we couldn't help but laugh. Did I ever say that compassion doesn't run real high in our family especially when we are all drunk, or high. We get Kevin into the kitchen of the studio apartment, and Kevin ends up sitting on the floor in the kitchen, by the table smacking his fist into the floor saying, "nobody loved him!", I don't know how he got on that kick, but this just made me and David laugh more!

Kevin, did a back swing with his ran over, and tire spun out on army, and knocked the table leg off the table making the leg hit the wall and putting a hole in it, the table which was full of dirty dishes from supper of fried chicken the girls, and Mom had, had. Neless to say my families lazy and they say never do today what you can do tomorrow, or the day after or whatever you run out of dishes to eat on.

Once the leg knocked the hole in the wall the table fell over with all these dirty dishes and chicken bones and ketsup etc... that then fell right on top of Kevin with a loud crash!

Of course even my hard sleeping family woke up with all of this noise and now my hard sleeping family and Mom, and the girls came down the stairs wanting to know what was going on, and David, and I was just sitting on the couch laughing.

Kevin, not really sure about what had happened was trying to get untangled from all the mess that nobody had cleaned up before going to bed. The girls were now laughing as they tried to help Kevin get out from under this mess, and Mom was mad saying that now she was going to have to pay for the table, and hole in the wall. She thought that we were high on drugs, but I told her that all we had was a couple of bottles of Vodka which seemed to nullify her anger, so I guess it was ok to be drunk, but not a doper!

As you can tell David and I wasn't helping Kevin any, we were leaving it to the girls, for we still had to laugh at everything. Kevin was getting the chicken bones off of him and it had been long enough for him to wonder what was going on with his arm, because he had forgot all about it until now, so when he finally got a good look at it we could see where I had rubber burnt his arm by spinning the tire on it some. It even sported the slight impressions of the tire treads. If you fold your arm into your chest, and look at the meaty part on top of the arm at the elbow that's where the tire had sat on my brother's arm.

Since his arm had been flat on the ground, that's all that had happened
for it hadn't broke his arm or anything except skin it up some.

Now the tire burn was pretty bad but it was nothing like the burn I had gotten from a motorcycle wreck we had where I was stuck on top of my bike with my leg on top of the tail pipe that was sizzling hot, and as Kevin helped pick up the bike with me still on it my leg was burnt all the way down to my ankle starting just below the knee on the side and back of the leg. We were a tough bunch he would survive, and as soon as we could get to the lake and get some paint in us he would forget about that.

We never got to the lake that night, and David and Kevin took off the next day as did I. We kinda just slept wherever we were at that night, and Kevin slept in the mess he had made, while we slept on the couch.

What would happen shortly after this I would never forget as long as I lived.
CHAPTER 4

Sometimes shortly thereafter (like a week, or two), on a Wednesday night, or late afternoon at almost dark otherwords I was sitting again on top of the manhole cover in the tall weeds by this pink church in the weeds when the sun started to go down I heard some singing in the church.

Now this wouldn't be so strange to me for this is what people do in church but what was weird about this was that I was deep into my addiction, and was really deep into my what I call blank out period. This is where I'm so out of it that I'm in a trance like state of being.

I lost hours this way. I would go into this mode at 6pm, and come out of this trance like state and now it will be 11pm, of course I'd spray back up, and off I'd go again.

Well I knew that I was in this state of being, and in this period you know nothing, and snakes can crawl on you, and you not know it, or bugs can bite you over and over, and you not feel it, so my hearing this singing in itself was a wonder. The weird thing about this though was the fact that the singing kinda faded into my consciousness, and although I was immoblie as though frozen in time the words of these christian songs came thru this fog of mine with a clarity I couldn't explain.

Then something weird started to happen, and I felt my heart strings being pulled, I felt God's presence as clear as day, and I felt the pull and call of the alter. I wanted what these people in that church had. I wanted God/Jesus to love me like He loved those sitting in those pews.

My life played out in my mind. I had been passed around as a kid, been in unstable homes, relationships, and had been falsely accused had been then sent off to war, shot at, ran over, and I was hopelessly addicted to sniffing paint, and sitting there on that four foot high manhole in the night, in the tall weeds with the wind gently rustling, and whispering in my ears. I wanted to belong, I wanted to have a life like everybody else, I wanted the pain to stop.

I could feel the coolness of the wind drying my tears that were on my
face. I reached up, and touched the tears to be sure that's what it was, and yep that's what it was. I was crying, and my heart was breaking. I wanted Jesus in my heart, but wasn't sure about what was happening, I felt or heard "come to me", being said in my mind. I continued to hear the singing in the church, and felt the pull of Christ just as clear as day.

My mind then cleared, and this is what amazed me, for everything was as clear as day. I knew that something was in the works, and I wanted the change in my life. I was tired of living a zombie like existence, and I knew my salvation lay inside that church.

I slowly got down, and started to walk out of the weeds toward the church. I felt like I was in a dream watching myself, and I felt and not saw Jesus standing there crying along with me, I felt His tears mixed with mine. I watched all this from outside my body, or felt like I was outside it. I saw myself walk towards this church. I wanted this, and knew that this was a life changing moment. I got to the church, and went inside where people of course some of them anyway turned to see who had came in.

I being now self conscious about the way I looked, and probably smelled I slipped into the back pew, and started to look for someone I might talk to. I don't know what type of church this was, but all I knew was that I wanted Jesus, and that Jesus wanted me.

I wasn't sure of what I needed to do, or who I needed to see, I wasn't making a scene, but people kept looking back at me now and again to see if I had moved I guess? I saw a man coming towards me, and as he got to me I was uncertain as to what to do, so thinking he was there to welcome me I stuck my hand out to shake his, but he instead not roughly, but not gentle firmly is the word, held my upper arm, and led me out of the church claiming that I was scaring the women in the church with my presence. I said that I wanted to talk to a preacher, or somebody, and he stated that nobody wanted to talk to me.

My heart was crushed, and I told him that I hadn't done anything to anybody, but he just went back inside, and closed the doors. Totally hurt I went back to my manhole not understanding how God could call me, and man turn me away. I was so pissed off now at these people in this church. The singing continued, and I sat there in the dark, and cried. I'm not ashamed of it, for it hurt being rejected again by a church. My family had been sent away.
from the Catholic church when I was younger although I never understood it, but this was different. I was seeking Christ!

I know this is what I was doing, how dare they turn me away! I sat there thinking that God had played a mean joke on me, and I sprayed up a big ole shot of paint, and tried to forget. I still felt Christ was standing there watching with tears running down His face, but I was a lost soul, and I sat there knowing that I would never have the life I should have because of this addiction. I sat there and I listened to the singing, and felt my heart breaking.

When the service was over these same people had a pot luck dinner in the lower part of the church, and they had opened the doors almost level with me since I was on the incline of the banks of the canal which is why this manhole was a good place to sniff paint since it was level.

I watched the people laugh, and joke about things, and eat at some long tables inside. I knew that they couldn't see me and I was only about 20ft. from them watching everything they were doing, and could hear them talking about the freak that came into their church. What was funny was the fact that their grass was cut up to about 5 ft. from the edge of the weeds where I sat on top of this manhole cover. I was about 10ft. deeper in the weeds.

I knew the laughter, it was the laughter of mocking, and again I knew that they were laughing at me thinking that I would be accepted into "their" church like a normal person, and that just ticked me off even more. I wondered why God would let such hateful people be part of His flock?

Well I knew one thing for sure, and that was I was rejected by God's people, and I had a few choice words for all of them, and I think I even made up a few new ones just for them as the demons took back over in my life, and the paint took me back into my trance like state. Sometime in the middle of the night after all was quiet I saw a very bright light hit me in my eyes, and my body went into automatic protection mode, for the light snapped me out of my trance. I knew how eyes reflected in the dark if hit directly by a bright light thus knew I had been spotted. It was a cop car that had seen me in the weeds, and was in the parking lot of the church.

I slid down the side of the manhole, and lay around the base of it like I was part of it. Since this manhole was about 4 foot below the 8ft. tall weeds on a downward sloping ground the cops had no idea where to look for
me. there were two cars now, and I heard a cop say that they had spotted me, and to just come out that they just wanted to talk to me. This was a lie and I knew it, because I could see where they kept shining their lights and they were no where close to me. This downward slope took me out of the line of sight for they kept looking like the ground was level.

They wouldn’t enter the weeds since they were so tall, and they weren’t sure about what they had seen because I was there, and then I wasn’t. They kept getting quiet to see if there was any noise, or looking for any type of movement, but there was none. They only heard the wind, and the movement of the weeds by the wind, and the frogs and crickets. They saw and heard absolutely nothing yet I was only a few feet away from them. I knew that if I tried to move anywhere that the frogs and crickets would get quiet as I got close to them, so I was safest where I was, and because I had been a hunter, and could even sneak up on deer and other game I knew that they would never hear me.

They finally decided that their buddy that had seen this figure in the weeds must have been smoking some of their evidence bags of throw down weed so they got in their cars laughing and left. I climbed back on my pedestal, and sprayed up again, and looked around. Now my brother Kevin, and Patty had seen the cops across the street. They were standing in the open doorway, and after Kevin saw the cops leave he gave me the all clear, and motioned for me to run across the street. Since Kevin and I both used this spot now to sniff paint he knew that it could only be me they were after since they were looking in that place and my basic direction.

I gave up sniffing paint for the night, and ran across the street as Kevin, Patty, and David laughed at the cops trying to find me. They knew it was me that they were looking for so that was one for my team, and none for them that night.

Of course they had a way of making up the score off, and on, so I didn’t feel any remorse about getting by on them. I was sad through from what had happened at that church though, and in retrospect it would take me over 20 years to come to God after that. I also never went back to that spot to sniff paint nor did I ever go back to that church.

I went to talk to a friend into helping me get into an efficiency apartment for $25.00 a week and it was small, but it was ok. I got a job at an all
night IHOP and ended up buying a pink and white 59' OLDS for $75.00 out of a dude's yard. I paid him $25.00 and drove off with the car. I would pay him out on the car at $25.00 a week. You could do those things back then, and maybe you still can, but since I was staying in the apartments across the street he knew where the car was, and since I worked all night he could see it during the day.

I really don't think that this guy was too worried about it. I got it out of his yard which was the main thing that he wanted. I had actually made out like a bandit on this behemoth of a car. It weighed almost as much as a Sherman Tank, and was all car as long as you could get past the pink & white paint job, and there was no rubber bumpers it was all steel.

The car was in good shape just old, and had set up now, and again, so I was able to get around again, and this was a good thing and since I was working again at a restaurant I could eat decently. I was ok with working there. I was now out of the rain, I had a job, and a way to get around things were looking up. I would go back to where Milton and Mom had last lived in Cedar Hill at a trailer park. I had met a gal named Dianne. She and her sister were full blooded Cherokee like Chyhue, and Lucky, and a very sweet gal that lived with her sister, and brother in law that was a welder. Plus there was a good paint sniffing spot close by that I liked where I could get this big car in. You might not think that you could hide a huge pink & white car, car, but you would be wrong that was something I could very well do.

Dianne, and I never officially became girlfriend and boyfriend in the sense where we proclaimed our undying love to each other, but I should have for even to this day I think about her. We accepted each other as we were which wasn't hard for me for there certainly wasn't anything wrong with either her or her sister.

Yes we were friends with benefits also why this gal accepted me the way that she did I don't know, but that was Dianne, and you knew where you stood with her. Anyway I did like her, and her family, so I would go see her. I did learn a little Cherokee from her "Nu-La-Di-Neses- Al-Stal-Dagus", which means "Get up and lets go to the store", which is what she said it meant, and since I didn't speak Cherokee I figured Ok she said it a lot, and she loved to ride to the store and loved Ice Cold Dr. Peppers, and I had no problem treating her to whatever she wanted.

-55-
We went to Midland Tx. one time with my step brother Vernon who also liked her although she didn't like him. He thought that if he could get her alone in a town alone and where she didn't know anybody that she would cling to him. "Wrong!" She would only go if I went, so since I had never been there, and since he was paying for everything we took off.

To make a long story short Vernon wrecked his car after we got to Midland, before we even hooked up with his uncle. We were stranded there because he totaled his car, and after a couple of weeks he and his Uncle decided that I was too much to feed. He, and Vernon would go to work each day, and I felt he owed me, and Dianne and wasn't there to please them, so I went off amongst the tumble weeds and rattlesnakes, and horney toads and would do what I did best, I would sniff paint.

I brought Dianne a horney toad one day which she thought was the coolest thing. They had her baby sitting Vernon's uncle's kids, so they decided that I needed to go, and Vernon would buy me a ticket back to Ft. Worth. Of course it was ok for Dianne to stay, so not to worry Vernon would get her back to Ft. Worth when he bought a new car "Wrong!"

Vernon was wrong a lot back in those days when it came to Dianne. One look into Dianne's eyes spoke a thousand words, and it said for one "don't leave me here." I told Vernon and his Uncle that if he was gonna buy me a ticket then he could buy one for Dianne too.

I saw her eyes light up. They assured her that it was ok for her to stay as long as she wanted, so I asked her out right if she wanted to go back with me? She said yes. I then told Vernon that thru his dumb driving that he had stranded us both, and he needed to buy both our tickets. He said that he couldn't afford it, and I told Dianne to pack her clothes and that I would get her home and we would strike out in the morning walking and I would get us back just to trust in me.

It was needless to say that she had made up her mind to leave with me no matter how we had to go. Vernon bought both of our tickets, and truthfully that was the last time I think that either of us ever saw ole Vernon for I think that he had decided to just live up there after that. He liked his uncle and living out in the middle of nowhere. His uncle worked for an oil field drilling company called Slumberjay, or something like that, so I said all of that just to say that Dianne and I were pretty close whether she wore
my ring, or not.

I was able to go see her, and go to the store with her now, and lets not
forget the Dr. Peppers, for this was all about getting out of the house,
and I found out one time when I went there, so I would just go there to hang
out with her.

After about a month at this IHOP one night when it was slow it was my
job to mop and clean the back area since I was the night dish washer, To
do this I was told to boil 5 gallons of water with a half a gallon of bleach
to throw on the floors (tile floors), to cut the oil and grease from the
cookers etc... I had all the mats picked up, and started doing this by getting
these boiling buckets off the grill and slinging it across the floor. I was
going on 3 buckets of steaming hot water down for when I put the first one
down it fogged up the place.

Once this already slick floor got the first bucket down it was really
bad it was slicker than deer gut on a door knob to be sure. The next bucket
that I got off of the stove was harder to handle, and as I took it down and
got to throw it on the floor I slipped, and fell into the upright bucket
that landed straight up, and down and splashed me in the face as my falling
I stuck my hand out to catch myself, and went into the upright bucket to
the bottom of the bucket that still had water up past my elbow.

Well it didn't take me long to slip, and slide my way out of this very
hot water! As a matter of fact if there's anything that will make you move
a 5 gal. bucket of boiling water is right up there at the top of my list
as a good motivator to do so!

Needless to say I was hurting. I took off my wide leather watch band that
had 3 metal buckles for it instantly blistered my wrist. Well my whole arm,
and side of my face was blistered, I went straight to the walk in cooler,
and got a hand full of whipped butter, and slathered my whole arm with it.

Now let me give you a word of wisdom here. "Don't Do That!", It just keeps
your burn a cooking, for it helps hold in the heat! I learned that the hard
way, and what I should have done was run cold water over my arm not baste
it like a turkey leg.Anyway the night manager was a prick, and even though
he tried to act like he cared in front of the waitresses he had everybody
mad at him when he made me finish mopping the floors, and then go out front
and clean up and mop up a spill that a waitress had made, and when I was
done he took me to a back booth and fired me because he said that I had tried
poison some of his friends that had came up there, and mooched a free meal from him.

He knew that the crew was watching him, so he offered to have me get medical attention if I thought that I needed it? I told him that I would call him to let him know just what I intended to do, and that he could pucker up, and kiss a certain part of my anatomy...more than once if he liked.

This pissed him off, but ask me if I cared? I asked one of the gals that was getting off if she would help me point my car in the right direction? Everything on this old car was power, power brakes, automatic tranny, but the steering was regluar, and since I was strickly trying to hold my arm still, and my hand too was blistered, and scalded I couldn't fight the wheel to get my car unparked.

She got my car started, and pulled out of it's space, and I told her that I could get it from there. She said she would drive me home, but I told her I wouldn't have a way to come get my car plus I had a lawyer that I wanted to talk too. She gave me a hug, and told me that she hated the dude that fired me, and would sign a statement on him if need be because he was wrong for firing me. She got in her car, and left, and I sprayed up a big bag of paint before I put the car in gear.

I could only loosely hold the bag, and it wasn't going to be possible to drive that way, so I closed the bag off lit a cig, and drove the couple of miles actually about four miles to my apartment that was on the county, and city limits of both Arlington, and Grand Prairie. It was called the strip because of a strip of bars and strip clubs was at.

The seedy little apartments that I lived at housed some of these gals that worked over at the strip. I was a recluse, and gone a lot. I had only talked to a couple of the gals. I got home, and sat in the parking lot sniffing paint trying to dull the stinging, and throbbing of my arm. God it hurt!

I decided that now I wouldn't be able to keep my apartment, nor be able to take care of my needs too since my arm was going from bad to worse, and the blisters on some of my arm had popped, and my arm hurt so bad that it would bring tears to my eyes at the slightest movement. That's why I sat in the car till daylight. I just couldn't bring myself to move until I could grit my teeth thru the pain.

The paint helped, and I got to the apartment, and went in. I spent more
time putting what little I had together, the rent would be due the next day, and I knew that I would need what money I had. I figured I could stay in this car, but I knew I would need help, and medical attention, so I went to a friends house in Kennedale. These people had an old woman named Sugar, she had a house full of boys mostly grown. Jackie McDonald was close to my age, but younger, and was all excited that I came to him for help. He was the one that I was staying with when Dianne, and I went to Midland. Jackie always wanted to run with me and my brother but we just barely tolerated him.

Sugar, had no problem with letting me hang out there. She had bought Milton's old house in Kennedale when we moved to Arlington, so I knew the place, and Sugar treated everybody like her kids.

I tried to give her money for my staying there, but with all her boys working she refused it. She did have me call the lawyer I had before I went in the Army, and he was glad to help, and made a few phone calls in my behalf.

He manager that fired me called Sugar's, and had set me up to go to the hospital, and they pay for all the expenses, that he paid himself. He was plenty worried about the lawyer, and was really being helpful, and even offered me my job back. I told him simply that I would talk to my lawyer about it to make him squirm even more now that I knew he was worried.

I told him that I was going to the hospital, and if I had "ANY", trouble he would know about it! I did go to the hospital, and was seen without any trouble. The debridement wasn't particuary fun where they removed the dead skin to allow healing of the fresh skin. There were three areas of concern that were already infected, and after the exfoliation of my entire arm the doc put medicine on my arm and wrapped my arm with gauze.

It stank worse than my paint. I thanked him, and he told me what to do to keep the treatments up of the burns, but I wasn't listening I was ready to sniff paint till all the fresh pains the doctor had brought on would subside.

This took a couple of days worth of gourd melting paint sniffing, and I guess that I went thru ten cans of paint those next couple of days. I guess that is because no where on a can of paint does it say that it was good for pain relief, or self medicating.

I decided to go see Dianne, and see how she was doing, and she came out to the car when she saw me drive up thru the living room windows. She came out all smiles her dark complexion, and coal black shiny long hair just made
her smile that much brighter. I was sitting in the car when she got in, and
gave me a peck of a kiss, and instantly knew something was wrong although
I had a loose fitting shirt on, and a light jacket on, you could smell the
putrid smell of my burned arm.

I had pretty much gotten thru the stinging pain these last few days,
but hadn't changed the gauze on the infected portions of my arm which were
really now seriously infected. I made no issue of it as long as I didn't
see it, and when your sniffling that much paint you tend to lose touch with
reality as well as taking care of your self.

I didn't know why Dianne was making a fuss, for my arm wasn't hurting
too bad, so if it was left alone maybe it would be ok?

She kept wanting to look at it, and remembering the yucky way it looked
in the doctor's office I told her it was ok. I also told her that I didn't
have gauze to put back on it if we unwrapped it. I thought that I had her
there.

She still wanted to look at it though, so I just took off my coat, and
she liked to have tore off my shirt! My left arm was the arm hurt, and next
to the door, so she got my hand, and pulled me till I got away from the
door, she then gently stretched out my arm, and looked at it even smelled
the gauze, and tried to peak under the edges of the bandages.

She then wrinkled up her nose, and told me "Nu-La-Dinese-Al-Stol-Degus"
"NOW!" I just looked at her, and saw that she wasn't in a mood to argue,
so we went off to the store that was close by. I had replaced my shirt, and
we went in, and loaded up on first aid junk.

I knew what was coming, so just went along with it. These damn Chrokeses
got get pretty onerous once they are riled up, so I let her shop. I got us
a couple of Dr. Peppers and off we went back to her house.

We went in the house, and she had me sit at the table, and now her and
her sister spoke in Cherokee together of which I had no idea what was being
said. Her Bro-In-Law, came up smiling, and said I was in deep crapola when
I got both of these gals to speaking Cherokee.

Now they ganged up on me and got me out of my shirt again, and Dianne
started unwrapping my arm. Talk about gag a maggots! This was gross! I won't
go into the lurid description but I will say things were greenish and yucky!

These girls were in rapid fire Cherokee now, and there was no trying
figure out what was being said. Warm water was brought, and they both basically
did what the doctor had done except with a lot more compassion, and a lot
more easier on the pain scale.

When my arm was rosy, and pink, and clean they got the ole Aloe plant,
and used this as the only medicine, and rewrapped my arm. Her sister made
some kind of concoction up that was boiled, and was gave to me to drink.

It tasted like dirt, and roots of some kind, but I drank it. Happy with
their old fashioned first aid Dianne, and Satora which means (white cloud),
told me that my arm was rotting with bad spirits, and I believed them after
I saw what I saw after they unwrapped it. Dianne talked more indian talk
to Satora, and smiled, and shook her head yes. They had decided that I would
stay there to be looked after; or so Dianne could look after my arm. Since
I kept what few clothes I had in the car that was ok. I think that Dianne
just wanted me for my body.... I could be wrong though because I have been
wrong before, but it was a convienent excuse, and it worked out for the both
of us, and I did need some help, so why argue huh?

I was getting sleepy, and Dianne told me it was the stuff her sister
had gave me which was like a natural pain killer/infection fighter and home
made tonic. I will say this though because of my high tolerance to drugs this
stuff must have been super strong to have had the effect that it had on
me.

I went to Dianne's room to take a nap on her bed that basically was
a mattress on the floor which is the way she liked it not to say they didn't
have a bed for her they had a nice place she just liked sleeping on the
floor. It was ok that worked out pretty good at times when big wampum was
in the cards, but today was a day of healing my arm although gently cared
for it was still raw, and sore now after they skinned me, as well as infected
in three places where the burns were the worse.

After a couple hours of napping Dianne woke me up to tell me that supper
was ready, and they wanted me to eat. I wasn't really hungry, for I wanted
to go sniff pain. The simple tonic Satora had made me eariler had triggered
the demons that ruled my life, and I wanted to leave.

Decorum took over, and I suffered past the urges and actually enjoyed
my meal with Dianne and her family. Dianne again was the quiet type shy mainly
until you got to know her, and when she was with her sister/family, and it
was funny as hell when we all would be talking and laughing and they would
naturally fall into speaking Chrokee, and not realize it, and with me and Satora's husband this would leave us out of the conversation we had going. Of course Satora's husband understood more that I did but he would be lost anyway.

Their boy about 5 years old followed the talk without missing a beat. John, and me just stared at each other. It probably would have been easier to deal with had we all not been going outside before we ate, and partook of the natural herbs Indian's as well as myself likes so much, so this became a funny thing, and when we were all talking about the same thing. I told them if "Nu-La-Dineses-Al-Stosl-Degis" wasn't being said to me that I totally didn't understand anything else in Injun talk! Then Dianne would spout off something and everybody would laugh and then she would talk the only Injun talk I knew and then we would go to the store. The store was only a half a mile away which wasn't far to go far a Dr. Pepper, and some munchies. We had a lot of fun together, and enjoyed each other greatly.

Things really could have developed had I not been so caught up in my addiction. She even accepted me as did her family without question, and I tried to act like a human around them, but my addiction just kept pulling me away.

I think of my addiction as an evil being with its own life, and either I, or "it", will try to sabotage relationships, or jobs, or whatever if the addiction is threatened, or feels threatened. I say this because even on the first night I stayed at Satora's and John's place I started looking for a way to get away. I at first wanted to go to the 59' Olds to sniff paint that night, so my place of sleep was the living room, and this is because I wanted to show them respect. It wasn't because I couldn't sleep in Dianne's room and they both knew that big wampum was still going on in their house it was because I still wanted to respect their house.

Of course Dianne and I had all the privacy we needed, and there was the tank of a car that I had, with a huge back seat!

The first night that I slipped out of the door, and deciding against sitting in my car sniffing paint till daylight where John going to work would run across me I walked the short distance to the woods, and found me, and Kevin's spot that we use to use. I sat against the tree I used as a back rest, and wondered just what was wrong with me, and I had a pity party as
I sprayed up my fix before long I was transcending time. I as always lost
that time, and although I was still sitting in my spot my can of paint was
sitting on top of a log some distance away which was always a weird feeling
because I knew for a fact I hadn't moved my aching legs sitting in a lotus
position almost always told me that I had been in that position for hours.

I thought that most of the time that something supernatural had happened,
or that gremlins had their greedy hands in this, and this was way before
the movie "The Gremlins".

This is a good example of how my addiction had it's own life, for actually
while in my transcended state the addiction demon knew that I would use the
entire can of paint up if it was within reach, so acting subconsciencely
my addicted body made a type of withdrawal which may have not been as bad
as heroin , but it was still just as intense to me, and I'd do anything to
not feel those fellings, so coming into my own mind I needed a fix, just
a taste to get me going. After finding out I had about a third of a can,
or about an hour and a half, or less of using time I needed to go back to
Grand Prairie, and hook about three cans to be sure I had enough to hold
me a day or so. Usually that would hold me about a day, but since I was staying
with Dianne I tried to curb my using, so I could stretch out my usage.

My arm was hurting, but it already felt better, so when I came wandering
in Satora, and Dianne were sitting at the table talking Cherokee. I knew
that they knew that I hadn't been in during the night because Dianne came
later to check up on me, and I hadn’t been there. She knew that I was somewhere
close though because she knew that my car was in front of her house. She
also knew that I wandered, and she like others that knew me knew that I could
move like a wraith, but she said that she had felt it when I had left the
house. She also knew that I was a paint sniffing fiend, and that I was probably
in my favorite spot since she too knew where it was although she wasn't a
paint sniffer.

Dianne, and I, did lots of things in lots of places lets say,so when
I came back in John had left for work, and I was ready to get going, but
these two gals had other plans. I was like an onery puppy, and wanted to
go. Well that fell on death ears, and they made sure that I was fed, and
then they wanted to treat my arm which I let them do. I told them that I
was going to G.P., and Dianne being slick wanted to go with me, and she knew

-63-
that I wouldn't tell her no, but she also knew that with her along that I
would have to come back, so my addiction: on hold which is probably a good
thing because Dianne also knew that I wouldn't use paint around her. We decided
to go shopping. Satora figured that this would save her from getting John
to take her later, so she gave me a few bucks for gas, and a shopping list,
so we were off.

I make a habit of wearing my Army Field Jacket a lot as most Vet.s at
the time did, and it was kinda cool. I was again off on the hunt for paint. I
just told Dianne to hang tight for the first couple of stops I made was for
my addiction because it has to be fed, or know that it was taken care of,
so the first couple of stops we went to were paint stops, and we stopped
to see Andy, and Jill at the Exxon I had worked at, and got a good deal on
gas as always.

Andy couldn't believe the car that I had gotten for $75,00, and had to
look it over. Upon leaving there we did the grocery shopping all in the same
Safeway that I stole paint at all the time. Shocking huh? Of course I still
got some ham actually party ham about 10 lbs pre cooked, and a couple lbs.
of cheese to add to the food. This hidden within my cost was taken to the
checkout as we purchased our food, and I passed right thru the checkout with
these stolen things without their knowing it. This had to be an extra $20,00
worth of food. We then went to another store where I went in by myself, and
ten more pounds worth of tenderized round steak which were in wrapped plastic
and styrofoam packages was easy to conceal about 3 lbs worth per pack at 3
packages in and out of the store just like a paint run.

Now take note here I am not bragging about being a thief what I am saying
is this was a way of life for me living on the streets, and I didn't feel
bad about surviving, nor did I think it was wrong because I only stole out
of a necessitous need. I'm not proud of it, but I did.

We stopped at Long John Silvers, and picked up lunch for all of us, and
went back to Dianne's and we had a good lunch. I went down a couple of trailers
and talked to Jay-Jay Zeezal. He and his dad did tape and bedding drywall
work, and Jay-Jay was my age, and he had his own work that he did, so in
a few days I could pick up $200,00-$300,00 without a lot of effort on my
part, or hassles. Jay-Jay, would pay me in cash at the end of the day which
usually was about $75,00 more or less, and if we did more than one house
then I got paid more for that day too. Lot's of what I made depended on what needed to be done, and all jobs were two day jobs because this allowed you to re-spot nails, and other stuff that the mud had shrunk on the night before as it had dried. The reason Jay-Jay paid me also each day was because I never committed to more than that, so if I wanted to work I would show up at a pre-set time, and go with him in his truck, and if I wasn't there he would leave no problem.

Truth be known I could only stand Jay-Jay for a few days at a time even though I liked him up to an extent, so when I came back from Jay-Jay's we had burnt a "J", I came to see what these gals were up too. They were laughing and talking Cherokee, and maybe I was just high but it was starting to sound like words that they were talking, and funnier than that I was thinking that I could understand them some.

I told them that I was going to be going with Jay-Jay the next day, and they figured that was cool. I figured that I would come up with some money to help pay for my stay although they had never told me that they needed me to do so. These gals liked to talk Cherokee, and I was never sure of what they were saying, but gals are gals, and once in a while I'd catch them looking at me like I was a beef cake, and I had the feeling that they weren't talking about totem poles, more like wampum sticks, but that's ok though I always had a way to get even with Dianne.

John and I liked to talk "Big Latin", which drove these gals crazy, and has us laughing till we hurt. It was always the guys against the gals around this place and a lot of fun.

Oh! you thought I was talking of other ways to get even with Dianne??? Keep guessing.

My working with Jay-Jay, only lasted a short while as I was still able to stay at Sugar's (our old place in Kennedale), I would go by there when I needed to work on my car, Even though it was a good car it was still a 59' and had been sat up now, and again, and needed an inspection sticker and I even thought about getting a drivers license now. The key word was "thought of", I never wanted to stop sniffing paint long enough to do this plus I didn't want a cop in my car for even the shortest period of time it took to do the test.

While going back to Kennedale about two blocks from the house within
sight of it actually I got caught up in a speed trap, and was stopped by Carl Haverson's deputy for going two miles over the speed limit. I was doing twenty seven miles an hour, and not the posted 25 mph. The reason that happened was because this was a heavy car, and I was having to give it more gas to get it up the hill I had turned on the road by.

Once the car climbed the hill it had momentum and once it crested the hill it just sped up a little and I couldn't slow it down fast enough to not get caught in this speed trap.

Well that was bad enough, but ole deputy dawg here just wanted to say that he had caught a big desperado, and started issuing me tickets. One for no license which really made me think that maybe I ought to have went and got one now. Then one for no inspection sticker. I told him that this was exactly why I was going where I was and that was to get the car ready for inspection, but he didn't care to hear that. Then he started digging under my seat and then he found my paint and old paint bags, which he gave me another ticket for driving under the influence of inhalants. One good thing about not having a driver's license now was I didn't have a drivers license to write this DUI against so it would not go against my driving record. Of course it wasn't looking good for the home team here folks. You ever get one of those gut feelings that you should have stayed back there in the woods till dark? Oh! That's right that's me, and what I should have said was stayed in bed, for you normal folk.

Well this is one of those times I should have stayed put where ever I was. The cop came back to the car after seeing if he could tear up my ride, but there was nothing he could do to hurt the tank, so he came back to call a tow truck.

I tried to explain that we were within sight of where I was going, and asked if we could just put my car there? Well that wasn't in the cards, and this dude was really full of his self. Well I was off to the hoosegow as was my car, and those gut feelings may just have something to them.
CHAPTER 5

The hoosegow good ole Mayberry RFD with Andy Griffith the sheriff, and Don Knotts literally. At the time all of this went down the city of Kennedale only had a two cell jail with a small court room. Carl’s office, and the reception desk that had a little gal I knew from Kennedale Jr. High Suzy, and I got along good in school even though we had never been an item as always I had gravitated towards the toughs in school, and there at Kennedale there was a couple there too, so she knew me, and as I was booked in jail which took no time at all I was put in the first cell and they had nobody else there. I spent the day there, and since there was only one deputy, and Carl was off doing sheriffing it was pretty quiet in there.

There was no jailer that I remember, but there was a night deputy that ran the roads at night, and another gal that ran the desk at night.

Carl had been gone the day before when I was put in jail, so around lunch time I was eating a sandwich they had brought when Carl a white haired, and just as nice of a person you could meet walked to the front of my cell, and said "say Tim whatcha doing?" I told him his deputy dawg had corraled me yesterday for untold charges. He laughed, and I told him this ain't funny, and went into how I stayed at Sugar's, and was within sight of the house etc...., and that he could have let me take my car to the house. He said that he would look into it and see what was going on.

Now you need to know ole Carl was a favorite of the town, he had been sheriff for over 20 years in this hole in the wall town, and he watched the kids grow up there, and everyday he was acting like a crossguard helping kids get across the main street from the Buddies supermarket, and a Laundromat that had a parking lot out front that we liked to hang out at since Kennedale Jr. Hi., and Elem. schools was next to the road, and when the teachers were parked, and the school buses unloaded there was no room to drop off kids, so mothers, and fathers dropped kids in the parking lot too, and then Carl would get them across the street safe and sound. He knew almost all the kids there by their first name as he knew mine too. He was like my grandfather, and everybody's grand dad. People liked him, the kids liked him, and so did I.
You see Carl didn't sweat the small stuff, and kids with motorcycles
could drive to school, or around town as long as they was going to school
without a license no sweat. Of course you had to obey all of the traffic
laws too, and drive like you was suppose to. After school was the same, but
for fun, for 2-2½ hours each day, and this way the kids could have a little
fun, and release some tension and hang out at a couple of the burger joints
that was in the town. This all worked well because kids respected Carl, and
appreciated that he treated them (us), with respect and like grown ups.

Kenedale is, or was a country town, with country roads mostly so this
worked out well. It was this rule that Carl used to drop my no drivers
license ticket, and since I had sat in jail all night the sniffing paint charge
like a drunk in public was also satisfied after a few hours. Back then things
were a lot different, and since ole Carl knew me personally as he did everybody
the charges were less important than me learning a lesson. This pissed off
his deputy, but knowing Carl, and his rules he went off to find a new target
to shoot at with his one bullet, or find another desperado.

Carl came back to the cell, and told me it cost too much to feed me, and
smiling opened my door, and that was that I was free. Nothing went against
my driving record for as I stated I didn't have a license.

I asked Carl about my car? He said lets go see Suzy to see where it is.
My arm was still healing, and looking a whole lot better now, and Carl had
asked about it. He was told the story of the IHOP, and he and Suzy both thought
that what had happened was wrong, so now Carl knew why I was staying at
Sugar's. I say that Carl knew us and that's because he use to have to come
out to the house a few times with the Davis' boys, and the rest of us because
we had a lot of problems with our neighbor Harvey Plunk, oh did we give that
dude the blues! He was just one of those guys you had to mess with.

Carl had to come a few times because we would have Harvey so wound up.
It always brought laughs even though it was probably wrong of us to pick
on him. I say maybe wrong I'm still not so sure about that.

Carl asked Suzy where my car was, and what it looked like, and everything
was fine until I told them it was pink, and white. Oh my God, Suzy, and Carl
both thought that I was kidding, and when they saw I wasn't they both broke
out laughing, and no matter how I tried to defend myself like saying it was
a good deal or it had belonged to a school teacher, or that the guy I bought
it from a guy that wanted it out of his yard seemed to help. I guess that it was funny, but because it was that too helped.

When Carl called the pound, or tow truck place he asked if they had a 59' Olds, that was pink and white there with 4 doors. He told him yes, and that he wanted to buy it for the cost of the towing, and storage. Carl told me what he said, and I said no it was a good car, and I needed it. He told Carl it would cost $125.00. so Carl told me that I would have to bring it up to the station if he helped me get the car out so that Suzy could see it. You might have figured out there just wasn't a whole lot going on at this time of the day in Kennedale.

We got to the towing place just down the road from the station, and Carl told me if I was looking for work that a company, or the company next door was looking for a few people. It was called Petroleum Rubber. They made small rubber parts for A/C mounts on cars, and such.

There is a reason I mention this now as you will see later, but first my car the reason that he had told me about the job was because of my telling him I couldn't afford to get the car out of the car hoosegow.

The car was parked right in front with a couple more, and it stuck out like a sore thumb. Carl said oh I got to see this, and parked behind the car, and got out then looked it over.

This car was no punk even though it was pink and white. It was big, it was chromed out with chrome everywhere, the headliner was snow white, and everything was in perfect shape. The car only had 35K actual miles. Even the rubber pads on the peddles for the brake, and gas looked new. The only thing wrong with the car was the old radio speaker had to be replaced for the sun had dry rotted it for as in old cars it was located in the top of the dash where the sun shone thru the cover grate over the speaker.

Carl asked the tow truck guy for my keys, and we opened up all the doors, trunk, hood, and Carl really liked what he saw. He couldn't fool me though he was searching my car on the cool, but I knew his deputy had got my paint, and bags, but that was easily replaced.

Carl really did like my car though, and while he was looking at the car the tow truck guy was bagging me about selling him the car. One of the big things besides the short drag strip they had in Kennedale was also a dirt track that they raced and used for demolition derby. they had, and he
wanted this car for that. It had huge bumpers, and weighed over 6,000 lbs, or close to it, and it was a tank.

Carl heard this, and saw that there was no way I was going for that, and neither was he, for there's a lot of people that appreciate old cars and Carl was one of them. He told the dude to release the car to the sheriff's office. and that was that. I got my car back no strings attached except he did want me to go see about the job as well as show Suzy the car. Yep! they were serious about me showing the car to Suzy, so I took the car to the station where Suzy could laugh at it. That was ok with me because I had my car back. and the local auto store was one block up that had my paint and Buddies had my Verde, plastic bags, and cheese, so I needed to do some shopping after leaving there, and one good thing was that now that the deputy knew that Carl liked me he would leave me alone, but now I had other plans and that was to go find paint. Oh yeah folks that's right I'm an addict, and was going to get my fix it made no differance to me that the sheriff was standing next to me, or a good looking friendly gal, I was going after the paint, and after I got me fix which I started in the parking lot of the Buddies I might go see about the job.

Once I was finished with Carl, and Suzy and they had their laughs Carl told me to tell Wayne, and Joanna my sis hey, and I was off and running.

I did just as I had planned to do, and after about 30 minutes in the parking I kinda felt like my old self, and went on to check on the job. I needed money, but I also knew what Carl was telling me on the cool. Get a job, and his deputy wouldn't mess with me, so I went to Petroleum Rubber, and did in fact get a job as a drill press operator. Now since Carl knew my car I felt it prudent to do this because as stated before Carl was easy going, but you had to respect his helping you, so he would drive by seeing me do my eight hours, and all was peachy, and I was never messed with again by him, or his deputy in that car that is.

The fact that I now had a job again was pretty cool, and when I found out that I was paid in cash on Fridays was even better because I had no Drivers License (I really needed to get one of those things), anyway most of the time I was paid by cash, or by check that is when I went to people that saw me a lot. Anyway that wasn't a problem here. I was there about a week when I was told that I needed to sandblast some parts that I was going to have
Damaged World
By: Timothy D.V. Bazrowx

to drill. these parts were just big metal rings about 8 inches across, and
they would go inside a rubber flange, and was in there, so that when this
flange was bolted up the bolts wouldn't be pulled thru.

Well that was all fine and dandy nothing hard about that, so I drilled
these parts then was taken out back and shown the sand blaster which wasn't
hard either to run. What makes this a notable mention is what I had to do
after that. I had to paint these parts with black BM paint. This allowed
the rubber to stick to the metal, so the metal had to first be cleaned with
an industrial solvent that we kept in 55 gallon drums. When I started cleaning
these parts I knew exactly what I had! The Motherlode of solvents "Toulene"was
what they used, and I was addicted to that very chemical for it was used
in my spray paints that I sniffed, and this chemical was the very fact that I
sniffed the paints that I did. I wasn't addicted to the paints I was addicted
to this stuff, and now I had access to hundreds of gallons of this stuff.
Pure raw Toulene. Well it didn't take me but a few minutes to go find me
a gallon jug and accost me a gallon stash that I took to my car trunk.

I couldn't wait to get off I was going to have me a brain melting good
time! Well now I had more incentive to show up for work, and I had no problems
staying to myself, and producing work too. I could go outside, and sand
blast hit my paint bag that I kept stashed out back, and sniff this thinner.
Since I worked with this stuff nobody cared if I smelled like it, but I wouldn't
try to talk to people, for my speech would be affected, and no matter how
well I could handle myself working my talking was messed up for a little
while after I stopped it, and then it would go back to normal.

I would work all day and then would get off, and go find a place to park,
and sniff this toulene. There are major drawbacks with using this chemical
in it's raw form without additives, and that is it evaporated faster, so
I used more, and more. It was clear which was good because it would eat thru
my plastic bags after just a little while. When doing paint the paint delutes
the caustic effects plus the mixture of paint thinner is always more than
thinner. While using this thinner it was so much worse.

The fact that I was soon going thru a gallon a night didn't help matters,
and it would do me good to eat sometimes, and sleep, so I guess that one
of the good things about this was I couldn't go outside unless I was sand-
blasting certain parts, so I couldn't stop my other work just to slip outside
My throat was bloody raw from all the toluene that I'd huff, but then that's why I smoked menthol cigs because my throat couldn't handle reg. cigs but of course I liked menthol cigs anyway so that was ok. Needless to say that it was doing a number on my other organs like my kidneys that would later come into play.

I got an apartment in Grand Prairie just so I could drive a little before work, and sniff paint on my way to work, and after work I just headed home.

I didn't eat, or sleep much, and when I felt that I needed to do this I would go by Sugar's, and work on my car, or eat with them, because I had nothing at all in my apartment except a bed and a couch.

I would go see Dianne each week, and we got along great, but now Satora, and John was gonna move, and John was going to start his own buisness, a welding shop. Dianne wanted me to move with them, and go to work with her brother-in-law. All I could think of was the fact that if I did this I would pretty much be committing to not only a relationship, but also a type of partnership with John, and since I knew that I wasn't good at staying put that would cause hard feelings, and I liked all these people.

My addiction soon saw that I had thought about it thus kicked in on why I couldn't move with them. First and foremost I couldn't weld, and I knew that I couldn't do this while I sniffed paint, but John was willing to teach me to weld.

The second excuse I had was that I would have no place to live. Of course that didn't fly either since I stayed with them a lot, and did in fact stay in Dianne's room more than not, so I did the next best thing I took the cowards way out, I slowly stayed away claiming car trouble, or work kept me away.

Dianne in her quiet way kept trying to get me to go with them, but not being the type to force the issue just settled herself into the fact that I just wouldn't commit. They moved one day, and I never saw Dianne, or her sister, and John again. I have a lot of regrets, and that truly is one of them.

My staying in Grand Prairie was ok, but I had no food at all, nor anything no sheets, no pots, no cups dishes nothing. the apartment was furnished, so no problem there. My job at the Rubber Co. was killing me. I had too much access to this thinner, and being an addict I couldn't not use. I was always on the verge of overdosing. I did the next best thing that I could

-72-
I quit this job one day after a payday. I then talked to a dude I knew from school named Gary, he and his Dad had a car crushing company, called Grimes Car Crushing.

The job of course was smashing cars or crushing them like the company title said. I was also paid in cash here too, at $25,00 a day and made $125,00 week total but I like most of the other jobs I did got paid at the end of the day so I had money in my pockets most of the time. This was ok, for we only worked if it didn’t rain, or was to muddy to pull semi’s in to be loaded.

One night as I was going to Sugar’s just about where Carl’s deputy had busted me my headlights picked up a wheel bouncing on up the road, and off into the ditch, and it then fell over. Sniffing paint as always it took me a few seconds for it to dawn on me that my passenger side front wheel had come off! The point was drove home when the weight of the car dug into the road with the front axle shaft that held the front tire on, and so I pulled the car as far into the side of the road as I could get. That sucked now my car was broke!

I got the tire, and locked it in the car. I guess when I had put on the brakes a while back repairing them, I either tightened the wheel bearings too tight which caused them to heat up and seize, or I got sand into the bearings of which grease I did not change, so either way my front tire was now in the back floor boards of my car.

I walked on to Sugar’s, and later borrowed their car or actually went to the store for her using her Ford, and drove by my car which was now being investigated by the night deputy of Kennedale. When I got back I guess he was satisfied with what he had saw, and he had left the car there. Usually they would have had it towed, but not this time. The fact that I didn’t stop and talk to the cop would suggest that I still drove without a driver’s license so as I talked to Gary the next day, and since they dealt with cars he had a suck-up truck that would pick the car up onto it thus getting it hauled off. I then sold him the car for $50.00 since I had no place to store the car while I fixed it. Gary and his dad collected old cars, and so my 59 became one he collected. He took me back to my apartment which was right across the street from the South Grand Prairie Police Dept. The weird thing was there was more illegal stuff going on at those apartments than they had any idea of.

Now with no way to get around except to walk this was ok with me. I al-
ways thought about when I wasn't sniffing paint, so I made sure that things were close by, so I had a supply of paint and food that I could steal. This apartment wasn't too far from where I was living on the strip between Arlington and G.P., so I knew the area.

Now I had to find a way to come up with the rent money. One thing that I did was invest in a two piece custom pool stick that I had found in a pawn shop about a half a block away from the apartments. There was a couple of pool halls close by as well as all the beer joints, and strip clubs on the strip, so I would win money when I played pool. I wasn't the best, but I was good none the less, and could piece together the rent by playing in the bars against drunks. It was a lonely life and I just hated being alone, but I had gave up my best relationships for the lover of my life which was this paint can. I couldn't get a hug from it, and it was killing me, but I loved it just the same, and there was no room in my life for anything like food or people. I hurt and didn't know why, so all I knew was that I was, and I couldn't cry for yesterday because there was no yesterday.

I drank only sparingly because I really didn't like the taste of booze. I was too lazy to do this on a regular basis because it took me away from sniffing paint, and I didn't like that. Thus I would work enough to get my rent covered.

I would now and again buy (yes I said buy), some sandwich makings, so that I could have some food in the apartment. The maint. man there told me that the owner of the apartments also owned McTavish Rentals which was an office furniture rental place. The guy, or maint. dude had a messed up hand, so needed help loading, and unloading furniture out of the truck etc. so I started working with him. This was ok but way too hard to my liking, taking some of these big conference tables upstairs at times, or unloading this stuff on a Dallas street was a lot of work mainly because I was the one having to do all the unloading and loading of this crap in the first place. As you may have figured I didn't do this work for long, and I got a job at the gas station that was right next to the apartment complex which was a lot more to my liking, and only helped the guy running this place part time and I would help the maint. guy on a part time basis some times.

I didn't need a car since the big truck the maint. man drove was parked at the apartments, or all I had to do was walk to the end of the apartments.
past these gals apartment that I partied with a lot.

There was four to five gals all living together and they were a lot of fun. The good thing about this gas station job was that I could always get my cigs, there, and I was known by the cops since they all used the gas station for their cruisers.

That was a good thing, and a bad thing since I had been locked up more than once in this very jail it kept me on my toes. I would get picked up at times for a P.I. (public intoxication) since I wasn't sniffing, and walking at the same time, so they knew me a little.

I was lucky though in the fact that they did know me, and they knew that I worked and lived across the street, and since I was only an ole paint sniffer they had no problem making me a trusty when ever they decided it was time for me to visit their jail a day and a night, I guess that they knew that at times I needed to eat a little.

One of the surprises that I had at the apartments while I lived there was that Linda Vent, and her Mom moved there too. If you remember from the other book that Linda is the one that got me started on bagging spray glue she used on foil art, so spotting her Mom's Mustang Fastback I found where they lived which was almost below my apartment just over a couple apartments on the bottom. It wasn't long before I was getting some hot meals at Linda's, and we used my apartment to sniff paint. Linda's Mom started buying gas at the "FasGas", where I worked because she didn't always have the money to pay for gas. Since I knew how to fudge the tickets when the cops got gas there was always a couple extra gallons charged off on their cruisers, and since gas was only 35¢ a gallon none was the wiser.

Folks I never said that I was a saint, and I did what I did to get by. Linda's Mom fed me whenever I showed up, so it worked out well. I am not proud of the things that I was doing back then, but then again I wasn't always thinking with the right frame of mind either. That is still no excuse, but I did a lot of things I know that I wouldn't have done had I had another life. I hope that you will remember the reason for this story and it is not a story about getting over on people it is a story of addiction and living the life of an addict and with my way of thinking I was helping people in the only way that I could and if that was sharing things that didn't belong to me then I didn't think it was wrong. These people were friends and these
companies that I did this way that I figured had a lot more money than I
did, and if these people were helping me, and I could do something to help
them in whatever way I could then so be it.

I had another friend move into the apartments which was a big ole gal
named Mary, and she would tip the scales at 350 Lbs without a doubt. She
use to live about a block from Randy Henson, and his Mom. She had got married
to a dude that I knew at one time, but I don't remember his name.

I was introduced to another paint sniffer by Linda that lived in Arlington
(yep there are more of us out there), anyway he had a nice apartment, and
he got a disability check each month, plus he got some money from his parents.

This was a good hangout, for he had an old TV, a car, and food along
with gals, and they all sniffed paint. I met this gal named Martha that I
got to liking, so I would go over to this dudes house. I bought weed that
had been laced with opium, and since all of us sniffed paint this laced up
do was just what the doctor ordered because we could all get off on it. We
didn't do a whole lot around there but sniff paint.

Now something about hard core paint sniffers is that they don't like
to be around each other since paint sniffers are basically loners it takes
a lot to get into their circles just like me I had those that I didn't mind
being around and those that I did.

This guy told me one day that he didn't want me hanging out at his place,
so that night after we were good, and tanked up I asked him to bring me to
my sisters in Kennedale.

Paint fogged brains are a mystery, for he readily agreed to this, so
we piled into his Ford L.T.D., and off we went. Well we got to Kennedale without
a problem, but once we got there we were stopped. At least I wasn't driving,
but we were both hauled in to jail, me for P.I., and he for D.W.I. among
other stuff.

That's how my luck was in those days and we had found the only cop in
Kennedale that night.

We were put into the same cell. I just wanted to go to sleep. The next
day Carl the sheriff had been told by Suzy the gal I went to school with
that I was there again, and he came to my cell, and opened the door, and
told me that he had a deal for me. The guy I was with asked me to help him
out of there, but since I was in jail because of him in the first place
I wasn't in too good a mood plus I had no idea what Carl had in mind.

When Carl took me to the small court room he sat me down at an attorney table, and sat down. I lit a cig which you could do then, and Carl told me look my car needs to have a good wash job done inside, and outside of it, and he wanted it waxed. He said you do that and I'll let you go, and if my deputy shows up tell him to switch cars with you, and take mine, and then wash his too.

I had to smile because this wouldn't take long, and I would be again off and running. Carl in this little Mayberry type jail came out with a sandwich which really tasted good since I was hungry enough to chew the ear off of a Griz Bear.

I talked to Suzy, and Carl then Carl shut the door to the two cell jail cell area, so this other dude wouldn't be so much of a nuisance, and abusive, for he was yelling, and pissed off, and wanted to talk to Carl. I did ask about him, and Carl told me that he was going to need a lawyer for the D.W.I. he had. It seems that he got quite a few of them. He would probably end up with a stiff fine before it was over with, but with Carl you wouldn't get anywhere cussing him, and Suzy. You could see the fickle finger of fate flying from his cell everytime that you looked thru the small window to the cell area coming from his cell and this didn't help matters for him either. Yep that will work just fine when the person you keep flipping off owns the keys to your jail cell.

Me? I was good as gone. Carl took me outside, and parked his car by the side of this country jail in the grass. His car was solid black thus showed up the dirt really bad, so this would be a wash job to be reckoned with. Since I had detailed cars a lot I was able to do a good job on his car. Carl really had no problem with me, and believe it, or not he left his shotgun in his car as well as his car keys, and the only thing he told me was to not open the trunk since I guess he had some gear in there.

He asked how Joanna, and Wayne was, my sis, and bro-in-law, and I told him that they were ok. They only lived about 3 country blocks away maybe ¼ mile. Carl asked about my pink and white car, and after telling him what had happened, and where it was he went into the jail leaving me with his car.

I had an old fashion garden hose, and a bucket with soapy water, and
rags, and went to washing the car up. It didn't take long, or so I thought for time flies by when your having fun. I actually enjoyed the sunlight, and had finished his car, and had dried it when his deputy rolled up.

I had this sneaky feeling that Carl had watched now and again thru the side doors wiindows, and when I was admiring my handy work he called his deputy in. Now I can't prove it, but it was funny that his deputy drove up, and parked up next to his bosses car when they in fact came up to the jail on the other side of the jail.

When his deputy drove up I explained that Carl wanted him to take his car and leave his to be washed. When he saw Carls shotgun this Barney Fife type deputy freaked out, and drew his gun on me, and had me throw my hands up. He promptly re-arrested me even though I hadn't been released yet, for I had to wash the cars first before Carl would release me.

Carl just so happened to come out of the jail while his deputy had me face down on Carl's car handcuffed, and being frisked. Now Carl's car had my nose marks all over the fresh wax job. Carl asked his deputy what he thought that he was doing? His deputy went off on this tirade about securing weapons, and having the keys to the car etc.... etc.... Carl was madder than I'd ever seen him, and told him that the word Trusty has the word trust in it for a reason, and he Carl knew what the hell he was doing, and that he had known me and my family for years, and then Carl took the handcuffs off of me while he was telling this dummy all of this.

He had me wipe off all the face smuges his deputy put on his car with my face, and had him transfer his stuff to Carl's car. When he was finished he took his keys, and went to leave, and Carl asked what he thought he was doing again? He said that he was going on patrol and that he couldn't stand it when prisoners ran the jail.

Carl told him to leave his car keys because he wanted me to pull the car around to the front of the jail, and that prisoners didn't run his jail that he did and that he had better remember that!

Carl was like your grandpaw, and he had a solid head of white hair, and he was huge like ole Marshall Dillon on GunSmoke. Maybe Carl was wrong in taking up for me in front of his deputy, but again this was a good dude, and he didn't allow either me to be abusive, or his deputies be abusive even when they had to use force to subdue. That's the way that cops use to
be in these family friendly towns, not so anymore though, and that is a
different story. Anyway needless to say this guy didn't like me too much,
and you could see it with the way his eyes shot daggers at me as he drove
off.

I finished the car without incident, but had I had a dead fish I would
have loved to leave it in under his front seat. I then took the car around,
and shut and locked the car by the front door, and walked in, and gave the
keys to Carl who was sitting talking to Suzy at the desk.

The desk was by the door. Carl told me it was lunchtime, and gave me a
lunch sack with a couple of sandwiches and an apple. He asked me if I wanted
to take my buddy in there his sandwiches who by the way was still ranting,
and cussing, all of us as well as flying the bird low and mean in there whenever he thought about it.

Some paint sniffers I think just couldn't adapt to the brain cell loss
like me, so I told Carl, and Suzy Heck No! Carl laughed, and said that he
would get his deputy to feed him as long as he was being abusive he would
just have to sit and stew.

Carl told me that I had already been processed out, and he gave me my
money, and belt. He told me to say hi to everbody and off I went.

I was already feeling my mouth watering up like good ole Pavlov's Dog
hearing the bell. Just like that when I knew that getting my paint fix was
at hand my mouth would literally water like that dog.

I had a set of bags and a can of used paint stashed in a big square drain
culvert under the train tracks a little ways from Joanna's, and that was
where I was headed. I had me a sack lunch, and I ate one of the sandwiches,
and saved the other for a lot later.

I never went by Joanna's, for I just bypassed her place and headed for
the paint. I could feel it calling to me, and like a Zombie that was in a
trance like state I then went to the culvert.

Getting there I found my paint, and judging the amount left there would
only be enough for a few hours. That was ok though the auto store by the
police station had my favorite paint as did Buddies supermarket which was
also close by.

I needed to go back to my apartment in G.P. anyway since I hadn't been
there in a few days. After a few hours there, and running out of paint I

-79-
came down enough by eating the sandwich, and smoking a few cigs. I had change my plans now, and I stopped by Joanna's.

They I found out were having some type of party maybe somebodies birthday I don't know, but everybody was plucky, and happy. I saw a bathtub full of iced down beer, there was B.B.Q., so the party time begun!

I would put off going to Grand Prairie another day. During this party I saw my little sisters, and could always tell when one of them was upset.

This time it was Patty Jean. I went to see her, and we always gave a big hug to each other when we met. Patty use to drive some of my girlfriends crazy by giving me big hugs, and sitting in my lap and stuff like that, but this time she started to cry. I took her aside, and got her to talking, and gave her a cig yep she smoked also at the age of 13 yr.s old.

Once I got her to talking I found out what the problem was. She had went and had an abortion sometime really recent, and I couldn't nail down whether she was made to have one, or just had one in secret, and it was eating at her since she was basically raised as a Catholic, and it had her in a tiff, as well as tears.

I didn't get into details she just needed someone that wouldn't judge her, and Lord knows I was in no shape to judge. She just needed to be consoled and so I held her, and let her get this stuff out of her system. I don't know who the father was, but I was pretty sure that he wasn't there.

As the day progressed Patty had dipped into the beer that filled the bathtub and she was in a lot better spirits although a little drunk. Jody, and Terry Joanna's kids my niece and nephew were scared of me, and they wouldn't come within 6 ft. of me, and would hide behind Joanna, and stare at me. It was kinda funny, and annoying all at the same time. I might have looked pretty rough with long unkempt hair, and I probably stunk from paint, and from rolling around in cuiverts, and jail cells, so I figured maybe a bath wouldn't hurt.

Well there was no bathing at Joanna's for the tub was full of brewskies. I don't know who kept filling up the tub, but with 5 Davis boys then others that were there it stayed full.

I got my fill of food, and then slipped off into the dusk without a word; the same way I showed up. I went to Buddies since the Auto Store was closed which was ok because the thing about this type of addiction is I could get this stuff at just about any store, or auto house in the land.
I walked and hitched back to Grand Prairie, and went to my apartment. To my surprise they had me locked out of my apartment. They had put this cap over the door knob that wouldn't let you put the key in. They did this when you got behind on your rent. OOPS! Maybe I too had forgot to pay my bill. Ya Think?

Well this ticked me off because I did a lot of stuff for the people that ran the place, and had worked for him too. Well I went back to the office, and told the dude there that I needed to go into my apartment, and if they wanted to get paid then I needed my pool stick with it's mother of pearl inlaid handle. I could go win the money without a doubt within a few hours.

I wasn't going to pay my rent though. I was going to walk off. Well the plan worked I was let in my apartment, and the asst. manager was with me. I got in and found that they had taken the only thing of value that I had, and that was my pool stick and it had been taken by one of these people of which claimed that they knew nothing about it. I turned to leave, and the asst. manager asked me if I was gonna take anything, and I told him if he had any room in his trunk then he could shove anything else that I had in that apartment up in it. I wasn't in a good mood needless to say. This dude told me that I was gonna lose my clothes if I didn't pay the rent. I wasn't concerned about a couple of pairs of jeans, and shirts. I travel light, and I was in travel mode now.

When we left he put this knob looking device back on so I couldn't get back in without going to the office. I thought what a dummy, I just told him to shove this place where the sun don't shine, and he thinks that I am coming back to pay the rent. I walked off, and after this dude went to the office I circled around and went to Linda's apartment as you know she was the one that got me started on bagging. She was still a friend though.

I popped in and asked her to run me back to Arlington, and see if my ole Mom, and her boyfriend some half gay dude she was now staying with would let me crash there for a day, or two? I explained what the deal was as we drove to Arlington, and she wanted me to come back and stay with her, and her Mom. They both liked me, and there might have been more there than met the eye, but my mind wasn't working in that way it was in tunnel vision mode, and for some reason I felt that my path led to Arlington Tx.

Well we went to this little rent house, and Mom and her weird boyfriend
was there, and he had a Pinto that he had won by guessing the approx. amount of radio bumper stickers it had plastered on it.

The story goes that he went to a wrecking yard and bought a door for a Pinto, and plastered stickers on that then counted them, and used that door to act like all of the surface areas and then multiplied that. He won the car, so he must have been close.

Mom, wasn't all that happy that I had showed up, but this guy was more than happy to let me stay a few days. This is a weird dude. He had a rope that went across the room, and he would hang upside down for periods of time to let the blood run to his head.

I don't remember the dudes name, so let's call him Phil. Linda burnt off and told me to give her a call if I needed a ride somewhere. Mom, had an old Fury II wagon, so with her riding around with ole Phil I knew that I had a way to get around if need be.

I got along with Phil, but he was weird. No food was to be had, but he had plenty of Apple Juice which he kept in the fridge. He drank this stuff by the gallon.

The next day he, and Mom was going to go off for a couple of days. This dude sold real estate, so they had to look at some properties. He wasn't very good at it by the looks of what he was living in, so he told me just to hang out all I wanted. I had about $40,00 dollars on me, so I told him that I was going to buy a few items of food. Of course I was just going to look for a paint supply close by. Mom left the car for me, and so I hung out for a couple of days.

I would basically sniff paint non-stop while I was there, and late at night I got a phone call from Granny my Mom's Mom. She lived just a short distance away, and was a total alcoholic, and would call to talk to Mom when she was drunk. She was a waitress now, but had many jobs. She was at one time a Liberty Ship welder, and learned her two-fisted ways drinking, and fighting in bars around the ship yards she worked in back then. Anyway this night she called and I answered the phone, so with me being high on paint, and she being high on booze we would have a good time talking because we were like two peas in a pod.

Now the thing about this grandmother was she got onery; and mean when she was on a drunk. Huey her husband had been put in the hospital by granny
when she used a coffee table leg on him. They still had the coffee table
which they had patched up.

This night we were talking about I don't know what when ole granny started
telling me stuff that she would like to do to Huey. Huey was just drinking,
and watching TV, and holding the small dog that they had. He knew that granny
was talking about him, so he started bugging her and asking her who she was
talking to about him in the middle of the night?

This didn't sit well with her, and she told him so. We had a three way
conversation going on and I kept sniffing paint listening to them, so Huey
shuts up, and now granny is talking about a catsup bottle, and smacking him
on the toe with it. This sounded like a good plan to me, and so I told her
to go for it, but to leave the phone where I could hear it. You could hear
Huey asking her what she was up too, and she just got the bottle and started
walking to him, and you could hear Huey telling her to put the bottle down.

Well she did hit him in the foot, and hearing this I broke out laughing
like a crazy person because you could hear everything she was doing, and
she had done like she had said that she would do.

Huey was pissed off now and grabbed the phone, and started cussing me,
and saying he would whup me, and granny. That was the wrong thing to say
for first of all he couldn't even handle granny much less me, and I told
him if he laid a finger on her that I would be there in less than 5 minutes,
and when I got finished with him he would gladly take an ass whupping from
granny before he messed with me again.

He said that he wasn't scared of me, and I told him I could be there in
a few minutes and we would see about that. He then started changing his tone
because he knew for a fact that I would come ring his bell. It was funny
too because he asked me, I did say asked me not told me to get granny to
behave after that.

I got him to give granny the phone back and told her to let ole Huey make
it, so she chilled because she had her fun.

Huey went to bed amongst the pile of newspapers, and dog that he slept
with. Grammy slept on a mattress in front of the TV. As you might have figured
out neither of them could stand the other enough to sleep in the same bed
much less have sex "EW!" even if granny had wanted to.

The excitement over I had to air out the house because Mom, and ole Phil
would be back that day.

Upon their return I had cooked bacon, and eggs, and other stuff which killed the paint smell that lingered, but of course I wanted to eat too.

When they got back they told me that ole Phil had talked to his brother in a place called "Cransfield Gap", that needed help, and had asked them if they would come there and help him out? They also asked me if I wanted to go and help him? We would only help out until his brother got back on his feet from hurting his back.

I thought why not? There was a good deal involved, and Cransfield Gap sounded like the old west, and Texas has a lot of places that are back from the old west days.

Plans were made, and the plan was to leave the next day, so I went to the store and got me a few cans of paint to hold me over until I could see how things would go and I would be driving Mom's car so I had a place to stash everything, so it was off to Cransfield Gap.
CHAPTER 6

This was going to be a joint effort to help Phil's brother Rick, who had a pretty good size machine shop business in this town called Cransfield Gap. He had hurt his back and was unable to keep the place up, and running.

We had took both cars because Mom might have been kinda loose in the man department, but she wasn't going to get left out in the middle of nowhere without her car, and she would put up with me and my ways because she knew I would help her out when need be.

She rode with Phil, and I drove the Fury II wagon. It turned out to be further than I expected, and so we drove out into nowhere. We were so far out into the middle of nowhere that your mind could travel back thru time, and you could tell that this was Indain country.

You felt that at any time the Indains would come over the hill and attack the wagon train. You can't believe how beautiful, and untainted, (and big), areas of Texas are. Texas is really a beautiful and rugged country, and should have been left to those that had it before us, but that again is another story that I know you really don't want me to get started on.

Anyway this was straight up Inju Country, and as serene as could be. We got to Cransfield Gap without a hitch, and to this small town which as I found out didn't even have it's own police force which is something that was always an interesting fact for a person like myself that lived on the edge of society, and depended a lot on the slight of hand speed I had in accruing my paint.

There wasn't any big chain stores for miles, but one of the things that helped me stay in this addiction and help it survive is the fact that it (the paint), was easy to find, and anywhere there was an auto store, or even small store or hardware store there was the paint. It wasn't even beyond me to drive for miles to find this stuff and I had Mom's car to do that if need be, and I wouldn't hesitate to snatch what I needed. There was a small store that was by the apartments that I had lived in when I fell into that bucket of hot water at IHOP that I at one time snatched a box of pre-cooked
chicken (frozen), from right in front of the cashier while she waited on another customer. I was hungry and needed food. I think that she and the customer both knew what I was doing though, and they just couldn't believe that I would go thru with it and or do this right in front of the both of them, well I did, and I left that store and ate it almost frozen I was so hungry.

We had finally gotten to Phil's brothers place as mentioned, and we sat and talked a little while. The stashed paint that I had kept calling my name, and my attention kept getting pulled away since I hadn't sniffed paint all the way there, and I was really needing a fix. I lived to use, and used to live, or so I thought, and I was wanting my paint.

Rick, though wasn't like Phil, and I actually found myself liking the guy, and he had a really nice wife of whom I no longer remember her name either. Folks my memory might still be pretty good considering my sniffing over ten thousand cans of paint in my addiction history, but in the past 40 years of addiction my memory is far from perfect, for had it been perfect I would have remembered how this addiction had messed up my life over and over, and had been able to try and do something about it.

Rick's wife was nice though and I do remember this, and so was he.

I decided it was time to look around town, but it was rude plus I do like to eat, and they were about to eat. During this meal Rick told us that he had built his business up from nothing, and was bringing in a quarter of a million and more in some cases a year profit with some of the govt. contracts that he was starting to get, not to mention the local stuff he made. He knew though that if he couldn't compete he would lose out on these nice contracts and as it was he couldn't.

Now the wheels was turning in my mind, and considering the area I was impressed. You have to remember too that this was still late 1975, so when he shut the doors on the machine shop it hurt a few people around there.

If I remember right Waco, Tx. was the closest town around there with anything worth while. Rick during the meal came up with a proposition for us, and I mean all three of us. Rick stated that if we would stay a year, and help get his business back up, and running that we would all be equal partners.

Now he really had my interest! I told him I knew nothing of machining parts, but he said he could show us what we needed to know, and basically for now
he needed to get the doors back open, and tell people in the area that the shop would be opening soon. I asked so what your saying is just hang out, and tell people that the place was going to be opening soon?

He said yes to start. I thought perfect that would give me an excuse to be out of sight and out of mind.

After the meal there was still some light, so me and Rick took the wagon to the shop. Mom, and Phil was more interested in hanging out with Rick's wife. Me at 18 years old wanted to move around, and wanted to see this machine.

He had a good size building, and although the property, and out buildings had weeds grown up around the place I could see how this could have been a pretty active place even out in the middle of nowhere.

We went in and turned on the lights and at least that was a good sign. The building had to be at least 20 thousand sq. ft. with an overhead trolley type crane system to move the big shafts of steel around. There were lathes, and drills, and other machines that all sat idle still with piles of metal shavings telling me that he ran this place all the way up to the time he had to shut the doors. I don't know how many employees that he had, but before he had closed these doors this had been a busy place.

We went on a tour of the grounds, but before we left the building I noticed a cat walk high in the dark ceiling above the lights which I thought was pretty cool.

He showed me how he could unload trucks with the crane system, and then he showed me his collection of old motorcycles. Oh yeah he had my full attention now! One of these old bikes was very old, and belt driven, and I believe that it was a Harley Davidson. It looked more like a bicycle than a motorcycle and he told me that it still ran, and that he had ridden it all the way up till the time that he had hurt his back. He said that he had rode it around town a lot, and people knew him pretty good because of it.

He had other motorcycles too in there that needed work, and told me that I could take my pick of them and fix it up. Of course the bicycle one was his and he wanted to keep it. I saw a couple of Jap bikes like Honda, and others. I saw a couple of 350 CC bikes but didn't know what else there was, so I was actually pretty excited about this situation, and before he decided it was time to go we went to the office, and he got me a key along with a couple more for Mom, and Phil. He asked if I would mind coming out in the morning, and just open up to let people see that the place now had
and then he told me to drag out one of the bikes and work on it if I wanted to.

He showed me where the air compressor was, and how to turn it on, and where all of his tools were, and then we left.

He had basically already had made me part of the team, and I thought that was cool. Of course I am the only one that acted like this was a good thing and showed interest in what was going on.

We stopped by one of the small stores at my suggestion of course to buy cigs, and sure enough the small auto section had my type of spray paint.

We went back to the house, and he told them what we was doing, and that I was going to open the doors tomorrow, and start things rolling. Mom, and Phil though wanted to go to Waco, and mess around which was fine with me, neither Mom, nor pansy pants Phil were much into grease, and dirt, and machines, so Rick had already seen thru them, but he was going to need someone that was, and that was me. I might be a paint sniffing freak, but my other love was messing with machines, and driving, so I was good to go.

Rick, stated that we were welcome to stay with them for the next year and that it would be tight, but he had put enough away to start the place back up, but pay checks would be non-existent until material was again produced.

His house was paid for though, and he had enough to get us thru till the money started coming back in. I told him though that was good because I had no money. I told him though that I could fix cars, and bikes though and he stated the crane could be used to pull motors and if I got that type of work to feel free to use what I needed, and as far as tools and machinery they too were there to use as I needed. Rick was just happy to get the doors open and see something going on, and happy that I could see a way to start getting people there. Rick also told me that he would start making calls the next day to let people know that he was coming back up and going to be running the business with others now.

I had carte blanche to the place, and even though I was young I was going to be a full partner, and he wanted everybody to know that I had his approval to crank things up.

There was a lot wrong with my life, but I hated my addiction, and I wanted to be rid of it, but I wasn't afraid to start something new because truthfully I knew that if I had something that would take my life and turn it around
then maybe I could lay this addiction to the side and make a life for myself, and this looked like one of those things that could be a life changing event and a positive one at that.

I slept on the couch that night, so at first light I got out of there after a cup of instant coffee. I didn't even heat the water I just used the hot water out of the sink. I needed a fix, and there was no denying it, and I dug out my stash, and took the wagon to the shop which really was only about a half a mile across town. Heck, that's about all the town there was anyway, but I wanted the car, and pretty much hung onto it while I was there.

I went to the shop already sniffing my paint before I was out of the driveway. I drove around to get a feel of this small town. It was absolutely dead around there which was fine with me, and I got a good look around town.

I parked at the shop, and openly carried my paint, and bags in my hand going into the place since it was about 5:30 Am., and nobody was about. There were some houses a short ways away that had a couple of lights on, but too far away to see what I carried.

I went in and turned on a few lights since I only needed to see with indirect lighting. I went into the office, and sat propped on the desk looking out of the window in the dark, so I could keep an eye on what was going on, and see if somebody drove up.

There was a couple of street lights, and a security light outside where I had parked the wagon, or at least close by, but it was dark where I was, and I made sure that I wasn't back lit by the light that I had on.

Rick had a couple of old Victrola's you know the wind up type with a big flower looking horn on top that emitted the sound of the records. It too worked, but needed something done to the regulating spring that kept it from winding down too fast. I didn't mess with it, but it was cool.

There was dust everywhere, and I figured that after I got good and energized I would do some cleaning. That sounded good anyway.

I tried to make up for lost time from yesterday by sniffing what I could.

The next thing I remember the light of day was now showing thru the window and it was about 8 Am. and now Rick had showed up. Luckily I had started moving around looking at machines, and when on the move I had already put my paint away in my boot top under my big bell Levis which is one of the reasons I wore big belled blue jeans, but also I was more hippiefide too.

-89-
I was at the end of the shop when he came in and I was able to put my bag away on a machine, and light a cig, which helped me come down, or made it able so I could speak better due to the bite of the smoke on my numb tongue so that worked pretty well, and the main thing I knew from all the close encounters I had already had in life was not to panic, so I just acted like I always did and that was cool.

I could operate pretty good while high, but I tried to stay away from a lot of talking if I could help it. There was no need to worry though because Rick was glad to see that I had already got there, and was checking stuff out. He had brought a dozen donuts, and some hot coffee which worked for me because I was hungry, and eating donuts would cover up what little of a slur I had in my talking.

This was just my first day, but I already felt I'd been there a while. Rick showed me some pictures of products he had a hand in making and some of this stuff was huge shafts that had been turned, and other things. He showed me some of the guys that had worked there, and you could just tell he was well liked around there. He told me that he would be getting in touch with some of these guys and tell them that he was starting back up and they would have first option to go back to work when the place started back up.

Rick left, and I stayed there, but as some people saw a couple of cars and knew Rick so they stopped by to see what was up, and later Rick would introduce me to a lot of these people when they would stop by at different times. They were just faces to me at this time, but I could see that this could work out to be a really good deal if I put some effort into it.

After Rick had left I just hung out, and for the most part was left alone. When I finally went back to Ricks they had left me a plate of food wrapped in plastic, so that I could reheat it which I thought was pretty cool of them.

After about a week of my going there people started coming more often wanting to know when we would be able to machine parts? They would ask me if I could make stuff, and I'd tell them no because I couldn't, and really I was too lazy to try and didn't know what to charge even if I was able to do this stuff.

There was a couple of gals, and a dude about my age that came to visit while I sat on the back of the wagon's tail gate taking a break from sniffing paint.
These people came from the house that was across the street on the other side of their block. Their back yard came up to the street across from the parking lot.

It was a shady piece of property completely covered with trees thinned out enough to make it seem opened. They had no fence either. I was kinda interested as to who these people were. They had come right up to me, and as stated was my age and something I noticed too they were high. You can pick out a doper when your one too.

These gals introduced theirselves as Brenda, and Sally the other was their brother Frank. You have to make a note here because this is a really small town, and I guess anybody new around there was exciting to find out about.

Of course I had been showing up each day at a company that was behind their house too, and staying all day, and sometimes into the night sniffing paint.

I didn't always sniff paint though for even though I sniff paint I was aware of the fact that I had to be doing something so I would clean up metal shavings from under the machines and I would wipe down machines and the place was starting to look a lot better.

Brenda, and Sally wanted to know if I wanted to smoke a joint? I told them heck yea, and we lit up right there! We were new friends right then and there, and Brenda, and Sally were real lookers too in that country girl sort of way.

I was beginning to wonder if this town was nothing but old folks? That's mostly what came around the shop, farmers, and country folk although I don't know what they grew around there.

I was always nice to people, and these three wanted to look around, so since nothing was going on we looked around the shop. Basically they were high even before they had came to visit with me, and they liked the tour of the place seeing the big machines and such. I had already learned how to turn some of the machines on and started a couple of them so that they could trip a little on it and to show off a little.

They had a good time because they said that they were tired of sitting around the house and they appreciated the fact that they had a new hippy friend now that nobody else knew.
Damaged World
By: Timothy D.V. Bazrowx

Their house was a little wood frame with a couple of rooms by my reckoning. I have no idea where their parents were, nor did I care really. I never saw them, so I think these gals lived alone with their brother. There were other people my age that came, and went, and stayed the night at times crashing in the living room. This was ok with me, and I now had a place close by that I could party a little at.

After I had looked up the shop one night I went to hang out, and there was about 6 people there. Since I had the wagon they wanted to go to the store to get some ice that was cool because I needed some cigs, and paint. When we got there which took no time they told me to back in, so I did, and when I came out we left. Well I took off, and the only time I ever saw a cop there was then, and he stopped me. I still had no drivers license, so I thought this is just great, and was fixing to go to jail. I really needed to get me a drivers license I guess, but that was always hindsight.

The cop made everybody stay in the car except me, and he started asking me what I was doing ect... I told him that I had went to the store for my Mom since it was her car, and since it was in her name. I had all the info on ole Ma so whenever he asked for personal info I was able to tell him.

The cop ran the plates, and saw that I was telling him the truth, and didn't seem concerned about my having no license, he also knew the guys that were with me and Brenda. What he was concerned about was "ice", it seems that 5 bags of crushed ice was missing, and the store clerk thought that we had stole it. The cop had shown his light in the back, and saw a couple of melting ice cubes, and asked what that was? A couple of the guys that had iced sodas said that they had been throwing ice at each other. I knew nothing about ice, and told the cop so, and neither did Brenda because she had been with me in the store.

The cop let me go with a warning to get the car back to good ole Mom, and not let him see it again that night. That was fine with me, for I don't like cops, nor close calls with cops, so off we went.

This is one of the reasons that I am a loner, for when there's others it always brings attention to ya, and I didn't like attention at all.

When we got to Brenda's she as I was both surprised to see these guys unload 5 ten pound bags of ice 50 LBS out from the tire bay in the back of the wagon, which was under the floor of the wagon in the back where they had been sitting.
That was it! They never got back in that car again. Brenda ran them all
off minus two bags of ice that she kept, and put in the freezer. These guys
left carrying 30 pounds of ice and were too stupid to realize that there
was a cop out there looking for ice already.

Brenda told me that she was so sorry about what these guys did, and I
said ok. I stayed a while, and asked her if I could leave the car there for
a while? I left and went back to the shop, and spent the night sniffing paint.

A note here. Do you see the depth of this addiction? I couldn't stay
away from this stuff and this is why it ruled my life. If I knew that I had
a stash of paint somewhere I wasn't happy until I used all of it, then I
wasn't happy because I had used it all, so would have to go find more. As
you continue to read this story please remember that this is not just a lot
of paint sniffing stories but it was a way of life for me and this is why
it was called addiction. This story tells of the way any addiction is in
a persons life, and when reading this if you know somebody that has a differant
drug of choice then the results are the same just replace the paint sniffing
with the other drug and you have the same thing in that person life, and
the reason for these stories and this overall story is to show people that
are trying to understand addiction and why their loved ones are so crazy
about using and not seeking help instead. Even though I was addicted to paint
it ruled my life and that is what drugs do. Now back to the story for there
is a turning point comming just bare with me.

I went back to Brenda's about 5 Am. and she sleepily let me in. I sat
in the living room about 10 minutes, and started getting sleepy then went
in her room to tell her I was heading out. I went back to the same store
that was about to open at 6 Am. I had a bone to pick with them, so when they
opened up I went in and waited while the gal made fresh coffee. While she
was busy I stole a couple of cans of paint, some cheese, and spam, and went
over and talked to the gal as the coffee made. When the pot was done I got
a large hot cup of coffee and paid the gal, and waved bye, bye to her smiling
all the way.

I knew that what had happened wasn't her fault and she wasn't the one
that had called the cops on me, but I felt I had to prove something to that
store, and the owners thereof, and that run cost them more than 5 one dollar
bags of ice, if they even cost that much back then?
I went back to the shop and ate all of the food that I had got. When I got done with that, I then decided to climb up into the cat walk. This was a high building, and it was dark up on the catwalk even in daylight since this shop had no windows, and since the lights hung down below the catwalk it stayed in the shadows.

About 10Am. Mom, and Phil showed up with some dude. They knew that I was someplace around, because they had seen the car, but not where. I sat up there and watched what they were doing, and listened to what they were saying. They hadn't been around a lot and this was the first time I had seen them at the shop, but this day I found out why they had showed up.

This day I had found out that they were trying to sell off equipment, and not let me, or Rick know what they were up to. They wanted to get rid of this stuff as fast as they could have this guy give them a check, and let this guy come pick up this stuff later after they saw if the check cleared. He assured them that it would.

I knew my Mom, she wanted to take the money and run. I was hot! After they left I decided to talk to Rick, and his wife at supper, so I had to get aired out so to speak, so I stopped sniffing paint at about 4:30 Pm. and locked up the place and went to ricks. Mom, and Phil hadn't got back there yet, so I sat down with Rick, and his wife, and told them what was going on.

Rick's wife cried, and Rick was really hurt to know that his own brother was trying to cheat him. Some might think that this was an underhanded thing to do to my own Mom, but if you have read up to this point you will see that my good ole Mom was no stranger to messing me over in serious ways.

Mom, and Phil weren't screwing over Rick alone I too was going to get screwed, and I had a real chance of making something of myself with this break. I guess that it wasn't meant to be though because I knew that all hell was about to break loose and so the deck of cards of fate had been dealt and again I had a bad hand.

Mom, and Phil show up like everything is all hunky dory, but Rick's wife started the ball rolling as soon as they sat down. My suspicion had been correct. They tried to say that they were trying to gain working capital, but you can't run a business if you sold the equipment that made the business run, and besides Rick had told us all that he had the money to start back
up, and he needed us to help run it. Well after the screaming subsided, and the doors slammed. Mom, and Phill left. She took her car, and left me with Rick, and his wife.

I told Rick that I would still help him run the place, but he said that he had to now find out what got sold, and try to get it back, and that after this he wasn't sure that he would now reopen.

I couldn't talk him into re-opening the place, so I told him that I would then leave in the morning, and they asked if I had some place to go? I told them my ole Dad lived in a place called Vidor, Texas, and left me an open invitation to come stay with him "anytime", I needed to. I said that this looks like a good time to take up ole Pop's invite, and told them so.

I told them that I would hitch-hike no problem, but they wouldn't hear of it. Waco, was only a short drive, so we went to the bus station, and they bought me a ticket, and gave me $120.00 for spending money. I didn't know much about where Dad lived, for I had just visited there a couple of times as a kid, and knew that I had a step sis Kay, and some cousins that I liked a lot, so it was off to Beaumont, Tx., and again into the unknown.
On the bus to Beaumont Tx. I sat in the back, or close to the back of the bus. I still had a little weed left over from the visits to Brenda's, and Sally's, but as of yet hadn't smoked a joint. Back in 1975 you could still smoke just about anywhere... cigs that is, so as I sat back there in the bus wondering what was going to happen I met up with this pretty cool ole black dude, and we started talking.

Since there wasn't hardly anybody on the bus I lit up a joint, and although we got a few looks nobody said anything. As we sat, and talked in the dark I found out that this dude was going to Beaumont too, and after I told him I was too, but then to Vidor which I told him I didn't know how far away it was, so he told me.

Then I told him that when I got settled in that we would have a B.B.Q., and that he would be welcomed to come there and party with us. He laughed at that, and he said that I shouldn't catch his black hide in Vidor, Tx. I asked him why not? What was wrong with Vidor? He just looked at me, and said you really don't know? Maybe it was the weed because what the dude said, or I thought that he said was because of the "Klan". I just looked dumb at him, and asked what did he say? He again said the "Klan", it took a second to register then I said "are you trying to tell me that you are talking about the "Klu Klux Klan", and that they are running around Vidor, Tx? He said "yep". "That's what I'm saying."

I saw pictures in my mind of white hooded klansmen riding horses with torches, and burning crosses in my minds eye, and being stoned this really made a me trip, and after seeing this dudes expression I just started laughing because now everything that this dude said about catching his black ass in Vidor was just too funny! I couldn't believe that the "KKK", was alive and well in Vidor. I had lived in China, Texas which is on one side of BMT. as you came into town from the Houston side of IH 10, but on the other side
of Beaumont across the Neches River there is Vidor, Tx., and the surrounding towns like Rose City, Orangefield, and a few others that in fact had the biggest population of "KKK", in what's called "The Golden Triangle" area.

The Grand Dragon lived in the area, and I was sure to look into this unbelievable stuff that this guy had been telling me. I thought that this dude was pulling my leg because we had been smoking a joint, but in the end it did bring lots of laughs though because I still wasn't sure that this black dude knew what he was talking about but the way he talked about this place just made anything rational go out the window.

Upon getting to Beaumont we parted company, and I looked around wondering where the hell I was going to find something to eat? It was late, and I was hungry as a bear. I saw a burger place next to the bus station around the corner of it actually, so I got on the pay phone, and made a call after finding the phone number. I talked to my cousin Rita which was cool she told me that Dad lived next door which was cool too, so someone went to get Dad. After a few minutes Pop came on the phone, and I explained that I had decided to take him up on his offer. He said "no problem", "and that I was always welcomed", and that made me feel good. I asked him how long it would take before he could get there, and he said that he was on his way, I asked him if I had time to eat a burger?, He said "go for it", and that he would look for me at the bus station if I wasn't out there.

There was no need because I was so hungry that the cheeseburger, and fries had no chance with me. I was standing outside waiting when Dad drove up in an old 54' Chevy which was pretty cool too, for it was just an old car, nothing had been done to it except it had been taken care of just nothing fancy. Now it was about 10:30, or 11Pm., so it was pretty late even though I was a night owl type of dude, but these small towns where nothing was happening it seemed a lot later than it was.

I talked to Dad, and explained what had happened, and of course he didn't like Mom anymore, so he had a couple of choice things to say about that. I had woke Pop up, but now he was awake, and ready to talk now since he had to drive to get me. He told me that I was welcomed to stay as long as I wanted.

He told me that he was a maint. man at one of the local schools, and since it was summer or close to it he was painting. That reminded me about looking for a place to find paint. I asked Dad about the "KKK", and he con-
firmed that they did, and in fact exist and were alive and well in Vidor, Tx.

As we got to where he was staying we came by a country store that looked like a promising aspect for paint. It was closed but I kept it in mind since we were out in the country, and with woods all around there wasn't many options.

Dad lived next to Granny Holden's place, which was my Step Mom's Mom. They had lived in this same house for who knows how long? The house actually looked like 2-3 old houses that had been moved in and pieced together which was in fact what they had done. There was no attempt to try to make the houses look like one they were connected which every way they could be.

It also looked like a wrecking yard around there with old cars in different stages of repair. Then Dad showed me where he and Helen "my step Mom", and my two half sisters Sarah, and Mary Kristine or "Kissy", lived which was a small trailer parked next to this house.

I thought men I can't impose on Dad, and my sisters, and Helen this way. There wasn't any room for me here, and I'd be better off living in an abandoned house for the time being, so maybe I should have felt out the situation before dropping in without notice.

I really felt bad about that, but Dad wasn't seeming to be distraught about my being there, and was actually happy to have me there. I had only an extra pair of jeans, and a shirt with me since I traveled light.

After getting there Dad had told me to wait at the car, and that he was going to surprise everybody since Pop hadn't told anybody what was happening.

I leaned up against the car and waited, and within a few minutes there came a squeal of two little girls, and they ran out of the trailer, and we hugged as Helen came out too, except at a slower pace but with a big smile.

Now you have to remember it's late, so everybody had been asleep. Nobody had seen me since I had left Heflin La., so now my sisters were a few years older. Now I guess that they were seven, or eight, or maybe even older, but not older than 10 years of age. You might think that it is weird not knowing when some of my sisters were born, but since we had different factions of my family these things happen. Anyway they were young.

I asked Dad how he had slipped off without waking everybody? He just told me that they didn't have a restroom in the trailer, so they used the one in Granny Holden's house. Then he showed me the trailer which had clothes,
and a bed on one side, and clothes, and a bed on the other end of the trailer. The middle of the trailer just had a 3 burner stove, and an icebox for food.

Since they had moved from Greenlake Farms the chicken ranch this is where they had been living. The trailer had as noted no restroom, or running water, so this is why they lived next door to the house. As a matter of fact there was a lot of cousins living here, and of course my step sister Kay which was my age, and we had always been really close. Kay wasn't there, for she was waitressing some place, and would be getting off at midnight, and coming home, so we all went in this small trailer, and started talking. When Kay came in Dad told me to stay in the trailer, and he would go get Kay.

Dad didn't tell Kay I was there, but when she got close to the door I bailed out of the trailer, and snatched her up in a fierce hug. We were like two peas in a pod and I realized then how lucky I was to still be alive. I loved these simple people living in this backwood town, and since none of them knew that I had been in the Army much less to Vietnam they didn't know of my near fatal last few years.

Dad gave Kay and me some breathing room, and ran the girls back to the trailer, and to bed. Kay and I went to her car, and sat on the hood, and lit a joint as I was sharing this with Kay. Dad came out of the trailer, and walked up. I cupped the joint in my hand, and looked at Kay, and she said don't worry about Dad because he smokes more than anybody there. This was news to me, and when Dad told me to not bogart the joint, I simply gave it to him.

That's when I found out that Dad himself was a bogart, and had to take the joint away from him myself. That's when I found out that everybody in my family smoked weed, and had thru the ages.

Kay was telling Pop of my short but lively military career, and he just broke down, because he had no idea that I had been thru that, and if I wasn't mistaken he had tears in his eyes when he gave me a big bear hug. He himself had been in Korea with the 1st. Infantry Div., or what they were better known by as "The Big Red 1", so he knew what war was about.

He hated Mom even more now since she was actually the reason for being sent to war, but what was bad was she hadn't told any of them that I was in the Army, so they knew nothing of this.

After the smoking of a couple of joints we all went our way. Kay went
into the house already making plans of where we would go, so she could show me around. Dad, had to go to work, so he needed a little sleep. There really wasn't anyplace to crash except with the girls, so I burrowed into the pile of clothes with the girls, and snoozed for a while.

Dad left early, and I slept only a few hours, and was up and ready to roll about 6 Am. I walked to the little country store only about a country block away in distance although there wasn't a block to measure things by, but that is the best way to describe how far that store was.

I had to make my move because even though I had smoked a little weed it didn't satisfy my need for paint, so I needed to find me a new source for paint. I got to the store, and headed to the back where the eggs was because I was going to buy 3 dozen eggs, and some milk for the girls and bacon. Lo and behold there was my brand of paint and special color which was Bright Silver at the time, but there was only about 10 cans, so that, or this store would only be used on an only have to basis, so now was a good time to use this store, for it was one of those times. I actually bought a couple of cans along with the other food stuffs which I had added bread, and cheese to the list.

I did this so that I could get the almost empty bag of bread that Helen had and use the bag for sniffing and this way they also had more bread to eat. I took this stuff to Helen who was up now, and really glad to see this food as was the girls. I didn't know what kind of food they had, so since it was breakfast time the food that I got would be a good choice of food to get. It's a good thing I did this too since they were really low on food, and hadn't went to the store for food as of yet.

I only ate about 6 eggs which is nothing for me, and made egg & cheese bacon sandwiches which was enough to also get the bread down out of the almost empty bag of bread they had.

We all had a good breakfast, and I had now squirreled the bag away, and had paint which I promptly went out back, and hid in the woods. Kay wouldn't be up for a few hours, so I sat by a small creek running thru the woods, and got my fix of paint that I was craving really bad. I now hadn't had paint for almost 24 hours thus needed a big hit of the stuff. I had for almost to "think", about what I was going to do, I couldn't impose on ole Maw and Paw even though they said that they would make do. I needed to find a job
and I didn't want to work in another restaurant which I'm sure Kay could have helped me out on that since she worked at Denny's, or someplace.

I got a good dose of paint fumes in my system, and went back to see everybody. My cousins were up, and about. Rita, Wayne, Mac, Ron, and the twins. The twins were both very pretty, but I couldn't tell you their names if I had to, for I've never heard them called anything but the twins. They were in their early 20's, and we got along great, but I still only knew them as the twins. They were also very much identical.

Kay, and I took off, and of course lit up the joints, for she had some too. She took me around Vidor to show me around, and what I was interested in was the supermarkets. That's where I would get bags and paint.

We went down main street, and visited Pa Pa's Gulf Station, and saw Granny Brent which was Dad's Mom. Pa Pa was my step granddaddy, and the only granddad I knew, and he had told me that he had met Granny Brent living in a gypsy camp in Crockett Texas, about a mile from Ratcliff, Texas where Kevin had been, so we touched base there, and then went to Joe Collins Freeway Gulf, and saw my Uncle Joe, and my cousin Debbie, or Judy, I can't remember which one now. I had cousins all over the place it seemed.

We went to Wood's Supermarket, and there right on main street two buildings from the small municipal courthouse with a Red, White, and Blue awning was the office for the "Knights of The Ku Klux Klan", with a klansman riding a charging horse, and he with an upraised sword wearing his hood, and robe, on a cut out sign on top of the building the entire width of the building. They had robes, and Tee shirts etc... on display in the front window for sell to those that needed them with the klan emblem above the heart area, so this in fact confirmed that the Klan was alive and well as ole Pop had said there in Vidor, Texas, as well as in the area around there.

After stopping at Wood's Supermarket, and buying some meat from another cousin named Judy (there was more than one Judy in my family), we then went back home. Oh we also had went to the Falls beer store outside of town, and one of the only places around there to buy booze.

Once home I passed off the roast to Helen who promptly went to work getting it ready to cook, because it would take a while to cook on a 3 burner stove that was literally a camp stove made into the camper trailer.

Helen was a great cook, so I knew that she would do it justice.
Kay, and I sat around in the shade under the trees on lawn chairs with beer in a cheap cooler between us, and we just caught up with what each other had been doing these years we had been apart. It was always years before we saw each other whenever we were off living our own lives. We had always got along great, and this was no different. We spent the day together, and I got a handle on places around Beaumont that might be hiring. I could have went to work with my Uncle at his Gulf Station had I asked, but although they were family I was still a stranger to them. Also they were my family, and I didn’t want to be watched by family. I was already an outcast, and I didn’t need people telling my Dad that I was a paint sniffing fiend, for he would find out by me. I was a loner and even meant when I was with family.

That night I told Dad that I wanted: a ride to BMG, because I wanted to look around. He said sure, so the next day I went to the woods, and got a can of paint, and slipped it in my boot, and had bags now from the supermarket.

Dad took me with him, and I told him that I wanted to see what was what, so with what money I had left I stopped by GoodWill, and bought a small tote bag, and some 2nd. hand clothes. I threw this over my shoulder, and had told Dad that I would get back to Vidor on my own. He was at work anyway, and decided not to worry about it, for I would come back.

I was walking down the roads to see if I could see some place to go to work and saw a place that looked like a good place to ask. It was a "Wizard Car Wash", and full service station etc.... you could get gas, or vacuum your car. Have it scented waxed etc.... and they had about 15 guys, and gals my age working there.

I went in, and talked to the Mgr., and found that they always needed people, and that there was unsurprisingly a big turnover there. Good for me because all I needed was something to tide me over to put some change in my pocket, but wouldn’t be a great loss if I moved on, and move on I would.

I got the job, and filled out some paperwork then told the dude I’d be back the next day since it was getting late. I could ride to town with Pop, and have him drop me off each day, since I had walked there.

Now I had to cross the Neches River Bridge which was going to be a neat trick because it was still daylight, and since there was signs that prohibited walking, or riding by cycles over it I was kinda stuck till I figured out what to do. I just couldn’t wrap my mind around the why’s that a person walking
couldn't go over a bridge? I couldn't understand why a bicycle couldn't or moped either? Did the people making the laws not think that some people may not have a car and had to walk and that we would just stay in one part of the city or country because we couldn't get across a bridge? Well I didn't like to mind as you now know, but I had other plans while I waited for dark.

There was another problem too, for this was a tall bridge that was able to allow some ships to go under it, so there was no way to cross it without either getting hit, or in trouble with the law. The other problem was that this was in fact the only way for me to get across too since all there use to be was the Mansfield Ferry that you got from shore to shore with before IH 10 had this bridge.

This is an area where there was a lot of traffic with Bethlehem Steel, Mobil Oil, and other people that right there and all about the same times, so unless I could get a ride from somebody which really wasn't an issue I would just walk.

I saw an open area that covered an entire block that was below the bridge on Magnolia Ave. before you got to the other bridge. Since it was kinda grown up, and had shade trees this drew me like a bug to a flame. I figured that I could use a fix since I always carried my paint down in my boot top under my bell bottoms pants leg, and it was time to "think", about this little problem which really wasn't a problem. I would cross the big bridge at night, and get to sniff paint up till then. To me that was a win win situation.

I got down off the road, and walked by a scuba shop, and a couple more small buisnesses, and headed to this big area without houses, or buildings. When I got there I found out why. It was some type of park that had fell into disrepair. Maybe funding for keeping it up had ran out, but the reason was unknown to me. This was a perfect place for a paint sniffing freak like me to pass the time away while I waited to cross over this big bridge illegally I might add in the dark.

I found an old rusted merry-go-round in the tall weeds that gave me a platform and a quiet place to sit off the ground, and sniff paint yet still be hidden by the tall weeds.

This was a pretty quiet place once you got past all the noise from the cars, and boats that constantly made nosies further away. I wondered as I sat sniffing just what I was going to do now since I was now in a new area,
and a whole new situation. I was actually now thinking about quitting my paint, and I looked at my can of Krylon spray paint, and wondered how something like this had got a hold of my life? I knew that I was addicted to this crap, but had always denied it to myself that I was. I always felt that I could leave this stuff where it was. I always picked it up again. I heard an inner voice tell me good luck with that partner, then told myself I don't want to quit I like this! I heard another voice in my paint addled head that said "Lead me not into temptation", then another that said "Oh hell just follow me I know a short cut!". That was the addict speaking for the real me was sick of being sick.

I was tired of going hungry, or going to find places to get out of the rain, or cold, or not having anything at all, and smelling of old paint, and stinking, but there was always a "but", I just couldn't lay this stuff down, and the demon inside me wouldn't allow it. I had tried to do so time and time as I would do so in the future, and I would still find rusted cans and bust them open just to see if there was anything in it to sniff, or inhale and if there was anything even only a few drops I would drain it into my bag to inhale too. This happened no matter where I went.

When I was done arguing with myself, and let the demon of addiction yet again win it was then after midnight. Traffic had came to only night travelers heading to Louisiana, or coming back from that way.

I stashed my paint can, or what was left of it in my boot, and headed over the bridge. It was cool crossing it, for it is a multi-laned bridge, and I was walking close to the edge since they had a walkway, or what passed for one. I wondered about that? If they didn't want people walking over the bridge then why have a walkway? I figured that the people that made these laws had fell out of the stupid tree of life, then decided that this was wrong and that they had been dragged through the entire "DUMBASS FOREST!" Now I felt better about breaking the law. I thought in your face city of Beaumont!

I had passed the creast of the bridge without a problem, and was about halfway down the other side when a car went zooming by about 110 mph. They got past me, and then slammed on the brakes sliding in a fishtail slide and coming to a stop sideways in the middle of the road. I reached in my pocket and pulled out my lockblade knife which was almost 8 inches long opened, or maybe 9 inches long opened. Who was counting? Being a coonass my knife was always razor sharp because I kept it that way just for this reason.
I could see tomorrow's headlines about a knife fight on the Neches bridge in the middle of the night and somebody gets thrown over and ate by sharks in the InnerCosal Canal which I think is what the River was called.

I didn't know what was going to happen but I made myself ready and slung the blade open and cupped the knife in my hand which was fighting position. The blade of the knife was facing away from my forearm and laid along the inside of my arm so when I threw a punch not only did I hit with my fist, as it went past them their face or whatever it also sliced them.

Then I heard "hurry up Tim!". I saw that it was Mac & Wayne my stepmom's brothers, and my cousin Judy which is still questionable because I don't know who she was related to? I still thought of her as my cousin though since I never tried to debunk her story. Anyway I wasn't fast enough, so Wayne put the car into reverse, and backed up to me, and I piled in with them in the front seat which was already crowded because Wayne had lots of junk in the back seat.

Now this Wayne should not be confused with the Wayne that married my sister Joanna. this Wayne was brother to my stepmom Helen, and none of these people could read, or write. They for some reason only went to the first, or 2nd. grades. Helen included. Wayne was a hard core boozer as was Mac, and just as backwoods as they could get, and although I can't say for sure I felt fit the mold for Klansmen.

The ride was welcomed though, and off we went after I put my knife discreetly back into my pocket. We were soon at the 100mph mark on the speedo plus a few more miles per hour was added onto that after we hit level ground. Wayne and Mac were super shade tree mechanics. They would find old cars in fields buy them then fix them up with junk they had around the house. It didn't make them any difference if the motor fit that type of car, or not they made it work. They liked getting drunk on the weekends or anytime really, but on the weekends they got drunk, and went down to the sandbar that was in Ten Mile Creek and without lights in the dark they would see who could get the furterest down the sandbar running as fast as they could before running the car off into the river, that was called Ten Mile Creek.

We got home without wrecking or getting pulled over for we had to go right by the Rose City Police station which was a house really or houselike building off the free way in Rose City that is on the way to Vidor.

-104½-
After we got back I went to bed. Now you might remember that my Pop, and stepmom, and sisters slept in a camper trailer that was plenty crowded already so there was no creeping in unnoticed. Pop asked me in the dark if I was ok? I said yes, and that I'd need a ride in the morning to go to work. We left it at that, and we went to sleep.

Since neither of us had to be to work until 8 Am. I had time to explain to Dad what I was doing. He told me that I could have got on as a helper with him at the school, but I told him that was ok. I really didn't want to be in a position that would cause Dad trouble when I decided to leave a job, and I would leave it I already knew that I would. I could handle an employer being mad at me but not my Dad. I knew that I was an addict and that the addiction ruled my life because I just let it, thus I knew that I would set up any type of job I had so that I could leave in a moments notice, because when my addiction which had a life of its own told me to move on down the road I would listen to it.

My Dad didn't know that I was an addict though, although I could tell that he knew something was up. You can't hide the smell of old paint, and chemicals oozing out of your pores, so we did like most families we chose to ignore it. We were who we were.

It was strange going to work, and smoking a doobie with your Dad each morning, and although it was wrong I enjoyed those rides to Beaumont in that old Chevy. My Mom had stolen my childhood away from me and my Dad growing up together and now I was a grown man. I had been across the sea and fought an enemy like he had and did what we had to do to come home. We were buds and more like best friends than father and son, although there was no mistaking the fact that we were related for to see me was to see my father at a younger age.

Dad just wasn't good enough for my Mom to stay with because he lived a simple life, and had she known that Dad was the steadfast partner he was she would have been better off with him than trying to chase rainbows, for dad had been with Helen now over 20 years.

Dad would now drop me off at the car wash, and I would put on my smock, and go to the gas pumps. That was my job at the car wash I took the orders when they got gas. I would pump a few dollars of gas in Dad's car and write it off to my check, and get ready for the day. The way this worked was when people bought gas the only direction you could go was snow into the car wash.
This was no regular gas station for the gas pumps were there so that people could buy gas and have their cars washed, so the way it worked I would ask them what they felt like today having the works or just a wash whatever, and when they told me I had a code that I wrote on the windshield and when the car got around the back the guys working there already knew what they needed to do to the car.

They cleaned the inside of the car too, and vacuumed as well as steam cleaned the outside of the car to wash and bake the road film off of the bottom of the car. The guys that vacuumed liked to keep that job because they stole anything they thought they could get away with which was wrong, and I told them so. I was always taught to treat customers right, and at Andy's Exxon I prided myself for doing just that.

When the cars came out of the blowers the gals that worked there then teamed up on the car, and wiped the car down to keep the water spots from spotting the finish. The better they did the better the tips would be. There was a box that customers put the tips in, and the mgr. would empty it at the end of the day the punk. He would then split the rest with all of us.

There was a little quirk with the part I took care of. I treated the gas station like a full service station except for washing the windows I would check under the hood, and your tire pressures while the car filled. I was fast too. I would also wash the windows too if all the person wanted was gas, because even though most cars washed their cars there some of the people would just drive around the side and leave. I made a lot of sales for the car wash that way, and was allowed to keep the change lots of times for a tip.

I didn't tell the crooked mgr. though. He was a cheat, and thought that he was entitled to what ever money that came to any of us as "his tip."

I met a gal named Beverly, and she had black hair, and the most beautiful dark blue eyes. She wasn't big, but not anorexic, and had a nice endowment upstairs. She was new there, and from Iowa. I noticed her looking my way often, and you couldn't help but lock eyes with her because of the sparkling blue eyes. Although her eyes didn't have the fear that I always saw when my buddies were running for their lives as I tried to keep the V.C. from shooting them in the back I always saw the eyes, and with hers there was no missing them.

Everytime I locked eyes with Bev. she always had a smile for me. At first
I was shy to talk to her, but when I got caught up at the pumps I helped
the gals wipe cars because the cars came back out just a short way from me,
and when there was a slow down I'd help.

Now all you guys might think that I was a lazy good for nothing paint
sniffing freak, and you'd be right except for the fact that I was a functioning
addict, and I worked when I work. Of course getting to talk to Bev. laughing,
and joking as we worked was a good motivater.

We started taking our lunch breaks together with another guy, and gal
then after we ate a sandwich which we bought from the store next door we
would go down a ways, and sit on the sidewalk under a tree, and smoke weed.

We kept our smocks on, so people that used the car wash (and the cops)
knew we worked at the car wash, and was on break. Many times have the cops
rode by while I had an open bag of weed down between my crossed legs. We
never panicked when they turned down the street, and was always laughing,
and smoking a cig. The girls would always give a big wave, and the cops ate
that up! They would smile and wave back at us and go on their merry way.

We would finish our breaks feeling a lot better, and go finish our day.

I noticed that Bev. was bothered by something, and I asked her what was
wrong? She said that she was mad at one of the dudes in back. I asked her
why? She said "because he had told her that he wanted a date, and stood her
up, and then didn't even apologize for it." I was bothered by that because
I had spent a lot of time with Bev, and this dude knew it, so I figured I
might need to make a move if I had any chance at all with her, so I better
at least try.

I had already started sharing my tips with her (she was the only one
though) because she would help me also at the pumps when I was swamped, so
I asked her if I could come over, and hang out for a while? She smiled that
smile I liked, and then got serious, and said if I stood her up that she
wouldn't talk to me anymore, so I had an idea. I asked her why didn't I just
go home with her? I told her that I would buy some junk at the store, and
we could have supper at her place together. She liked that idea, but would
have to ask her room mate that she shared a garage apartment with.

They were the "Two Broke Girls", of the 70's that lived together that
was funny.

After work her pal, and her talked, and she had no problem with it, and

-107-
she was even going to her boyfriends for the night thus we would have the
place all to ourselves.

I bought some grub for all of us, and some munchies then off we went.
I asked her friend if she wanted to smoke a "J", this surprised her friend
and Bev. because Bev thought that her friend was straight laced, and looked
at her then at me. I didn't think anything of it because I thought that every-
body smoked weed, for after finding out that my Dad smoked and I knew that
my Mom did, then how many more surprises could there be?

Later indeed I would be surprised again and again, but today I thought that
this would be a good ice breaker, and I was right because before we even
got started good and got to their place which was only right down the road
on Magnolia Ave. we were laughing at everything being high once again.

Their place being on Magnolia would work in my favor since I didn't know
the area real good, but I knew where this road ended up that was for sure.

Since this road came out on IH 10, and the big bridge I had to cross
to go back to Vidor. I could now put me a stash at the park under the old
rusted merry-go-round. Now don't worry there were no kiddo's that used that
this old place, and as a matter of fact it looked like I was the only one
that like using it in the first place or for a long time.

I went to their apartment, and saw that there was no TV, and that the
place although livable was sparsely furnished, but there was a stereo, and
couch, coffee table, and breakfast nook with a table, and a couple of chairs.

It was way more room than I would have had going back to the camper
trailer. Bev's friend went about getting ready for her wild tryst with her
boyfriend. I on the other hand rolled joints of which I made sure Bev's friend
got a few of. This put some pep in her roommates step and she wanted to get
to her boyfriends for a fun night of what-ever they were about to do.

Since I rolled cigs a lot of people loved the way I rolled a doobie, and
it might not be right, but I've always been proud of my rolling capabilities.

Bev's friend left us with a "Toodle-Loo, and don't do anything that I
wouldn't do, and if we did don't name it after her", and with that a smile
she was gone.

The reason I don't use Bev's friends name is because this is the only
time I ever saw her, and another time in passing, for she stayed at her boy-
friends a lot, so this left it open for me and I ended up staying there more
times than not, and this worked out well too.

As we passed time together she asked me if I would think bad of her if we made love? I told her "Heck No!" I also told her that I thought that this was a bloody good idea!

This started my romance with Bev, and we got along great. I would see her at work, and most times go home with her, and or show up later. Dad wouldn't see me for 3 or 4 days at a time which worked out. That was a crowed little trailer. I gave Helen, or Dad whoever was home at the time I showed up $50,00 even though I didn't stay there all the time, for it assured me that little bit of roof over my head, or hot meal when I decided to roll in, from my Alley Cating around.

I wasn't at Bev's all of the time though, for as always I had found some woods, or abandoned houses. I did see Bev a lot, and I would be close to where she lived a lot of times because she lived at the end of this road almost and beyond that was wooded areas and almost no houses.

I started not showing up at the car wash this was cramping my paint sniffing time. I would just pop in on Bev who stayed alone at the apartment a lot. I would come in at daylight lots of times, and she would not ask about my movements. She would offer to draw me a bath when I got there, and it was her way of being very nice about the fact that I stunk of old paint, and dead things old houses and where ever I had been holding up.

I did take her up on these hot baths too for they felt so good after what I had been doing and after where I had been.

We enjoyed each others company a lot, and had the garage apartment mostly to ourselfe. One morning I came in and Bev was upset. I asked her what was up? She said" that the landlord had come up earlier, and tried to seduce her, and he wanted her to have sex with him because he thought she needed a boyfriend."

I had seen him that morning go into his house when I came up. I never paid him any attention though. I was pretty hot about that, and wanted to go down, and have a word with him, but she said that this would just cause her, and her roommate trouble. Since this was payday at the ole Wizard Car Wash, we went to work together. The landlord was flitting around watering his flowers, or something when we left. Bev made sure that she was laughing and making noise so that it would draw his attention, and he looked up and
he saw us walking to work. This had to be painful for Bev. to try and keep from saying anything, so she kept her arm intertwined with mine and as we walked by this dude I gave him the ole staring evil eye, and by his look he could tell that I had been told about his little morning escapade. I guess my giving him the all knowing look that I did got the message across because he never messed with her again, or at least that she ever told me of.

Of course I would pop in at any unannounced time too and this guy saw that so maybe this too woke him up because I did go by there a bunch.

I got us a ride to work which was only a couple of miles away, and since we were going down Magnolia Ave. this was as a matter of fact a major road thru BMI. where the steel mill, and refinery both were, so most of the time when Bev, and I walked to work cars would just stop for us just because this was a working man's route, for you usually didn't see anybody walking down this road unless they were going to work somewhere.

After getting to work, and getting paid which was at the end of our shifts we then cashed our checks right there at the Wizard Car Wash. I don't know why they just didn't pay us in cash since they would just cash the check too. It worked out well though, and so we went to the store after I scored a bag of weed from a co-worker, and bought a bill of groceries. I had told Bev that I would stay the weekend which we were both off on although the car wash was open 7 days a week.

On the weekends the part timers mostly worked because these guys, and gals mostly went to High-School during the week. Anyway this worked out good since her girl friend wasn't anywhere to be seen most of the time. Bev started talking about going back to Iowa because she was getting Home-sick. Bev wanted me to come back with her to meet her parents, and actually get married.

That was all well, and good, and actually sounded like a good idea, so I was thinking about it, but as my addiction ruled my life I would have to check with it.

Bev, and I got along great, but I wasn't sure about getting hooked up yet. I had been engaged before and when it was time to tie the knot and I had came back from war she left me. This made me think twice about this situation. I may have been calloused and mean at times and seem non-caring, but I still had a heart and feelings, and I was ruled by a demon and hurt was something I felt intensely.
I didn't tell Bev that I would go back with her, but also that I didn't tell her I wouldn't either we just let it hang some.

One day about daylight as I was comming out of the woods from "thinking", about the going to Iowa which was my excuse for sniffing paint all night in the woods, I was going to see Bev. Now the area Bev lived in was at the end of Magnolia Ave. as mentioned before, and it deadended into another road that Tee'd it. This was on the backside of Beaumont, and not really a good area to be out, and about in. This was because it boarded a projects area, and wooded area as well as a major spur of the railroad yards, so this morning as the sun was yet to peek over the edge of the world I was walking down this road when approaching the train tracks three blacks jumped me from a wooded area by the trian tracks. I did not know that they were there, but I had my radar on because I had been out all night in the woods and there is no telling what you will run across out there. I was always aware of my surroundings mostly, and I always carried a lockblade on me, if not a couple of them.

Well this mangy group came out with sticks that they had found in the woods to use as clubs. They were most likely addicts too, that thought they could rob me for a few bucks to buy drugs. They would be wrong, for that wasn't going to be in the cards for this day, and somebody was fixing to have a bad day and the sun hadn't even came all the way up yet.

They had a little distance still to get to me and since I was always in the woods they sounded like a herd cows. By the time they had got to me I already had my knife opened, and laid up against my wrist out of sight. I was ready for them. There was no talking, we all knew what the score was, they were black, I was white, it was dark, and this was their area, wrong place wrong time ect....ect....but they hadn't figured out one thing, and that was I wasn't going to go down without a fight. One dude that was close behind me started the frey and took a swing at my head with his make-shift club, so it was time for action, since I had been in a special forces outfit in the Army, and trained in hand to hand combat as well as raised fighting, and knifing I went into kill, or be killed mode. I went down into a sweeping circle type kick that took out the feet from under one of these guys, and as I came up I sliced another's gut with my knife, and he grabbed for his viscera because my knife had found meat and bit deep. The third guy finally
scored a hit with the club across my back, and head which rang my bell pretty bad. One guy that had been sliced was holding his belly, and was out of it, the guy that had hit me with a stick was bringing it down to hit me again with a downward swing which I blocked with an "X" cross arms brace. I kicked him in his "boys", and this got his attention, and then because he had grabbed his nads I stuck him in his shoulder with the knife which he wrenched out of my hand when he took off with my knife in his shoulder. I then pulled out my can of paint from under my shirt and sprayed it in the eyes of the guy that I had kicked down the first time for as he got up again I kicked him down again after spraying bright silver spray paint into his eyes. I know it was mean but I wasn't in a nice mood right now and if you have ever had spray paint in your eyes then you will know that he wasn't trying to hit me anymore. I can tell you that spray paint in the eyes burns like hell, for I have had it happen to me.

The thinner in this paint can eat it's way thru plastic bags and has my throat bloody more than once so I knew what this guy was feeling.

For good measure I also sprayed the guy that I had sliced also, and this got the guy holding his belly to run like a scalded cat. This left only one man left because his friends had left him and ran down the train tracks and the fight was pretty much over or at least I thought it was because the first guy I had sprayed got up and swung the stick he had, and he hit me across the face with it splitting my lip, and cheek bone.

I spun the paint can around and hit him in the face across the nose with the bottom rim of the can which broke his nose, I then picked up one of their clubs and it was on now in this dudes life, I cracked it across his bone head which staggered him, and then I threw it down and went to work on him with my feet and fist. I can kick a person in the chin and spin around and hit you with an elbow in the mouth before you can blink and I showed this guy why jumping on me was really a bad idea.

I was pretty pissed off now and this guy tried to get somewhere but I turned him every way but loose.

Finally this guy got away from the swinging fist and took off in a wobbling run away from me as fast as he could see to run. Well this was all I needed to get me to move also but not before flying the fickled finger salute at them and exited stage left. I didn't know who might come back if anybody
but I figured that I didn't need to stay and find out. I was bleeding, but
wasn't hurt to bad because it could have been a lot worse for sure, but I
figured that hanging around that area from now on wouldn't be a prudent,
nor a good idea, so I decided it was time to find a new stomping ground.

I wasn't far from Bev's, so that's where I went to get a little doctoring,
and T.L.C. with emphasis on the T.L.C. I will say this that if you want some-
thing to wake you up good about daylight let three blacks jump you in the
dark and I can assure you that it will just wake you right up!

After I got to Bev's I was sure that I looked like something that the
cats had drug up that the dogs wouldn't eat, Bev of course hustled me in
post haste, and was talking to me a mile a minute. I headed to the restroom
to see what was up with the spitting blood all the way there. Looking into
the mirror I could see why she was freaking, for I had crusted blood all
over my face, and neck where I had been wiping it away. My hands had paint,
and blood on them, my clothes were bloody, and dirty from my stay in the
woods, and now the fight, my lip wasn't split thru, but there was a nasty
cut on the inside of the top of the lip where it connected with my teeth.

My cheek was cut about an inch, but nothing to serious. I welcomed a
hot bath, and even wore Bev's frilly robe while we washed my clothes up.
I put a bandaid on my cheek just to help it stay closed. Then I would take
it off after a day.

We ate then went back to bed, and had a wild ole time in the sheets
then slept. Bev, had decided that she would not go in to work this day which
was fine with me since I was too tired to escort her there anyway.

I had decided to quit there anyway, so I didn't want to go into the place.
I didn't know yet where I would work, but I knew I needed to get a car, and
I had one picked out that Wayne, Helen's brother was putting together. It
was a Ford Falcon and he was working on it in his yard. He wanted $250 for
it. As you might realize it was nothing to write home about, but it would
get me around. I couldn't buy it though by working in Beaumont though because
I found just too many stop off points to sniff paint at. Thus I would only
work enough to see Bev, and keep a little change in my pocket, so I needed
something closer, and as much as I hated the word accountable for my whereabouts
staying closer to home meant that I needed to work then come home. Dad under-
stood my roaming spirit. I had been to war I earned my right to be who I

-113-
wanted to be.

My family and sisterpoohs might have still seen me as just a big brother, or Timmy, by my cousins, and step sis Kay, but I had already been places, and done things that most people would never do.

As sad as it was I slowly drifted away from Bev. Not because we didn't get along, but just because I knew that I was no good for her, and I couldn't give her the love that I knew she deserved and was looking for, because my addiction was a jealous lover and there was no room in my life when I knew my addiction would try to keep rule over my life.

I didn't go back to see her again. I felt that this was just the best way, although I know now that was the chicken thing to do.

One late afternoon while we were all together on a rare occasion, and eating in the little trailer I was sitting on the door step as Dad & Helen ate on their bed, and Sarah and Mary ate on their bed. The only place left for me was the door step.

That's when Paw Paw and Granny drove up, and came to the door step. That's when Paw Paw broke the news to me and the family that my Great Grandmother Sue Kremlin had passed away. I just stopped eating, and Paw Paw said come on boy lets go to our place to get you cleaned up, and we will take you to Houston to see her, and take you to the funeral. The funeral was actually in a small town close to Houston or about 25 miles from it.

My Great GrandMa was a character that was for sure. This is another milestone that effected my life profoundly.
 CHAPTER 8

We went to my grandparents place in Vidor just down from the Gulf station on Courtland road, and Main St. This was Paw Paw’s station where he worked on imports like VW’s and such. Granny ran the station mostly. Actually she just hung out, and brought Paw Paw food for lunch and supper if he stayed there that long during the day. She sat on an old couch, and talked to customers while Paw Paw fixed cars, and she would even pump gas at times when someone needed it. This was literally a Mom, and Pop buisness.

Uncle Bill, Dad’s half brother also worked on cars, and pumped gas when he was there.

Paw Paw had done lot’s of family type buisnesses, mostly fixing cars but he had a small logging buisness, and later import shops, but more on that later.

We went to their house mainly because it was close, but also I could bathe since the little trailer had no bath room. We brought what clothes I had with me, and without a word transferred my abode from Dad’s to Paw Paw’s, and Granny’s.

We went to the town that had Grandma laid out in her coffin. She must have hated that, for she was always on the go until the family took her car away because she was getting into more, and more wrecks because of her age.

She finally wasted away slowly at my Great Aunt Mary’s one of my Great Aunts.

Grandma’s daughter, and died from pneumonia in a hospital. She would be buried next to Paw Paw Buck her husband of many years, but not the only one.

Grandma Sue is what most of the kids called her, but not me she was someone that I had loved, and I loved to sit there with her, and listen to all of the stories that she would tell me from an era ‘gone by. I’d listen to her for hours at a time.

Grandma had been born in the East somewhere around the year of 1883. When she was a little girl she spoke of coming over here in a wagon train, and rode in a water barrel on the wagon during the Texas/Oklahoma land rush.
of 1889 where somewhere around 50,000 "Sooner Settlers", staked claims against 2 million acres that were set aside for that reason. She told me that their wagon was so full that on the day of the land rush she rode in one of the drained water barrels that was tied to the side of their wagon. She had been in a train robbery when she rode some place with her mother, and had seen, and talked to Bonnie and Clyde while they target practiced off a small wooden bridge in Liberty, Texas. She told me things that she had done at the turn of the century, she moved to Stafford, Texas in 1900, and talked about hanging out at a tent city style Army post outside of Stafford, now what she was doing there I can only guess, but knowing my family like I do it was probably something a 17 year old girl should not have been doing, so to not disparage my grandmother, or her actions let's just say she had a colorful life.

She also told me that her brother was in the great flood, and hurricane that hit Galveston in 1900 killing over 8,000 people, and her brother survived but later died and he left her moment of the flood and his life, like a stopped pocket watch that stopped at the time salt water got into it during the flood, and other items.

She had lots of stuff as a matter of fact when she died. When one of my uncles opened her old "Hope Chest", he found stuff like 6 shooters with holsters that had seen a lot of use, and also a 410 ga. shotgun pistol, some old U.S. Army eating utensils etc.... the list goes on, and on.

I would listen to her and see these images of her life, and just eat it up. I have a love for history even to this day because of her. Grandma chain smoked Raleigh cig.s like there was no tomorrow, but she also chewed the filters more than she smoked. I don't see how she ever drew on a cig to get smoke but she did.

Grandma was laid to rest the following day, and what history she had still not told me about went to her grave with her. After all the family get togethers and such, Paw Paw, and Granny brought me back to Vidor.

Granny told me that Paw Paw needed help at the station, and that was that. I was glad to help them, no wages were paid, so I figured that I was working for room and board.

That wasn't going to help me get a car though since money is what I needed to buy a car. I would need to find some way to get one. Paw Paw, had a plan for the though, and he gave me some hand tools, and an old tackle box. He would share the mechanic work because Uncle Bill was working for Uncle Joe

-116-
at Joe Collins Freeway Gulf right off IH 10. Uncle Joe could pay him a salary as well as money on the mechanicing. Most of what Paw Paw made went back into the station. Their house was paid for as was their lot in town, so they just kept money coming in to supplement their income.

Paw Paw could take a VW motor and rebuild it and put it back in the car in about an hour.

These were the old air cooled ones back in the day, not these new pseudo bugs that they make now-a-days, so the mold was set when there was extra work that either Dad, or Uncle Bill didn't come by and do to make extra money on. I got to work on it. Paw Paw showed me what it took to rebuild a VW motor which really wasn't all that though. I was given the chance to help out in the shop. Of course I ran the gas pumps on the full service side, and serviced cars, and as you might know they had a lot of older customers, and there was a lot of women that liked the full service station. They knew that they would not be messed over and told that they needed something when they didn't, and when I looked under the hood, and checked things for them if I saw something that was suspect I would get Paw Paw, and tell him what was up, and if work was needed to be done like a belt change, or something we would let them know, and I would do the job right then and there for only the cost of the belt and they would never have to leave the car because there was a shaded awning over the pumps, or they could go inside the station and talk to Granny.

Most of the time the little jobs like that would only take me a few minutes at the pumps but the only bad thing about this is the fact that the cars had been running so they were hot and everywhere you touched would burn you so I wore gloves a lot when I had to do something like that. We never pressured anybody, so I had a lot of cars that made a funny noise that I had to check out there.

After people started knowing about me, they would seek me out a lot to help them at the pumps, and we all had our customers that we worked with on a regular basis, or at least I did anyway.

Everybody knew Paw Paw, and Granny, but when it came to Dad, and Uncle Bill they didn't because they only came by to do extra work and only stayed in the shop bay and didn't work the pumps like I did.

Paw Paw pretty much had all of the VW work in Vidor since not many people
worked on imports around town, and the back of the station always had no less than 5 cars at any given time. The only time we needed to put a car on hold was when parts had to be ordered by the local Auto Parts Store, or I would have to go to Orangefield, and get a used part from Grainger's Import.

They had a wrecking yard for imports, so used parts were around, and approved of by our customers because of the savings.

I still sniffed paint, but now went off when there wasn't anything going on, or I just took off which was rare. We were closed on Sundays, and after 6 Pm. on any other day. Again this was a town where everything closed up early on main street. Our Gulf station wasn't any different.

Uncle Joe, though stayed open till about 11 Pm. if not later than that, or you had to go to the truck stop a Union 76 up the road from him that was open 24/7.

I could find ways of going off to do paint, but I didn't leave Paw Paw hanging he was my buddy, my fishing pal, and I loved my Grandparents. After I got to working there younger customers, and some of them, or most of them actual were gals. They were from the local neighborhoods and they started coming by to talk and drink a cold coke, and walk back home. They all knew Paw Paw, for he was every kids Paw Paw, and even teen age gals would come there to give him big hugs, and even sit in his lap in front of Granny.

Granny would just talk to them like they were her grandkids, and everybody got along. Granny would just get on them and everybody would laugh and so that is the way it was around there a real family buisness. Granny could be a little cranky sounding to talk to, but a lot of fun to talk to. Since I was Paw Paw's grandson he started giving me the younger customers, mainly the older gals in their upper teens and early adulthood up to the 30's or so.

They were find with that, and so was I. Paw Paw told me the reason he did this was because he could only deal with so much flirting when he was trying to get motors fixed. He is like me, he gets lost in his working with machines, for they intrigue us, and the way stuff works is always an interest to the men of my family, and that's why we were all good mechanics.

Of course that's exactly why everybody brought us cars to fix too. We would go thru the cars that other people either couldn't or wouldn't. This worked out for all of us.
One day Paw Paw, and I went to this house to drag a car from it. He said I could fix it, and I didn't think anything about it because he did this a lot. This car was a real basket case and we had to look around the yard and floor boards and an actual basket that had parts all from this car in it as well as spread out in other places. Paw Paw didn't like this type of stuff so he gave it to me to puzzle out.

I should have known that there was more to it than I did, but I was all into fixing this thing up and seeing how it would run when Paw Paw sicced this 19 year old gal and her Mom on me while I was working on her car.

It just so happened that day that Grammy was running the front of the station, and I was elbow deep in this cars motor and Paw Paw was working on his motor on the floor lift in the middle of the bay. I was at the back of the bay half in the shop and the car was halfway outside.

This car belonged to this 19 year old named Bonnie, she and her Mom always came to the station, and they would talk my ear off while I worked on the car. I would look over at Paw Paw and see this "I told you so", look and smile at me because he knew what I was going thru. This tickled him for some reason, but I didn't mind it too much as long as I could get some work done.

I pulled a fast one though that Paw Paw hadn't thought of. I would get Bonnie and her Mom to run and get parts for their car at one of the two places that we dealt with, or I would have them take something like the radiator to a person that could unclog it and they would get a discount by telling him it was for us to fix their car with. I was only charging her $75.00 to rebuild her motor instead of the flat $350.00 that labor started at for these motors.

She didn't get a $75 dollar job though just because I charged cheaper rates was not so I could flub off on a motor, it was the way we all worked.

Paw Paw had a policy that instead of charging what the high priced import people did by law he charged what he thought was a fair price, and didn't act like it would take him a week to fix something for if it took a couple of hours he would say so, and people appreciated that, and another reason he did this, he said that if you did your customers right and cut them some slack and was fair to them that you would always have something that would be there to bring in money and you would always have work. I believed him in this because I could look in the back of the station and see the results of this policy.
The way our service station worked was that it didn't make any difference where a person pulled up in their cars: if they needed help then that was what we was there for, and we did it with a smile. I even had some of my female customers that would pull up to the self serve pumps and ask me to pump their gas and check under their hoods, and this was just to save a penny or two, but it didn't make any difference they were good customers and my customers and I had no problem saving them a penny or two. Gas though at the time was only about 45¢ per gallon but even then that was a lot to some.

I told my customers that the next time they needed me to do this just pull up under the awening and I would charge them the self serve prices anyway because it was all the same gas except the different grades, so this way I didn't have to do all of this under a hot hood in the hot Texas sun.

My grandparents were people that liked people, so when they saw me give one of my customers full service at the self service pumps nothing was said. Well to make a long story shorter about the car I was fixing it took a lot to get it running again, because somebody had used a ton of stop leak in the motor and stopped the motor water jackets all up. There were bird nests built in air dams and the ram air system and even though I got this car to running good it if got hot on them I would take the motor back apart and go thru it again, I ended up doing this about four times and then decided that it would never run like it was suppose to for if it sat too long in one spot like a railroad crossing running it just couldn't stay cool and would start running hot again. I suggested that she buy another motor and I would put that in at no cost but they didn't want to do this. I never charged Bonnie or her mother again from the first time I rebuilt the motor even though I went thru it 3 more times at no cost.

This is why we kept customers and always had someone bringing a car to us. It just made me sad that I couldn't stop it from running hot, but I can't account for someone elses way of fixing things, and even though she drove this car all of the time and it never got hot, that sitting in one place too long and it getting hot I couldn't ever fix.

It got her around though and she always came into the station and I would be able to keep an eye on it that way so she was a happy camper, and they invited me over to eat supper with them now and again. Bonnie had sent one of her girlfriends up to the station to give me her phone number and had me call her while she stood there. That was funny I felt like I was in high
School.

I met a 17 year old gal named Ruanne that lived two houses down from my Grandparents. I saw her, and her friend Stacy who lived in the house across the street, and I would see them each day in the late afternoon while I sat outside trying to play the old guitar that my granddad had. Once the ice was broken Ruanne would visit a lot after school, for she was in High School.

Ruanne would come to the station on Sat., and spend the whole day with me. Her Dad was opening up a motorcycle repair shop behind out station on the next property in what looked like an old barn although not a big one.

I would go visit with them, and they liked me. Her Dad, and Mom did anyway.

Paw Paw saw that I could fix out board motors too, so he started getting a few of them in there too for me to fix. Most of the time I made money at the shop I gave most of it to Granny and Paw Paw for food and stuff although I had earned it, and needed it, I would keep some of it for my needs too.

I didn't need money for paint or bags because I stole this most of the time.

I just needed change to buy this and that. This helped them with more money in their pockets. Of course Paw Paw would shut down, and go fishing occasions when things were too slow, or Bill would come over to run the shop with Granny.

Fishing was what Paw Paw lived for, and I was right there with him on that, and most of the time I was just tell Paw Paw "hey lets go fishing", and that is all it took and were were gone.

My paint sniffing didn't stop but it was more controlled though, and I kept it at the least I could do without stopping because if I stopped all together I would binge, and disappear for weeks at a time, and I didn't want to do that to my grandparents.

I would go to church with Ruanne now and again since neither of us went to a church I saw a Pentacostal Church close enough that we could walk to, so we would go there.

Paw Paw at one time was a Pentacostal Preacher whom fell away from it, as did Uncle Bill. Drugs, and alcohol have been the bane of many a man and woman, and just because they had been preachers didn't exclude them from these demons either. Ruanne and I got along great like I did with all the gals
but again my paint sniffing destroyed that relationship too. She knew of areas I would go to and sniff paint, and come, and try to talk me out of doing that stuff. I would be at this old abandoned house, or in some tall weeds by an old watertower that use to be next to an old park that had a couple of old picnic tables still under a couple of big old trees, the key word being old for sure. I found out about this old park by the girls Ruanne and Stacy and we would go there and smoke weed at times.

There was never a shortage of weed. Uncle Bill always had it, and I would score from him, and since then I also found out that Grammy smoked too, and so we all had a smoking good time sitting on the screened front porch of Grammy's house, Paw Paw didn't smoke that I knew of, but I smoked around him all the time, and he would take a few drinks of whiskey with a melted peppermint stick in it. He would also crush it up if he didn't melt it, so one or the other was always in his pint.

The only reason Ruanne wouldn't smoke around my grandparents was because as most young people do they kept that type of behavior hidden.

The old park was only a block away, and we actually got to it by going thru Stacy's back yard, so after we spent an hour, or so necking, and smoking we would come back to Grammy's, for at least Grammy, and Uncle Bill were funny, and Ruanne's high didn't get spoiled trying to act straight. That was always a Buzz Killer, and that was the way things went for a while then Ruanne and I broke up.

I was still doing my paint, and still working at the Gulf station trying to make headway to get a car. Paw Paw had an old 66' VW Bug behind the station that he gave to me. This was ok, but it needed the motor rebuilt, and it needed tagged and inspected. There was also a few other things that it needed too, and even though it was nice of Paw Paw to give me a car this didn't really help me out too much. It did give me a place to get out of the rain at night when I was alley catting out at night sniffing paint.

Since we had other cars behind the station as well as no security light it was a perfect place to sit and sniff paint. During this time Uncle Bill was married to a gal named Polly whom was a nurse someplace. She had a friend come stay with them named Molly (No Joke here either!), anyway Molly had her little girl with her. She had left her husband in Dallas. I visited Uncle Bill a lot, and went over there to smoke weed too, and then that's where I had met her.
My areas of paint sniffing expanded to all close wooded area's, and Vidor had a lot of woods as well as burnt buildings, or abandoned houses, so I visited lots of these places. The woods were my domain and that was the way that I got around unseen most of the times. I lived out in the fringes of life and at night most of the times, and like always I moved like a shadow and that's the way I liked it. If you thought that you saw something out of the corner of your eye maybe you did, because it might have been me passing thru the woods near you, but when you looked good I would already be gone.

I would spend my weekends in a burnt out buisness. I believe it was an old beauty shop or something like that. It was by IH 10 which gave me a view of the road, and at night I would sit in this burnt out building, and watch the traffic, and trip on the headlights.

There was also an old brick house that had been mostly gutted that I used to sniff paint in a lot also. This place was also by the road too. Most of the times I used these places was to get out of the rain, but the woods was still my favorite place to be.

There was things that you always had to keep your eyes open for mainly snakes, for this was an area that had lots of Coral Snakes, Copperheads, Timber Rattlers, and Cotton Mouths, not to mention Spiders, and Scorpions etc.... I wandered these woods like a wild animal going toward the lights at night, like a Moth towards a flame. The lights that I saw in the woods at night were usually security lights, a lamp post, or even a back porch light.

I would just see them thru the trees, and head to them, this was just to give me some direction to go during my wanderings. Uncle Bill would hustle me off to the bath room to take a hot bath when I would show up at his place. I would be a mess as you could figure out with insect bites all over me, and soot from burnt out buildings, and such.

My family knew that I was in torment with my demons and didn't know how to help me. They knew that I was slowly dying and couldn't stop my self destruction and all they could do was try to feed me or help me in whatever way they could.

Uncle Bill would send Polly into the bathroom with me to see if I needed any type of first aid in any way. I would be soaking the aches away from such a binge.

Now you might think that .... what was all the fuss about?, but that would just mean that this is why you should be reading this book even more...
because too many people think that sniffing paint isn't serious. Well it is and the fuss is because you see someone you care about near death because they are so addicted to a chemical that it's actually killing them, and you don't know what they are except paint thinner, and paints which are not considered drugs, but we all know that anything that can be used to alter your mind and your body like this by its abuse is a drug and drugs are drugs no matter what they are. Paint and paint thinners are not drugs, but they are petro-chemicals that were never meant to be used as a drug for the human body. They weren't tested to be approved by the F.D.A. for a better way to control your eating and, or to cure your problems, and or headaches they are poison, and no different than drinking rat poison, and that by the way was meant to be ingested more so than paint and we know the end result with that stuff already. With paint there is the possibility of Heart Failure, Acute Renal failure (Kidney Failure), Seizures, Blindness, or other maladies including last but not nearly the least Death, so when I came in from these binges medical attention was a good idea although I didn't know what everybody was so freaked out about because I certainly wasn't. I figured a good night sleep, and a couple of hot meals, and I would be ready to go sniff even more paint.

I said sleep would help, but there was never a peaceful sleep, for my mind craved paint, and I would constantly awaken with the paint calling me.

Polly was a nurse and she would hover around me like a hen with her chicks and she was not yet in her 30's, so I would cover up when she came into the bathroom while I was soaking in the hot tub. This hot water always felt so good on my aching kidneys for even though I didn't realize it they were taking a pounding trying to filter out these harmful chemicals. People don't realize how serious a hard core addiction is be it paint, or some other drug. People don't seem to understand that these addictions, or these types of addictions cannot be told no by the addict. There is no saying "no", only use till death, or until it's physically taken away from you.

I loathed this addiction, and this type of life, but could not leave this mess alone. During these periods of rehab albeit short as they were Molly started liking me, and I her. Because she had a little girl I tried to stay clean and sober longer by going to Uncle Bill's after work instead of going out to sniff paint. I would visit with Molly, and rest until I started to feel like I could go longer without using, but it wasn't to be, and after
a few days I would take off for a few hours to get a fix.

Uncle Bill, and Polly, saw that Molly, and her girl were keeping me sober longer, so they encouraged our getting more involved. Her still being married meant nothing to me since I was an uncouth bastard, and not too compassionate either.

I never concerned myself with whether Molly was in a dilemma concerning her marriage, since I rode the lightening, so close to death many times in my short life. I believed you lived in the now, and didn't concern yourself with what lay in the future. I did want to take our relationship to the next level by living together, for we had already had lots of wild sex, but before she would commit to that she wanted to go back to Dallas to close the books on her marriage. Before she left though she decided she no longer wanted to have sex, and was always real moody. Well, Uncle Bill and I took Polly, Molly, and her girl to Houston to catch a bus. Why? Beats me since there was a bus station in Beaumont, and I had been let out there so I knew it was there. There's not a whole lot that gets by me as you can see.

Polly wanted to go with Molly to visit some friends, and when Molly was done getting her business straight, and taken care of she promised to come back.

After she left I went into hard core sniffing paint, and although still working, and helping Paw Paw there just wasn't much money being made. I then met a dude named Jerry Chandler, at the station about my age, and he liked having me work on his car since he was a "mambie pambie type of a dude", whom I thought had a little, or even maybe a lot of sugar in his gas tank.

I say this because I couldn't figure a man his age would be so out of tune with his car. I figure that a man should at least know the basics about his car if he is going to be driving it. The stuff that I did to his car he could have done, and been doing his self. I can understand a woman not knowing about the up keep on their cars, but a dude should just know some things about cars.

Now gals don't get me wrong I do know that there is reasons that ya'll don't know a lot about cars, and I am not being deflamatory at all, for I have found out thru the years that most gals had a better understanding than this dude did about their cars so if anything it is he that should take offense not anybody else.
Jerry was friendly, though, and he had a car, and always wanted me to go places with him. He hooked me up once with a gal that lived next to Ruanne's that we went on a double date with, but to tell you the truth I don't even remember what we did. I think that she knew that I use to be with Ruanne since they were neighbors, but that was the only date we had.

I clicked along for about a month, or so, and there was no news from Dallas, so since I couldn't call Molly I was just doing my thing.

One day a silver Malibu came to the back of the station where I was working on something. Coming to the back of the station was an easy way to talk to one of us when a person wanted their cars worked on, so they didn't take up space at the gas pumps. This was not a big station it was, or had been around probably since the 40's, or before, and was on the corner of Main St. and Courtland Rd.

This day I was by myself, and things were slow, and I was in the bay helping this gal with her 65' yellow Mustang, that as a matter of fact was like a street rod. She had wanted to use our car lift in the bay to get a good look at the underside of her car, so I ran her car up, so she could look at the her car and could check it out. As I said earlier some gals do know more about cars than this dude I was speaking about because this gal with the Mustang had built her own car.

The gal with the silver Malibu was Jerry's sister I found out, and she had asked for "a Tim", and I told her that I was Tim, , and she told me that Jerry had messed up his clutch, and or had burnt it out on his car, and he wanted to know if I would come over to work on it? I told her that it would probably be on the following day since that was Saturday because I was at the station by myself and couldn't close it. I told her that since it was a clutch problem that I would most likely need all day to get it going again.

She told me how to get to her parents house which wasn't all that far from Uncle Bill's, so I knew the area. This gal's name was Joanne, and it seemed that everywhere there was a Joanne, or Joanna or something close to that. My Mom's middle name was Joanne, my sister was Joanna, and so on, and here was another Joanne.

This Joanne was kinda chunky, and had an overbite some, but I enjoyed talking to her that little bit.

Now please understand folks that even though I did some very crazy things
while I was on paint and my system was saturated with petro-chemicals when I wasn’t I was a nice enough person I felt. I enjoyed talking and liked to make people laugh. I will be the first to tell you though that I could be an ass when needed but thankfully those that I was an ass towards needed a person to be an ass for them.

My grandfather came back later with granny, and I let him know that I was going to go fix a car the next day, and let him know that things had been slow, so I told him about the gal with the Mustang that had built her own car, and that I had put her car up on the lift which he was ok with since he also had done this same thing too for the same gal, since he knew her. He had actually let her put her "Hi-Jackers Air Shocks", on one day up on the lift, and even let her use his tools too. Paw Paw was just an ole softy. Granny though called her a "split-tail", and said that we should have charged her for putting the car up on the lift. Granny was a little jealous of this gal for some reason. We decided to change the subject.

Saturday rolled around, and about 7 Am. I grabbed my old metal tacklebox/tool box, and set it on my shoulder then took off walking. Paw Paw was at the station with Uncle Bill working on a Chevy truck that Bill had someone bring over to fix.

I stopped to get a coke then took off. I didn’t ask anybody for a ride, for I was pretty independant, and liked it that way. It took me about 40 min. to walk there because I couldn’t take the short cut across IH 10 with my tool box because there was something like a fence in the middle of the interstate to keep people from crossing the street, or highway. I could climb it without tools, but not with them.

I finally got to their place, and got the information I needed off of his car which was a Chevy Vega that the clutch needed changing on. Luckily the car was under a car port, but had a dirt floor actually a red sandy type floor which meant that it was going to be a dirty job plus this sand would be all in my clothes.

I told him that I would only charge him $35,00 dollars for the labor, but he had to buy his parts. I should have charged more since this was going to be the good ole fashion type of shade tree mechanicing, so I slide under the car, and went to work.

Everyone in his family was there, Jerry his Mom Maybelle, his Dad Joe,
sister Joanne, and his oldest sister Judy. They all sat under the shade trees drinking ice tea in the front yard laughing, and joking at the show going on. I was the show as you might have figured. I guess that it was all in a good natured fun sort of way, and they would talk trash to Jerry for taking advantage of his friendship with me to work on his dumb car.

Joanne, and Judy kinda looked alike although one was older than the other. They got a big kick out of a slight flub that I had made when Judy came to ask me if I wanted a glass of ice tea. I told her that I would appreciate that sweetheart. She just laughed for when I climbed out from under the car which was where I was at the time, I saw that it was Judy of whom I had just met. I had talked to Joanne a lot since the first time I had seen her the day before so was pretty comfortable talking to her. I apologized for I mistaking her for Joanne, but said that she was still a sweetheart just the same because the ice tea was really welcomed and it was really hot and she was thoughtful enough to check on me and see if I needed anything.

Now guys take note here, you can always correct a mishap if you just do a little thinking on your feet at times, but of course I sometimes realize that my family tree has some mighty twisted roots in it so maybe I just lucked out and thought of someway to save face.

Well everybody made a big joke at everything that was going on. I guess my being a hippy mechanic was just too damn funny. I finally got the old clutch plate off the car, and wrapped it up, and gave it to Jerry with the info I'd got off his car, and sent him to the parts store with instructions to tell them he was getting his car fixed at Henry's Gulf on Main St., so that he would get a discount. He did this, and I on the other hand sat under the trees with everybody to shoot the breeze. Jerry came back with the throwout bearing and clutch then I finished the job in a couple of hours. I was filthy, and Joanne's dog hadn't helped out with that since he wanted to get under the car. He kept aiming his dirt that he was digging up so that he could lay in a cool spot at me. It was bad enough that I was crawling around under a car getting dirty on my own so now there was a dog tossing dirt on me too, so I did the next best thing I threw dirt back on him and he ran out from under the car. I figured that he could throw it on me so I could throw it back. He didn't care for that though and ran to Joanne.

Oh that wasn't the only time he did this that day and because he couldn't
find him the right spot to lay in and I'd foget about him until he threw
dirt back on me again, and he just showed me in this red sand.

I was getting tired of eating dirt everytime this dog came under the
car so the last time he did this and was turned away from me raining dirt
on me I took my long extension and poked him in the butt with it which made
him yelp, but got his attention and he ran out from under the car.

Joe, Joanne's Dad had seen what I did, but he didn't say anything, but
he smiled, and took a sip of beer. I gathered that he didn't care too much
for this dog either. Joanne couldn't figure out why her dog had lit a shuck
out from under the car, and I told her that he had probably hurt his foot,
or bumped his head on the car. I then told her or he may have bumped into
something that he didn't like to much. This made Joe burst out laughing,
and I just smiled.

I didn't need to worry about the dumb dog though. When I was finished,
and dusted off I laid an old sheet over the seat, and I test drove the car
to be sure that the clutch was adjusted right. Jerry now wanted me to do his
brakes, so I told him that I would charge him $40,00 dollars and to bring
it to the shop because I wasn't going to do it in his drive way again.

They paid me, or his Mom did anyway, and then she told me, or actually
told Joanne to take me into the house, so I could take a shower, and she wash
my clothes. She made Jerry give me a robe to wear, so that was cool, and
I took Maybelle up on the offer. It was getting late and I hadn't ate all
day, and Maybelle and the rest had now moved inside, and Maybelle was cooking
steaks. Judy lived in her own place on land that butted up to Maybelle's
and Joe's place. Judy She had a couple of kiddos Jody, and Tara. Everybody
was still at Maybelle's, and Maybelle hooked me up with a steak dinner.

I was batting a thousand now, so I decided after dinner that it was time
to head on out. I got my tool box and started back to Paw Paw's. After this
time of going to there house Joanne and I became an item.

I kinda liked the gal and she did have a car, so that was something too.
Don't get me wrong I didn't hang out with her just for a car but it did
help for sure, because we did go a lot of places in it.

Joanne was 4 years older than I was, and she had a job as a medication
nurse at the nursing home that her mother ran called "Jone's Health Center",
and all of the family worked there even Joe did part time, but he was a super-
visor at Mobil Oil in the carpentry dept. Judy, Joanne, and Jerry were all medication nurses there, and this nursing home was also right down the street from Paw Paw, and Granny's house on Courtland Rd. It was just a little further down the road as a matter of fact.

This Courtland Rd. was a residential street but there was a couple of businesses on it. It was also a quiet street although you might have already figured that out since we smoked weed on the front porch of Granny's and Paw Paw's house.

There was an apartment complex right across from the nursing home too, so this little road had its share of traffic too.

I started seeing Joanne more and more, and as things went Molly was not going to come back, and she was pregnant, and going to stay up there in Dallas.

Who's child it was I don't know, but I somehow think maybe it could have been mine. I never really put too much thought into it since my addiction ruled my life.

I started staying away from the Gulf station some more since I couldn't stay out of the woods sniffing paint this was for the best. Paw Paw, nor Granny would say anything about the paint sniffing since nobody understood, what was really happening, even I didn't understand all I knew was that I hopelessly tied to this addiction, and as I tried to live my life it too cut out a niche, so that it could always have a place in my life. It would not be excluded.

Joanne, and I decided to get married which I thought was a grown up thing that I should do. Joanne and I was breaking in the back seat of the 76' Malibu that Joanne had, and we felt that we were in love/ We would sometimes spring for a motel room, or use Uncle Bill's place since he and Polly's kids were up in Dallas with Polly and Molly for a week or so.

Things would heat up quite a bit when Joanne and I married, but we wouldn't know that until we did.
CHAPTER 9

Joanne, and I really had no business getting married at that time since I myself wasn't drawing a pay check. It all went kinda like this.

One Friday, Joanne, and I had decided to more or less Elope. I had sat and asked for Joanne's hand one day the good ole fashion way by talking to her father Joe, and Maybelle. They thought that we were just being silly, so really didn't take it seriously since I didn't have a paying job. After I had gotten engaged with Joanne they really didn't like me because I wasn't good enough to be in their family.

Maybelle's family had been deeply rooted in the Vidor area by the Mansfields which owned the Mansfield Ferry the only way to get to the Vidor area, and beyond back in the days before IH 10 was built. I couldn't tell you how far back that is but it had to have been at the turn of the century since there was those around that still remembered it. Anyway my family had been in that area a while too, and owned businesses, but we were just down to earth people. I was good enough to be a mechanic for them to make fun of and to work on their cars but not really be a member of their family, or so they thought.

Joanne, and I took off one weekend. Here's a special note here. Remember that we are both legally adults. I was 19 years old, and she was 23 years old. We took off, and went to Bridge city a neighboring small city going towards Orange, Texas, or next to it actually almost in Louisiana.

We used her check to get us food to eat, and buy gas, rent a motel room etc.... Joanne called her family, and told them that she wasn't coming back until she was ready. Oh this was stirring up a fireant hill. They all got in their cars, and started combing the motels to try to find us. They went by Paw Paw's, and Granny's, my Dad's place, or where ever they thought we may have went.

They got a cold response from my family for sure since first of all I was old enough to do what I wanted, and secondly because they were sticking their noses into our business, and since everybody in my family made, or
makes a living getting grease under their fingernails didn't take too kindly to their degrading remarks about me, so they got no help there.

You can see where this is going right? These people had nothing exciting going on in their backwoods lives, so they thought that they were doing something.

Denise was Jerry's girlfriend, and of course their family didn't like her as much as they disliked me. She told them that they just needed to leave us alone, oh yea that advice didn't work too well either.

When Joanne called them they, or Jerry stated that they had called the cops on us, but of course even I knew that the cops wouldn't get involved since we were old enough to do this. We stayed in Bridge City that weekend then went to Beaumont to get married. Back then you had to get a blood test which took 3 days to get back, so we used the rest of Joanne's money for that, and another motel room.

I had a dalmation puppy that we had with us that we were sneaking into the motel rooms, so I ended up giving him to a family with kids. I then sold a pint of blood to pay for the lab test on the blood that had to be tested.

I got $35.00 for the blood. We sat out this waiting period at this cheap motel, and we were kept quite busy having started the honeymoon a few days earlier. No waiting for sex for us, and we didn't need a piece of paper for that, and since we had been having sex all the time before that too there was no stopping us.

I think that it was July 8, 1976 on a Thursday... that would be about right since we did the... or I sold blood on a Monday we did the test got the marriage license etc... so in Beaumont we went to the Justice of the Peace got hooked up, and afterwards I had a $10.00 bill left, and was going to give the J.P. a five dollar bill for a tip, I guess that it would be called because that was all the money I had. He smiled, and took the whole ten dollars and told me he had to have campaign money. I told him that I had to sell blood to get that, and he said: a bit of advice son, he said your married now get use to it. He then told me look son I can only please one person per day and that person seems to be your new wife, so today is not your day and as a matter of fact tomorrow doesn't look good either, so have a great life and thank you for the $10.00.

Well I had to figure out a way to get us some more money now and I found
out that since I had just sold a pint of blood within this short amount of time that they wouldn't let me sell another one, but I could sell serum, so I did that, and Joanne sold a pint of blood since she hadn't sold any that week.

We went back to the motel, and then we went to a K.F.C. in Beaumont, and ran into Jerry, and Denise where we broke the news to them, and even showed Jerry and Denise the marriage lic. Denise was happy for us, and Jerry was going to try to get his parents to get the marriage annulled which was they couldn't, so in the end Joanne got another $30,000 bucks from Jerry, and we told them we would be in touch. They wanted us to come back to Vidor, but we wasn't ready to confront her parents, but now that Jerry was secure in the fact that we were married now he figured that he was now going to be ok with it, for now he figured he wouldn't have to pay me to fix his car.

Anyway he was now going to lay down the facts that we were married to the parents, and they had to lump it or leave it.

Joanne, and I headed to Louisiana to the little town of Oppaloosa, La., and stayed at a place called the "Pelican Inn". This place wasn't deep into Louisiana, for we were right across the state line. We stayed the weekend there, and now Joanne wanted to go back home, so she talked to her parents on the phone, and was told to come home and that I could come too since they knew that she wasn't coming back until I was allowed too.

We checked out that Monday, and went back to Vidor Texas. When we got back to Vidor which only took about an hour, or so because we weren't but about 40 miles away we went into Joanne's room which use to be a back porch that was walled in with slatted windows that could be opened by cranking them out. It had been included with the central heat, and air. We could come and go without any problems since we were at the back of the house within sight of the kitchen, and carport, so it was almost like having our own apartment. The only reason to go into the house proper was because of the restroom and everybody was gone since it was still early in the day, so I laid down, and talked to Joanne about places that I could check on to go to work. I was going to need a job that paid a paycheck on a regular basis. Paw Paw's station was in trouble at the time, some lawyers wanted the station, and their law firm, and Paw Paw wasn't selling, so the lawyers found something wrong with his contracts on his buying the station and they had the property snatched out from under him and then he had to close the station.

-133-
This station was on a corner of main street, so it was choice.

They ended up getting the station, and Paw Paw opened another shop down on Hwy. 105 which is still main street of Vidor just not right in town. He called this place T.H. Imports being his name was Thomas Henry Brent, and that's where he got the T.H., so our customers moved with him as did mine.

The place he chose though even though on top of a hill flooded something awful. I have never figured this out unless the place was built on a hollow spot, or indentation in the top of the hill, but when it rained which it did a lot there would be at least 6 inches of water inside the shop, and unless we used a pump to get rid of the water we just had to let it dry out. If we tried sweeping the water out it just came back in the doors.

Coming back home to Joanne's parent's house. Now you might have already figured that the Mom ran the show in this household, and Joe her husband would only get involved in stuff if forced to, so otherwise he just let everybody have their own rat killings. As noted Maybelle wanted her kids to stay close to her, so that she could control every aspect of their lives, and I on the other hand must have peed in her cereal because I had my own ideas about who ran the household in a marriage, and although we now lived or would live there shortly, and only for a while she wasn't going to control me, or Joanne's life.

Maybelle didn't even come back in to the house until about 6 Pm. I had been out looking for a paying job, and had come in and showered. I was laying on the bed when Maybelle came in our room, there was no knocking she just walked in. I had been propped up laying on the bed without a shirt, but had my pants on. She came in and decided she would interrogate us first wanting to know if we were having sex? I stood up, and asked her why? Did she want to watch? I told her you just barge in the room without knocking you just might get your wish. She of course did not like that, so started to upbraid me, but that didn't get too far with me. Maybelle didn't realize that I wasn't her kid, nor did I intimidate that easily, and we were both hard headed coonasses so and wasn't neither one of us backing down and this too she wasn't use to.

Joanne played referee, and tried to defuse the situation. Maybelle started asking about how I would support her daughter having no job, and just being

-134-
a mechanic. I told her that I didn't need her help for anything, and if she wanted to keep Joanne around she'd better go on, and leave me alone since I had family all over the area it would be easy to find another place to live that I only came back to her place because of Joanne. She stated a lot cooler than before that she hopes that I could find a decent job. I told her not to worry Joanne was my wife now, and I would take care of her, so as things cooled down a little Maybelle had became somewhat civil after that. I guess that all she needed was at least to have her say so in the matter.

I went to the DMV and finally got my driver's license. (Yep I finally did it), I was 19 years old, and had been driving since I was 14, not just cars, but army trucks, jeeps, tractors, motorcycles etc... but now I was legal!

I went to Beaumont, and decided to go to this small Mall. I think that it was called Parkdale Mall? There were a few stores there, and Montgomery Wards was one of them, so I told Joanne that I wanted to apply for a job there. We found out where I had to go to put in an application by asking around, and so this I did. After filling out the application which I signed up to be a small engine tech. They asked if I had a driver's lic. I proudly showed them my license, and they asked if I had hand tools? Which I said I did. They told me that they would call me in a day or two when they ran the background checks.

Now you might be wondering how I was doing on paint sniffing? At the time I remember using the car when Joanne was at work, so while I "looked" for a job I sniffed paint. I didn't look to hard though. I just a feeling I would get a job at Montgomery Wards, and was kinda excited about that.

About three days later we got a call in the afternoon for me to come back in because they wanted to discuss my employment there, and had some papers that they wanted me to sign, so Joanne, and I went there the following day a little early, so we could look around. We went to the stereo dept. and was looking at a nice stereo that was a console type more modern than the usual type. A young black gal came to talk to us, and wanted to know if I liked it?

I told her yes, so she explained what it did, and wanted to know if I wanted to buy it? I told her that I needed to at least get a few paychecks under my belt before I bought anything. She asked where I was going to go to work? I told her here at this store, and that was why I was here to sign the paperwork. Oh yea, she said and that lit up her eyes, and she asked
if I wanted it because she would make sure I got it plus a discount for employees, and a credit card from Montgomery Wards. She said she would make sure that it got delivered in a couple of days so I said why not?

That being that we thanked the gal and told her I guess that I needed to go sign those papers now. I signed papers W-2's, and such, and they told me to show up at 6 Am. which was pretty early since the store didn't open until 9 Am. I figured it out though since they had to re-stock, and do other things before they opened up.

I went back to Vidor with Joanne elated for I had a job that would be pretty decent and I didn't have Maybelle to thank for it either. Of course Maybelle didn't like the idea that I had to use Joanne's car to go to work, so I said there wasn't much I could do about that for now, so Joanne just told her to be happy for us.

When I went to work the next day early I of course sniffed paint on the way to work. When I got there I couldn't figure out where I had to go to get in the place since the place wasn't opened up yet. After about 30 minutes of watching people go in and out of the Car Care Clinic I went up there, and just told one of the mechanics that I was starting work there, and I needed to know where to go?

The mechanic just pointed me to a door that led into the store, and that was that, no ID check, nobody even asked if I was suppose to be there so anybody could have walked in and out with anything that they could carry.

I talked to a gal that was setting up, and restocking tools since this was the auto section. She told me where to go, and I went to the small engine repair shop, and talked to a Mgr. named Duke, this was his last name.

Now this gets confusing. Joanne was married for 6 months to a man named Duke, so already I had a dislike for the guy I worked for, also named Duke, but I don't think that they were related, and I also had a brother-in-law named Duke or his first name was Duke anyway, and he drove Semi Trucks. I thought that I would mention this since during this period of time these names crop up a lot, so I can say is stay on ya'lls toes.

I get my time card, and am showed where I would be working, and the machines that need me to fix them. I go get my tools, and come back light a cig, and go to work. Maybe an hour goes by, and I had already fixed 5 mowers, and was looking for something else to fix. The ace number one coon dog mechanic
told me that there was no hurry to fix these things, and to just slow down. I told him that I was working slow already, and asked him what was so hard about working on a stupid lawn mower? So this dude wanted to be a smart ass just because he had a fancy tool box, and he thought he was the best mechanic there. I told this guy to worry about his on work and I would worry about mine and if my working slow made him look bad then so be it. I went to Mr. Duke and told him I needed more work to do, and he said I had enough to stay busy all day, and I just said yea right. He said that he hoped that I had fixed this stuff right, and I told him why did I have to be slow like ole what's his name to make you think I was doing a good job? I then told him then to come check my work, and gave him the work orders.

He did check my work, and of course the other dude wanted to talk crap which I not so politely told to shut up. After Mr. Duke saw that the machines were fixed he had me fix some chain saws which were easier than the lawnmowers then seeing that I was able to finish them he had me help the dude that fixed outboard motors. They were a little more challenging, so I helped him the rest of the day.

Now I don't claim to be some super mechanic, but I've mechaniced all my life as short as it was starting at about 6 years old helping my Granddad by cleaning, and sorting parts to motors "VW's", that he was fixing at car lots. I worked on Flats, Triumphs, Porsche, VW's, Motorcycles, trucks ect.... so lawnmowers were a piece of cake. That's why this other dude felt threatened since lawnmowers were all he knew plus he was one of those that liked to get over, and just side by on his job, as well as charge the customer more for labor. Anyway by the end of the weekme and the dude next to me had a pretty good spat going on till I told him if he even said one more word to me I would bust him in the head with a hammer. Everybody else thought that was funny since he talked crap to the other mechanics too. He was just an arse, but I shut him up because I was dead serious about what I had said to him, and I set a hammer out on my work bench just to let him know I had it within reach.

After a week in the shop besides this crap with this guy Mr. Duke called me in his office, and stated or asked whether I had any traffic tickets, or other moving violations on my driver's license? I told him nope, it was clean as a whistle, so he asked me if I would like to fix bigger mowers?
my skills were wasted in the shop, and he needed real mechanics out on the road fixing the big riding mowers and lawn tractors, for they had hydraulics, and such, and had to have someone that could think on their feet and not have to bring the mowers in to the shop for these other mechanics to play with.

I told him to show me what he wanted me to do. He sent me on the road with another mechanic to learn the paperwork, and how the work went. This consisted of getting fuel first at the Mall gas station, then getting to the first donut shop closest to the Mall where the next 45 minutes was wasted talking to other Montgomery Ward workers. This went on for three days then I was turned loose with my own Van. After seeing how these people worked I had a better idea of how I could do this job a lot better. I wasn't able to punch out at night when I came in, so I kept a truck log which I did keep up without fudging the reports. I talked to Mr. Duke, and asked him if I could just drive the Van home since I lived in Vidor, and we only had one car, and he said that he was ok with that, but I could only fuel up in the morning, and had to be at the Mall when I fueled up. No using the van for personal business either. Yep! That was the ticket!

I got Joanne to take me to work the next day. I then took out my tools, and place them in my van along with a fresh can of paint (inside my tool box), and a handful of new plastic bags.

I went in and got my work orders and route for the day, and picked out the parts that I would need to fix the machines that I had to go see about.

Unlike most of these guys that loaded up the riding mowers, and brought them in for the shop mechanics to sit on a couple of days, or weeks in some cases I opted to fix them at the person's house like the job called for, unless it had a blown engine which was rare, so I pulled parts, and set up my orders to do the furthest one first, and worked my way back towards the Mall. I would let the counter girl know so that if someone called and told her where they lived she could tell the customers where they were on the list and could get an idea if, or when I would get there.

Some of these jobs could be 50 miles away, and since I got an early start I would get to my first job about 8 Am. which was not as bad as 6:50 Am or so if I had went to the closest places first. If I had went to the donut shop I would just be starting out at this time.

I wanted to get on the road as fast as I could so I could get my fix of paint.
I brought my lunch with me plus I had a thermos, and breath mints, but since I was a mechanic smelling like chemical fumes was not a problem. The breath mints always helped bring back feeling in my toungue, so I could talk right. Most of the time I dealt with women since the husbands had went to work, so I was always mindful of my phrasing of things plus I learned that keeping my eyes on theirs helped since most of these gals answered the door in nightgowns, some pretty revealing, or sheer, and some just down right were almost naked.

They were friendly enough as was I but because I had plenty of female customers already in my past I had learned early on how to be nice no matter how much they played, or truthfully how lewd I felt. Some of these gals came on pretty strong, and would come out in their shorty night gowns, and bring me tea, or water which was ok with me, and the eye candy didn't hurt either. No matter how tempting though it was I never made a move on any of these gals. I always stayed respectful, and would even explain what was needed to be done, so they could tell their husbands. I tried to keep things pleasant, and they appreciated that I could tell. Maybe I wasn't hip to the game, or something, you know how the old joke goes, where women call the plumbers over to work on something just so that they can can be the plumbers helper with a nightgown. The point is there was opportunity there had I wanted to pursue that, but I was more interested in finishing the job and moving on to the next one. Truthfully though it got hot real fast, and the only way to cool down was to get the van moving with the windows down for the breeze.

Most of the jobs didn't take me too long, but some did because like sharpening the blades on a mower deck they had to be taken off checked, then sharpened with a grinder I had in the truck, or replaced, and that was the same with the belts. I kept a lot of parts on the truck too so I had most of what I needed when I pulled up to a house to do just about any job.

These mowers would have dirt, grass, stickers, ants you name it caked under them. Most though were pleasant working conditions, nice cool garages by lakes and such. Most of the time when I was finished, and had washed my hands with cleaner, and blew off the grass with my air compressor the customers would invite me in to drink a glass of tea while I did the paperwork but I would only go into the kitchen.
I developed a good repute with these customers, and they would call the shop and give me good reports with Mr. Duke on customer service which I liked, and it got me a raise early as well as a bonus on commissions.

I got lots of renewed service contracts, and was able to make sales while I was on the job site like new tires and batteries if they needed it. I wouldn't pressure anybody I would just tell then that they needed whatever part that they needed, and when they came back to Montgomery Wards just ask for it, and they could buy it. If they did that and wanted me to put it on later then call back and set up another service call and I would put their parts on for them if they didn't know how to do it. If I had one in the van, and it wasn't covered by the service contract I could put it on with a labor charge, and it would be placed on their accounts, no money needed to change hands, and everybody was happy.

The main reason I liked this job was I was able to sniff paint, and do so on a regular basis with short breaks when I fixed a mower. All I worked on was the bigger mowers no push mowers, of course just to be helpful I would on the cool look at a machine if asked, and I could tell them real fast if they needed to bring it in, or it just needed a spark plug cleaning or such.

The only bad thing was sometimes more than not I was still working at 7PM. at night, so I was putting in 12 hour days. It wasn't because of my sniffing paint either it was because I had the largest and most remote areas. If I was running late and it was getting close to supper time, I would call the customer and see if they minded if I came out anyway because I told them that I didn't keep store hours and I wanted them to be seen as I had them on my route for that day. If they did not want me to come that late I set them a date for the following day or whenever I could get back in their area.

Most of the time they didn't mind me coming over just as long as they got their mowers fixed.

This van was like a mobile parts house, and shop combined. This was fine with me, I for the time being was making pretty good money with my check plus commission, and was proving to my in-laws that a mechanic could support a wife. We paid no rent since Maybelle wanted us to put money back to get our own place. Even ole Joe asked me one day about his riding mower. That was really rare since only he worked on it, or used it! It was also a Sears mower. I looked at the motor, and carb., and went to my van and took out
a new one. He said it can't fit for it was a Montgomery Ward mower part, and I told him it was exactly what was on his mower, and he looked at it, and asked if I would put it on his mower? 15 minutes later he was cutting the grass smoking a cig with a smile on his face. I just used his old carb as a trade in.

Now things weren't peaches and cream because I for one have my own way of thinking, and dealing with people. My In-Laws considered me an outlaw not to say that I was a criminal just because I didn't fit into the Chandler household. To them I was a real rebel, a nobody from nowhere. The truth of the matter was Maybelle liked to ride on the history of the Mansfields whom basically made what money they did running the Mansfield Ferry way back when. Me I didn't like them trying to tell me what to do. Never was good with that aspect of life because of all of Mom's boyfriends, and husbands.

That's why I liked my job so much. I went in to work in the morning signed my time in from the night before, and repunched my time card for a new day. I turned in my paperwork restocked my parts and was gone. I only saw the parts gals, and my router that gave me my tickets (workorders), I now knew the area enough (paint sniffing or not) that I could go by the addresses, and areas set up my routes, so that if need be they could call my customers, and give them a headsup if I had any trouble. It all worked out pretty good, and I absolutely sniffed paint all day, took breaks when I wanted, ate lunch as I drove, and even napped during my lunch sometimes when I was by a lake, or at a roadside park. I never came in before dark, and was always beat when I got home probably more so because of the paint sniffing combined with work that is certainly something hard on the body.

I liked the work though, and my boss didn't mind because I got so many good reports from customers. They sent me to fancier places, some or mostly places now like Ivanhoe Lake Community, and Possum Kingdom Estates. They set me up with more than one customer in the area because it was at least a 40 mile run one way, so I would bounce around these gated communities, and spend time at very pretty lakes, and such without so much as a hassle.

One day I had some trouble though, but it wasn't with any of my customers though it was with my boss. I had some local jobs to do, so I knocked them out, or was in the process of doing so. I was at this one customers house, and was having some problems with their riding mower, but I was determined
to fix it before I left. It was really too hot, and I had sweat pouring off of me. Since this is a time before cell phones I needed to call in to let them know that I would be there a couple of hours which was not unheard of, but I needed to let central know in case people called in to see where they were on my route list.

When I called dispatch, and told them where I was they told me to hold on. The customer a gal about 25, or so was there with her sisters, and a couple of kids. I was cooling off, and drinking a tea at their pass thru counter when the phone came to life, and it was accounting. They asked me a couple of questions, and since I had the service contracts I could give them the info they needed. I could see the gals hovering around the phone with worried looks, and I could see why because accounting told me that they were in arrears on their payments for that mower, and their icebox. I just said so what? They told me that I was to repo these items. I told them that they were full of crap that I wasn't taking their lawnmower, and certainly not their icebox! They then told me that I would get fired if I didn't pick up these items, and I told them to go F#*k themselves which made these gals laugh, for they saw that although I worked for Montgomery Wards I wasn't a company man in that way. Anyway they made me hold on, and they patched me thru to my boss Mr. Duke who already knew that I had a problem with him because his last name was Duke, my wife's ex's families name. We still got along though for he assured me that he was no kin to my wife's ex, so he came on the line. I am sure that the gals upstairs in accounting were madder then a wet chicken, but I didn't care for when I draw a battle line that's it, and I don't care if it hair lips a Rhino I stand my ground.

Mr. Duke, asked directions to their house, and I just told him that he had to figure it out. He then tried to bully me into loading up the mower at least, and I told him that if he wanted it he would have to come get it because I wasn't taking one item from these people.

I gave the gal that owned the mower a wink that was standing by me chewing her nails, and she then smiled. Then accounting told me that if they would give me at least one note payment that they would forgo repoing the items which was about $34,00, or something like that. I already knew that this family was on hard times, so told accounting just to take that chump change out of my commissions for that week, and hung up the phone.
The gal asked me what was I going to do, and I told her that after I killed this here tea I was going outside and fix the mower. She followed me outside, and told me her husband would pay me back, but I told her that it wasn't necessary and that I lived with my Maw-In-Law, and my commission checks nobody saw but me, so not to worry about it, and that these people had pissed me off so I would see to it that they didn't get their things. She asked if I would lose my job? I said that I didn't think so since I was a service tech. and not a repo man, so they really can't tell me to pick up an item unless it's for service, so I fixed their mower, and had another cold tea, and the whole time I was there, and the gals wanted to talk too since they all came out to talk. I was sure that they thought that I was still going to take the mower, but I didn't. I told the gal to be sure to keep the mower in the back yard, so some butt kisser working for Montgomery Ward didn't pick up their mower before I took care of the paperwork.

The next day before I left the shop I did exactly that except I gave accounting $75,00 dollars to catch up the arrears, and that was that. Mr Duke, called me in before I left, and wanted to chew me out, but I slammed the keys on his desk, and told him what accounting wanted, and I wasn't taking nobody's icebox or fridge, because the mower could be used to make money, and they needed it. I told him I would not play the bad guy for them, and I fixed mowers only, or other items, and if that wasn't what he wanted there was the keys! He smiled and told me to get the hell out of there, and that I had customers to take care of. Although I never got into trouble for that infraction, nor ever saw these people again I wasn't going to be working for ole Montgomery Ward much longer, but it wasn't because of what had happened.

I know that I am suppose to bow down to the powers that be so that I can look out for number one, but I was just not wired that way, and I didn't like the administration telling me to mess over my customers, for I had it ingrained in my mind now that my Granddad was right you looked out for those that sought out your help, and if you treated them fairly then not only could you sleep each night, but you always had more work than you could deal with most of the time, plus I thought what these people in their offices said sucked.

As I clicked along working for these people things were going pretty good. I sniffed paint like a fiend took breaks from my fixing a mower then
sniffed more paint. I constantly stayed in motion, this is where I learned to be a functional addict, and this is the only way that I could do what I wanted which was sniff paint, make money, and keep me and everybody happy.

On a Friday the 13th. in Aug. of 1976, I was again doing my job. I had went to Orange this morning which is in the opposite of the directions I went most of the time I went to this job and found out that I was going to need some parts that I didn't have on the truck, so I was going to have to go back to the shop because the machine I was working on was a big rototiller which would be hard for me to take in, but wouldn't take me no time to fix once I got the parts.

Orange is on the other side of Vidor, so since I had a job in Vidor I was going to knock that out then go in gas up, and head back out with new parts. The weekend was upon me, and I had a paycheck, and things looked good. I told the folks that had the tiller that I would be back sometime that afternoon.

I went to Vidor, and got on the road that the workorder had stated these people lived on, and that was right down from where I lived by about a half a mile, or mile at the most. I found out that I was on the wrong side of Hwy 105 and was going to have to cross over to the other side. Hwy 105 is a 4 lane and right by a car wash, and the parts store we always used when we had the Gulf Station. I stopped at the stop sign, and waited for the traffic to clear. There was a "Paine Burger" sign next to a telephone pole on my left blocking my view, so as traffic cleared I gave the van some gas to get across the road, and as I cleared the stop sign, and Paine Burger sign, and telephone pole the front end of the van went well into the cloest lane to me, and as I did, there was a car travelling above the speed limit of 35 miles an hour, for he was doing around 50-55 mph. He crashed into my driver side door, and came thru it. I had my window half way down, and my head hit this ... My temple slammed into the edge of the glass. The impact was so great that it spun the steering wheel out of my hands, because the style of van this was I sat on top of the front wheels basically. The hit knocked me all the way across the 4 lane road, and up into a tree next to the car wash. The impact was so severe that it buckled the dash, and broke the passenger seat off it's mount, and of course paperwork, and parts flew all over the cab. Luckily the sharp stuff was in the back like extra blades,
batteries, and other stuff. I was protected from all of this in the back by a metal wall that was there for that reason.

I remember pulling out from this stop sign and just starting to gas the van when I looked to my left and saw this car barreling down on me, and when the impact came and the car came thru my door, it twisted my seat sideways and my arm went between the door splitting open and the seat and as the metal flared I felt my arm wedging between the seat and door and jerked my arm up and sliced it open in a few places from the sharp metal. As the car knocked the wheel out of my hands it also bent the wheel in an angle and as noted buckled the dash. When I hit my head on the door glass at the temple I grabbed my head with both hands because the van was going wherever it was going for it was out of control. I saw other cars coming from the other direction and they were slamming on their brakes as I went across the road and up into the tree by the car wash.

As the van came to a stop I had a few seconds to look around and at the cab, there was a big hole in my door that had flowered in with sharp metal everywhere. My arm was bleeding and still stuck some between the seat and the door, and as I was already cut was trying to keep from causing more damage.

People were running towards my van now from the parts store, and car wash. I saw someone through the blood on the window from where my head had hit the window. The window hadn't broke because I had hit the edge of it.

The man that was at my door was trying to open it and yelled saying that he couldn't get me out because the door wouldn't open. I was knocked silly and wasn't thinking too clearly I tried to get my arm all the way out from the door and was bleeding on the window so people were freaking out trying to get me out of the van in case it caught on fire. I didn't know what it the outside of the van looked like but there was a lot of people trying to get into it to help me.

I saw the passenger door come open and someone came into the van with me and waded thru all the mess and thru the seat that broke out of the van so he could get to me and before I could tell him that my arm was still stuck in the door he pulled on me and that pulled me loose but it caused more damage as the metal edges cut me in a couple more places. As I got out of the van my knees buckled, and I went down to my knees, but I recovered although still a little wobbly I was able to stand by the van.

There was a lot of blood but I didn't think that I was hurt too bad,
so someone gave me something to stop the bleeding of my arm and head. There were a lot of witnesses to the accident, and they knew that I had stopped. The dude driving his sister's car got out on crutches, and a cast on his foot, and leg where he had just wrecked his car a month or so before. The car he was driving was full of guys all smoking weed that scattered after the wreck, and as the cops showed up this dude was talking smack about how "Monkey Wards", was gonna pay big for this wreck. The people had kept him away from me and when the cops had showed up and found out that he was speeding, they also got tired of his mouth pretty fast, so they loaded him up in a police car, and left with him since the witnesses all pointed fingers at that guy, and his cohorts that had took off. They dispatched the E.M.T.'s to the scene because I was bleeding still on my arm and temple. One cop looked van, and asked where it needed to be towed to. I didn't want that my paint and tools was in there somewhere and I really wanted to sniff some more paint now even more so because I was hurting for sure. I told the cop that I thought that I could drive it to my house, and I told him I could get somebody to take me to the hospital. I told them that I didn't think that I needed any serious medical attention. The cops said that they would follow me to the house, so I was given a ticket for failure to yeild since I had the stop sign, but that was just a formality since I had all these witnesses, and phone numbers, and addresses as well as statements. The cops said that they would file the report in my favor because they knew what had happened, and that the only reason they gave me a ticket was because of the stop sign.

I climbed back into the van cleared the parts away, and noticed how the steering wheel was tilted as was my seat. The van would drive, but only make right turns which luckily was all I had to do to get home. Once home, and I had the van parked where a tow truck could be dispatched, and able to pick up the van.

I then unloaded my tools, paint, and whatever else I thought I needed. I also got my truck logs, and workorders. I saw that Joanne was home as was Jerry her brother. I went to the door and Jerry, and Denise was coming out.

One look at me and Jerry said "Oh God", and he ran back into the house, and me and Denise walked in after she got some rags because I was still bloody, and had some bleeding thru the gauze that the E.M.T.'s had put on the cuts.

Needless to say I was a mess. Joanne had been sleeping on the couch, for she had a headache, so when I kneeled down, and told her that I needed
to go to the hospital to be checked out, when she got a good look at me she started crying.

I was making a phone call to the boss telling him what had happened, and where the van was, and he told me what hospital to go to. Denise was telling Joanne to stop freaking out that I was ok, and showed her that I was calmly taking care of buisness on the phone. Jerry hadn't helped out any because he had went out to look at the van, and was acting so stupid about the way the van looked. It was tore up bad and looking at the insides of it, it really was a wreck. We left to go to the hospital, and of course Mamma's Boy Jerry had to call Maybelle. They were such drama queens.

We got to the hospital, and I told them what had happened, so they took the info, and sat me in a room for a couple of hours, and kept checking me. Then they took x-rays of my arm, and found that all was well except they thought I had a mild concussion, but nothing to brag about since I had a pretty hard head.

When we got back the van was gone, and I called the shop, and told Mr. Duke that I'd be in Monday. He signed my card out for a full day. I fielded questions, but was tired, so I showered, and laid down. When I got up around 6 Pm. everybody was being real nice to me which always made me leery with them anyway.

The weekend went on without a hitch, I was sore as hell but I dealt with it, and on Monday I had Joanne take me to work. She now worked the afternoon shift. I told her that I was sure to get another van. They always had some parked in the parking lot not being used.

When I went in there I had to answer a ton of questions and do a ton of paperwork for insurance purposes. I had to talk, and give a recording to the insurance company also while I talked to them on the phone.

I was told that the van was totaled, and the frame was cracked, the front end knocked out from under it, and many other things. Duke gave me a Ford pickup to drive which wasn't to my liking because I couldn't carry many parts, that I needed to fix mowers I had to keep the parts locked up as I was away from the truck, so I could only carry the small stuff for repairs in the cab.

This meant that I would have to bring most of the jobs I had to do in to the shop to fix then and then bring them back which was double work for me. That was too much for one person since customers do not want their
mowers brought in, and you also had to get these monsters in the truck by
yourself. After a couple of days of this I told the dude Mr. Duke that I
needed another van, and he said that he wanted me to use the truck, so I
put the keys on his desk, and had him sign my time card, and said goodbye.

I had quit. Joanne knew that I was going to quit, so she followed me
to work. I had unloaded my tools, and such the night before, so my time at
Montgomery Wards was over, but I always liked them as a store, but never
worked for them again. A job wasn't hard to get, and I went right to work
to work for my Uncle Joe at his Gulf Station for $200.00 a week plus what
I made fixing tires, or got for washing cars on the side. Maybelle couldn't
gripe about that since it was a paying job, but then again she always had
a plan up her sleeve, as I would soon find out.
After I started working for my Uncle Joe I got to know him more. You might not understand the fact that I didn't know most of my family. I had never met like my Aunt Gene, and Uncle Joe, and their kids. I only knew them because Aunt Gene was my Dad's sister.

Uncle Joe was a strange one because he always thought that he needed to carry a .357 magnum 6 shooter with a fancy black leather western style holster that would have made any Oater gun slinger proud. He couldn't wear it around his waist on his hips, but could only carry it while he transported his money from the station, so he kept it slung over his shoulder, and always carried a money bag in his hand. This was a Klan town, and although Joe wasn't in the Klan as far as I knew he was still klanish in his ways up to a certain point. If good looking gals black, or white pulled up, or whatever came there he would be strutting around like a proud peacock laughing, and joking, but if a car load of blacks pulled up, or started to get out of their car they might as well have stirred up an ant hill. He would send them away without a second thought. This might have been wrong, but that is the way it was when it came to living in a Klan town, for blacks just weren't welcomed, and car loads weren't for sure. A person might also get the Klan on them even though you was white if you served blacks, and or wasn't acting like the status quo, and the Klan would burn a cross in a white mans yard as fast as a blacks for an infraction that they thought promoted blacks. Of course I know that blacks were served at times just not by the car loads and with Uncle Joe who also was a poonhound if they were women then he was ok with that.

You might think that there was help if blacks called the cops on my Uncle, Joe, but since the cops were as klanish as the Klan there was no help there and as a matter of fact it might be better not to call them if you know what I mean?

I worked in the afternoon till closing each night, so I would drive around
during the day, and sniff paint, or if Joanne, and I had to go do something I would. Maybelle at this time had been looking at trailers, or had run across one that had belonged to an old lady that had passed away. Since she ran a nursing home she always knew about old folks around the town, so anyway one day she told Joanne, and me to come with her to go look at this trailer. We got there which took no time at all since it was only about a mile away at a small trailer court.

We met Maybelle there, and she was at this green and white trailer with the owners. We went in the trailer that in fact was almost brand new. It was a 72, or 73 at 50' called a Rembrant 2 bedroom 1 bath. It was now 1976, so it wasn't an old trailer. It had a new awning that was half the length of the trailer. We didn't know why she had us look at it with her maybe she wanted a second opinion about it or something?

The lady that had owned it had both legs amputated, so didn't get around too good. As far as I was concerned it was a good trailer compared to some I had seen, and unbeknowing to me she had purchased it for $3,000 with a $500.00 balloon note for a total of 3,500 dollars. I found this out one day when a tandem dump truck pulled up to the house, and in the backyard along the property line load after load of 60/40 red sand, and clay was dropped.

I was wondering what was going on till Maybelle, and Joe told me where to start spreading all this dirt. This really pissed me off. There was probably 50,000 lbs of dirt per load of this 60/40 to spread out. At first Joe, and everybody got out there, and played in the dirt, but with me Joe showed me where it was to be spread, and how thick he wanted it, so we spread out the first 4 loads, so it could dry, and get hard, or as hard as it would get anyway.

This wasn't too bad since sand/clay is pretty loose, but after that it wasn't fun anymore because after the dump truck dropped a couple of loads I would be the only one spreading this stuff out.

I wanted to know why they wanted me to do this, and that is when I found out that I had been put in debt on this trailer. Maybelle, and Joanne had worked out the deal without even telling me because she knew that I wanted a place out from under Maybelle's, and Joe's noses. I had asked Joanne why all of them.... Judy, Jerry, and her all wanted to stay right up under their parents? They were all scared to go out on their own for some reason. Judy that was married to Duke had her own place, but her property abutted to the
back of Maybelle, and Joe's property at the end of a dead end road undoubtedly
Maybelle had a hand in her getting that property past a small chicken yard
of Joe's, so she had stepping stones that went from her property past the
chicken yard all the way to the back of the car port of theirs.

Now this trailer would be going along the outside property line halfway
between Judy's, and Maybelle's, and this ticked me off for sure!

Maybelle, and I barely got along, and everybody Judy, Jerry, and Duke
liked to throw gibes at me because they were all just smart asses. Of course
Denise, and I got along great. She was Jerry's girlfriend, so since neither
of us were family we both caught hell. We were the outlaws the rest were
the in-laws.

Now I knew why I was having to spread all of this dirt, but it didn't
make me feel any better.

I would take off, and stay gone all day, but when I came home the pile
of dirt stayed there till I spread it. The dirt never seemed to go away for
I would spread it one day and the next three times as much would be back
there again.

Maybelle, and Joe, and Jerry even Joanne would sit under a big tree in
the backyard that had a benchswing, and other chairs there, and laugh and
joke while I spread out this dirt. Denise would help me, and Jerry would
try to tell her to let me do it, but she had a mouth on her, and would talk
smack back to them as would I, and we would high five each other, and boy
did they hate that!

Since we were basically raising up the level of the back yard making
a small hill, or a knoll, so that the water would drain off out of the yard
I always joked with Denise saying we were raising hell on the hill. This
would tickle her, and of course Jerry was jealous of Denise, and Maybelle,
Judy, and Joanne didn't help matters either.

Denise was slender, and all of them either fat, or chunky. Joanne weighed
in at about 160 lbs. but was 5ft. 8 in., so didn't look too big as was Judy,
but Maybelle was a whale, so they always told Jerry that Denise was flirting
with me. The truth of the matter was we got along great, and that pissed
everybody off. Anyway I would be dog tired by the time that I went to work.

I got all of the dirt spread, and I had basically raised the whole left
side of their back yard up out of a flood stage to a hill as stated. This
took fourteen 50,000 lbs dump truck loads of dirt. That is almost three quarters of a million pounds of dirt that was spread with a wheel barrel and a shovel, and rake, but it was done.

We let it settle a week, or so while the people that would move the trailer got it unhooked, and ready to move. When we was ready the trailer was moved, and although I was at first a little ticked off (my pride bruised I guess) because I thought I should have been able to provide for my wife. I still was excited that "our house", was now being set up. Since I was without credit Maybelle had bought the trialer outright, and I would pay $150.00 a month to pay it off. I would also be responsible for my own electricity. Water, and gas was piggybacked off of Maybelle and Joe's as was the city sewer. They didn't make us pay for that which was good although it wouldn't have been too bad to pay for even if we had.

My old 66' VW was in the back yard as was an old car they had that I couldn't figure out what was wrong with it. Jerry had broke it, and parked it, so there was no telling what he had done to it, and he had everybody and their uncle looked at it so there was no telling what was wrong with it. They had it towed off. I rebuilt the VW engine for $66.00 but it needed to be put back into the Bug. This car needed tagged, and inspected, but Paw Paw had no papers on it, so I sold it for $75.00 to get it out of the yard.

Maybelle was always finding deals (she reminded me of Milton that way), so she had now came to me on a rainy day, and told me to look and see if I had $125.00, and I told her that I did have that, so we went to a feedstore and she showed me this old 56' Chevy pickup that was for sale. I looked at it and saw that it had been an old Vidor ISD work truck, but although not in perfect shape would be a good work truck, so I bought it. As I was warming up the truck another car pulled up, and a guy asked me if I had bought it, so I told him I had, and he offered me $225.00 for it. I almost took it, but said no because first of all I really needed something to drive myself because Joanne and I always had to share her car. I could also see the benefits of having a truck with mud grips, and that was basically an old farm truck.

It was solid, and everything worked. No radio though, so I'd have to put a tape deck in it. No key either, just a switch that turned on the electrical system then you pushed the foot starter, so I put a riding mower key switch on it that some how had found it's way into my tool box, no it was used not a new one, but it worked ok.
This truck though had one thing that would get your attention. It had a mind of its own. It would take off across the road as you was driving, and when you corrected it then it would decide to go that way too so you looked like a drunk driver as you tried to keep this thing going down the road like it was suppose to.

Now this was a problem because as it made you look like you was drunk even when you was sober I knew that it had to be fixed because I was always sniffing paint and did not want the attention of the cops even though I tried to stay on the backroads with it.

I hurried up and fixed this problem although it took a little bit to get it fixed. I had to rebuild the fornt end basically, and did it under the shade trees. Yep I was a real shade tree mechanic now for sure!

Now I had a tank of a truck and a new trailer that came fully loaded with everything including all the linen, pots, pans, plates, beds everything! The only thing that it needed was a washer and dryer, and AC, of course my maw-in-law, and paw-in-law came to the rescue. Joe bought a big 110 volt window unit, and I paid him out on it, and Maybelle found a washer and dryer combo that she found at an auction barn that was bascially brand new that I bought for $35.00. I helped Joe set up our trailer since all the mover did was move the trailer into the yard where we wanted it. Then we dug the sewer lines etc....

Joanne, and I hand planted grass runners in all this dirt, and before long we had grass and stepping stones that ran off the main path of stones going to Judy's, and our porch light now helped light the path at night for Judy and the kids while they walked back and forth.

Once everything was said and done it wasn't long before I started sniffing paint in the house. Joanne being a nurse know of my paint sniffing, for I did it all the time even before we got married, and she had even started or at least tried it once or twice while we watched TV.

She as I would find out later in life, and many NA meetings later would be called an enabler. I just thought it was cool having a gal that was cool with my running the household of course I figured it was because I gave her the best sex of her life, of course I could be wrong in this, but that's the way that I thought anyway.

I was really fun to be around as long as you didn't try to take my paint...
or tick me off while I was sniffing paint. I was clicking along ok, but I
didn't like working around Uncle Joe, for although he was good people he
was quirky with his moods.

Paw Paw, showed up one day, and told me that his friend that ran Graingers
Imports a wrecking yard that dealt with Imports needed a mechanic, and I
would make more money with him, but that he had also told them about me,
and more or less promised them I would go to work for him. This was really
ok with me because it made me feel good that my Paw Paw would talk me
up to people, and believed in my abilities. I loved ole Paw Paw even though
he was my step grandfather. You couldn't tell it with us though since I had
only ever known him and to me he was my grandpaw.

He talked to Joe who was of course cool wiith my going to work there
since it was Paw Paw's idea whom was our patriarchal leader in our family,
and all respected.

I went and found the place that Paw Paw sent me, and talked to the owner
of the place, and he led me to the back. He needed a lead mechanic, and I
was to be it. What this dude did was sell used parts that was still good
if the car had it on it you could buy it.

He had parts pullers that took the stuff off the cars, and he had guys
that rebuilt carbs, and alternaters as well as other stuff, and this other
dude and I rebuilt the cars that weren't damaged too bad. I would rebuild,
motors, or replace motors and fenders etc.... The owner would then resale
the used car after it had been repainted, and repaired.

All of this was a pretty good set up. His property went back from Hwy
105 into the woods, and he had tons of cars in this place that had been there
a minute or two for it had some old stuff there the further back you went the
older it was so it was kinda like walking back in time with the old cars.

It seems that I have this thing for wrecking yards I guess. The shop
I now worked at was about 10 miles away from the house. I was a nice drive
in the woods, for there was woods all around the place, and I sniffed paint
all the time and enjoyed the quiet of the woods. I also liked to go into
the old cars back at the very back of the wrecking yard and sniff paint
sometimes until he closed the yard. The owner never wondered about where
I was, or what I was doing for this was a wrecking yard and all of the guys
working there left whenever they finished their work for the day some later
than the others, and we was mechanics and below the radar to most people.
I kept my paint in my tool box, and when I was using tools I would just put it on the shelf with other paints to use later when I was done with my jobs. I would take my tool box to the back with the pretense of pulling used parts which mechanics were always doing in there. I made pretty good money, but nothing great, for in the end it was a junk yard job no matter how you looked at it.

One morning one of the mechanics and tow truck driver had to leave to go get a car, but he had left a job he was doing which was pulling a rearend off of a truck for a customer to buy. I was working in my shop that I had to myself when the secretary came to get me, and tell me that I needed to pull this rearend, so I got my tools, and was shown what truck to pull it from.

I saw that the truck had been wrecked (go figure) and that it had been put up on some homemade stands which consisted of old rims stood up on end resting on top of one laying flat. I climbed under it, and took off one side of the rearend and while I was doing this the truck shifted. I saw it move so I pushed it back on the stand with my foot and had it resettle itself back on its stand. I decided that I would get out from under it, and just lay along the back bumper on the ground where I wouldn’t be under it if it fell. While I had my knees bent up and my feet rested on the ground as I lay on my back I reached in to put my wrench on the nut.

I never made it because the truck fell with the bumper catching my knee since it was braced on the ground with my foot, and as my knee was up in the air it acted like a jack stand thus rolling my knee under the bumper, and I had to knock it loose and as it came out the tail gate fell open again slamming flat on top of my already injured knee. OH MY GOD! That hurt so bad that it took my breath away literally!

I held my leg, and just lay there trying to catch my breath. Once I could breath again I tried to figure out what had happened. I never saw the truck move instincts had made me jerk away as it fell, or it would have fell on my chest, but my instincts had saved my bacon other times too when a pressure plate fell off the fly wheel of a school bus I was working on that would have crushed my skull had I not jerked out from under it. Well now my tools lay all scattered, so I pushed them closer together, and hobbled to the office and the sales floor. The secretary saw me stop, and lean on a display counter
and then she came to me because I had walked as far as I could. The owner was being a snob, but the secretary told him that he wasn’t being nice that I was really hurt, and he thought that I was acting because he knew I didn’t want to do that other guys work. After he saw that I was really hurt he told the secretary Rachael to take me to a doctor in Bridge City.

The doctor took x-rays, and gave me shots to help with the pain, and swelling and then he put this brace on my knee cap that looked like a horseshoe to keep my knee cap from moving around, but also protected it from bumps. He then pronounced me well, but to try to stay off of it for 3 weeks at least for it was badly bruised, and had blood under the cap as well as swelling but lucky enough there was no broken bones.

The doctor told Rachael that I wasn’t going to be able to drive, or do any serious work. She said that she would tell the boss.

We went back to the shop, and told the owner, and he told me to just go home which meant that Rachael would have to take me home because I couldn’t drive my truck. After she took me home, and I got one of my other cans of paint from my stash after I had got in the house. It had taken both Rachael and myself holding on to her for dear life to even get me in the house. My leg was really swollen now and hurt like the dickens and I couldn’t put any weight on it at all.

The dryer was where I kept my stash of paint and once I was alone I really knocked out the pain by sniffing as much paint as I could. I called Joanne and told her what had happened, and that I needed to get my truck the next day. Of course now Joanne had to come see how I was doing since I wouldn’t be coming up to the nursing home that night. I usually went there at night after work to see the old folks, and help out where I could with maint, and buffing floors and such.

Now Maybelle and Joanne showed up, and tried to talk me into going to the nursing home. I wouldn’t though. Joanne knew that I would be sniffing paint the entire night, and wanted me to be cool while she was at work. I on the other hand cooked me some hot dogs, and settled in to watch some TV.

The next day Joanne and I went to the shop to pick up my truck. She could drive a standard although not too good, and we went back home after I went in to tell them that I would take off a few days. Joanne had brought me some crutches from the nursing home so I could get around. Rachael had went out
and found all of my tools I had out there where the truck had fell on me, and she had put them back in the smallish tool box I had and carried them back in, and had them behind the counter where she could keep an eye on them.

Grainger told me that I would work in there with Rachael till my knee got better. Joanne and I left, and I drove the Malibu since it was an automatic and we then went to the house.

Joanne tried to talk me out of sniffing paint while I was on pain pills, but I wouldn't listen. The pain pills didn't bother me, and they didn't help as far as I was concerned, for with my sniffing paint everyday hour after hour as you might have figured the pain pills had no effect, and it's the same reason that I needed 12 hits of acid to feel anything when I tried to get high on that.

I spent the weekend mostly in the trailer just sniffing paint, and when Joanne and I did leave the house we would go someplace, and I sniffed paint as I drove. I was a good driver whether it would seem that way or not. Never have I gotten pulled over for a DUI, or swerving speeding ect... When I went back to work I took my truck since it was my right leg that was hurt, and I didn't have to use the clutch with it, so sniffing paint when I had the chance allowed me to get back to work.

The owner and I got along ok, but he wasn't what I call people friendly, and he watched Rachael like a hawk. She was pretty good about his stalking her because she would tell him off in a sneaky way, or was devious about it which is a better word.

She and he must have had a thing going on that's why he was jealous about her. I didn't like working inside since first of all I couldn't sneak away to sniff paint, and I had to stay grease free inside which is something else I didn't like. I was raised getting greasy, and when there's old cars around and grease I like to mess with them and get greasy.

I saw an ad in the Vidor paper about the Vidor ISD needing a bus mechanic, and a bus driver for the High School, so I applied for the job. I had worked for the Arlington ISD fixing brakes on buses, so I figured that this would be a good thing, but again my mother-in-law interjected, she was a nosy ole biddy, and a control freak, so she saw that I was looking for another job and talked to Asa Mansfield whom was the county commissioner for prct. 3 out in Bridge City, which was also her 1st. cousin my wife's 2nd. cousin.

She found out that they needed a driver for a couple of old guys they
had there, but also a dump truck driver, so she actually did talk to me about this, and I thought about it. The bus mechanic/driver job sounded pretty good too, so I told Maybelle whoever allowed me to use a vehicle to get my commercial license with is who I would go with. Of course Asa being the county commissioner, and my wife's second cousin this really seemed to be the better job, and what clinched it was when I talked to Asa on the phone, and he told me who I would be driving around, and why, and that he would be sure to get down to the D.M.V. to get my license, so on the day I was suppose to show up at the Vidor bus barn: was the day that Asa talked me into going to work for Orange County, and this would be a good steady job, and I had a good shot at advancement.
CHAPTER 11

I went to the precinct which was just about 3 miles further down the road from Graingers Import. I liked the set up as soon as I saw it, for this was a fairly new yard, and had about 10 dump trucks, and a nice garage big enough for trucks, and of course tractors, brush hogs, and other types of machinery.

I went in after parking, and talked to the road foreman Raymond Harper, and told him that I was told by Asa to meet him here that I was suppose to go to work for ya'll. He gave me coffee, or told me to get some since they had a big pot made, and of course everybody was there and they were all old men.

I was only 20 years old at the time, and all these guys were 50 yrs. old and above, mostly above as a matter of fact. When Asa came in, and you couldn’t have asked for a nicer person, for he was a christian, and old with solid white hair and he had "Parkinson's Disease", although not too bad. He welcomed me there and personally took me to the comptroller's office, and other places to do all the paper work, and expedite stuff.

It seems that you just don't hire on at the county, for there’s lots of paperwork. Anywey that was an all day ordeal. Once officially now a county worker I found out my job would be to drive a 1 ton patch truck with two old guys. One was 79 yrs. old his name was John Terry, and the other was Walford at 69 yrs. old, and onrey as a rattler.

They didn't like the idea that a youngster around 20 yrs. old was going to be driving them around. I was told to just put patch material in the truck, and drive them around till lunch then come in for a load for the afternoon.

Well that would have been fine, but these two spunky fellows had another idea. I wasn't their boss, nor did I try to be. I like old folks, and enjoyed their banter between each other, and they had worked together for years.

John Terry, use to drive the patch truck, but he had cataracts so bad that when he saw a dark spot on the road he thought that it was a hole. His vision was so bad that he would feel for the hole in the road with his foot, and he'd throw the shovel full of patch down and miss the hole, so I would
just use my boot to scoot the patch in the hole, and I wouldn't say anything.

I kept the truck running, so that the heater was always on, and warm when they got back in the truck. To answer your question "No", I didn't just sit in the truck and let these old guys work. But my job was to keep an eye out for these two oldsters, for they would walk right in front of cars, so I kept all the lights flashing, and the headlights on, and the spinning yellow light on that was on the top of the cab of the truck that we called the "whirly bird" going at all times, then I also kept my door open, so cars would pull further away from the truck. I would also honk to let the guys know a car was coming from the front of the truck, so watching out for these guys was a full time job.

I learned where the back roads were since we were the county, and not city workers this was fine. Of course Raymond Harper would come check on us, and he would tell me of other out of the way roads were, and try to set our pace for the day. The reason for that is these guys liked to walk, and talk, and spread out patch, and they knew where the big holes were that would take a lot of patch, and we would put out 3 tons of patch before lunch. For those that do not know what patch material is it is "Asphalt" just old asphalt that has gotten hard in most cases and can't be used for anything but patching holes in the roads.

Because these guys would put out so much patch before lunch it would drive Raymond Harper crazy, and he blamed me by saying I was working these guys too hard. I told him it was the other way around since not only was I doing what they wanted to do, but I was also using the truck on these big patches to pack them with the dual tires like a soft wheel packer.

I would raise the truck bed, and patch would slide down to the tail gate and they would scoop it out, and right off the tail gate. They would square up the patch, and I would pack it with the truck.

We would take a long lunch break because Raymond would come tell me to, and then get one more load for the rest of the day. This use to drive these old guys crazy, and they wanted to put out patch not sit in a truck, and I agreed for the fresh air was cold, and invigorating.

We got up to 5 tons of patch a day, and the last one was more for looks although close to the end of the day we would find a big hole for it, and dump it in the hole and we all three would spread it out and I would pack it with the truck and that would be the end of the day.
This is how it went. John Terry still drove his old pickup to work from a few miles from the yard, and I would see cars hit the ditch when he was coming in from the opposite direction from me in the morning. I guess that I should have started picking him up because I could have went by his place by just making a big block, but I liked sniffing paint on my way to work or anytime I drove and John Terry liked to be independant so he drove his self and didn't ask for any help.

It was a good thing that I had this job because it caused me to have to take a break from sniffing paint by at least 8 hours anyway. From the time I cranked up my truck to go home until most of the night had passed I sniffed all of the paint that I could. Paint sniffing was a love/hate relationship, for I didn't like the way it made me feel after hours of huffing yet it was all I could think of when I wasn't doing it. It drove me crazy to run low yet when I had plenty it would drive me crazy trying to sniff it all up.

When I finally went to sleep the fumes being emitted from my own breathing would make me feel sick thus wake me up, and I would in turn spray a fix into a bag, and stay up either the rest of the night, or most of it, so at work taking these long breaks was good since I could kinda nap some.

Spending that much time with these old folks was cool, and I liked them both. John was quiet and reflective, but Walford was a mean old cuss that just liked to act mean.

I would go off away from the truck since of course you would need to take a restroom break, and what better place for a guy than a wooded area with lots of trees? During these short breaks I could smoke a joint which I wasn't worried would be smelled since both Walford, and John would smoke stinky cigars, and since most of the time I drove the truck at an old man walking and talking pace with lots of pauses there was no danger of running into anything.

They hired another young guy named Jackie, and he was a pill head, but goofy, and he had no aptitude on how different types of vehicles worked, but we got along ok.

During this time Raymond was told by Asa to let us drive dump trucks whenever we could, so the we could go get our commercial drivers license to drive legally. When we were ready we went to test in a dump truck. I made a 94% on the written, and a 96% on the driving. Jackie barely passed either, so now I had a commercial license, and a regular license, so although the com-
mmercial license superceded the operator's license I kept it because it was
good for 4 years and the other was only good for two.

When it rained I took John Terry, and Walford, but in an 8 yard dump truck
to spread oyster shell on county roads that weren't black topped, and of
course they knew where all of these roads were. John and Walford could only
work so much because of their social security because it only allowed them
to make so much money. As it got colder, and wetter we did more riding around
although you couldn't keep these old guys hemmed up in the truck all day,
so there was still work going on.

One day we had to take out a 3/4 ton pick up that didn't have a lift bed,
so only one load was going out before lunch while our truck got worked on.
The bad thing about cold asphalt is it is like a rock when it cools off,
and has to be chipped out with a pick axe because in this pick-up it packed
up after you broke it up with a front end loader getting it in the truck.

Well being that I was the youngest I was the one that had to use the pick
axe. We found a decent hole in the road a short ways away from the county
barn, and we decided to put this patch material in this hole. John and Walford
shoveled out the loose material, and as they got close to the cab the material
continued to get harder and harder so I got up in the back of the truck and
was using the pick axe to break up this material. This truck had a headache
rack and rails along the sides of the truck so I had to keep an eye on this:
as I was having to swing this axe really hard to get it to break up this
stuff.

As I got close to the cab there was about a foot and a half of material
maybe two feet from the cab that was really giving us a hard time, so the
oldsters stayed away from the back of the truck as I drove this pick axe
into or tried to drive it into the asphalt. It was chunks of material
all over the place and on a full swing downward I hit this headache rack
with a full driving swing and as the axe hit it the metal bar sprung the
pick-axe back as hard as I swung it down and it hit me in the top of the
head. Well connecting with my head wasn't bad enough it felt like it broke
my neck too driving my head downward with the force of a kicking mule.

The force of this knocked me to the back of the truck and I grabbed my
head with one hand and tried to keep myself from falling over the back side
of the truck. I knocked ole John Terry back out of the truck as he was trying
to climb into the back of the truck to see if I needed help. I grabbed

-162-
the side rails and kept myself from falling out to the cold hard black top road. I was now holding my head with both hands. I had took a solid hit and I knew it, and as my cap came off the blood started to flow, and all I could see was red, because the blood flooded my eyes, and I had busted my head open, or at least I thought this anyway.

The blood ran thru my fingers, and down my face, and all over my clothes. John Terry gave me an old red grease rag to help stop the bleeding. Walford was standing in the hole that we was filling, and a car stopped by him, and the driver asked if one of the old guys had hit me with a shovel? Walford told him Hell Yeah!, and if he didn't go on, and mind his own buisness he would smack him too!

Now Walford saw me sitting at the back of the truck with blood running thru my fingers, and this freaked him out since he hadn't seen what had happened.

The man's wife in the car wanted to know if I needed an ambulance, or if someone needed to be called, so I told them to call the county barn, and tell them we were coming in. Now John and Walford was arguing over who would drive, and neither could since John was in town we couldn't chance him driving, and Walford couldn't drive a stick shift, or even drive that I knew of since his wife brought him back, and forth to work.

This left me to do the driving. I had got the bleeding stopped or at least slowed down enough to put on my cap and this kept the blood out of my eyes.

I told them to load up, and off we went. They were quiet as I had ever heard them because they weren't wanting to distract me in any way.

The county barn was a straight shot right down the road so I didn't need to do anything except get past one stop light and head into the barn.

Now hitting my head didn't even give me a headache, the cut on top of my head hurt actually stung, more than hurt, but my neck hurt because it took the shock of the hit by being compressed like a spring when that pick axe came back on me.

Getting to the county barn I had John, and Walford put up the truck, and good to their word the couple that had stopped had called the county barn, had turned around and went to the county barn too and was waiting for us.

Asa had called Joanne at the nursing home, and told her that I would need a drive home since they didn't know how bad I had been hurt. She wouldn't be there until I got back from the hospital.

-163-
When I got out of the truck at the front of the building, and I went inside Asa and Raymond was in the building talking with another guy and when Asa and Raymond saw me and all the blood Asa said Oh My God, and Raymond came to help me sit down. Asa asked Son are you alright? I told him I didn't know, so he had Raymond take me to the emergency room of the Orange County Hospital where I was taken straight in and to xray to see what had happened. Raymond filled out papers and told them what had happened. As the little gal slid me around on the xray table, and took pictures all I could think of was sniffing paint which is what I would do A.S.A.P. after an hour or so, maybe closer to two hours that I was there. The doctor came in, and checked me out some more, and he showed me where the pick axe had chipped a spot out of my skull, but the good thing was that my skull was pretty thick there for some reason which brought on the thick headed jokes by the doctor, and hard headed jokes by Raymond. All in all it was a good thing for once to be hardheaded, and such an avid paint sniffer my brain was use to trauma thus never paid no mind to getting knocked around.

My neck hurt though. We went back to the shop, and Joanne was waiting for me. Raymond made me park my truck inside the yard because they didn't want me to drive home, so I did and loaded my paint up in my lunch box.

Joanne was talking to Asa, and you could just read her eyes, for she looked like a scared deer. I still had blood all over my clothes although I had wiped my face, and hands I still had it everywhere else, and I looked like I had took part in a murder.

We went home, and I sniffed paint on the way home, but of course Joanne tried to talk me out of doing that but I wasn't hearing that. I took a shower when I got home, and felt better, so Joanne talked me into going to the nursing home with her, so she could keep an eye on me.

I was ok now since I had an hour or so to sniff paint, so I didn't mind, and I liked messing with old folks, and messing with the other nurses. I was always joking around with everybody we all got along ok. I even helped take blood pressures, and the old ladies liked to flirt with me while Joanne gave them their meds, and she always acted like she was jealous, and these old gals would just cackie like a chicken.

They all acted like grandmaws when Joanne told them about me busting myself in the head with a pick axe. To get away from the place a little bit I
would make a food run, and take all the nurses orders, and go to K.F.C., or a burger place. Nursing home food sucked, so everybody wanted something different.

My head got tender though for a couple of weeks, and I had to take all the metal buttons off all my caps that was on top of them because climbing into the different trucks I had a habit of hitting the top of the door ledge when I got in. That's the part that stops the door, or that has the seal on it to keep the water out which is more pronounced on these dump trucks since there is more cab to them than a car.

I enjoyed driving trucks, or other equipment which the county has a lot of. Ole John Terry had cataract surgery on one eye, so was not able to work for a while, and Walford had reached his work limit for social security thus both of these old fellows were not working. Walford was ok with it, but old John couldn't stand being idle, and it was about that time when two new employees were added. They were two women, and one dude the old cow sheriff is what I called him, because he was like a game warden, but dealt with people's cows, horses, and other animals that get out of their pastures etc....

Brenda that I would find out later was actually his niece. Jackie the dude that went to get his license with me would go with me at first to do patch work, and when Brenda started she too went with me. Hubert never did. He liked his starch and ironed jeans, and shirts, and had worked as the cow sheriff 20 years, so he was already a county worker with seniority.

Of course when Jackie and I went out there was a lot of dope smoking since we were always out on the road, and holding our shovels up mostly what better job could you ask for huh? As a matter of fact there was a few more oldsters that smoked pot too.

Jackie wasn't too machine savvy, but always wanted to get on things like the front end loader that we loaded the black top with, or other machines. When Brenda started whom was in her 30's she went with us, and threw patch. Raymond told me that I wasn't to give her any quarter because she was a gal, for the guys at the county barn didn't like the fact a woman was hired on, in fact there was two of them that was hired thru affirmative action, one black and one white.

Brenda was the first one to be hired. She too smoked pot, so Jackie and I both had a blast working with her since we were both younger than she was. She always dressed like an old man, in baggy clothes, and had big gloves.

-165-
as the work started hot asphalt will get you out of all these extra clothes, and working with tar, and other smelly stuff will also.

After John Terry was able to do some work again, but not at the county, Asa had me, and Brenda, and Jackie go get a dump truck load of 60/40 sand, and clay then drop it in John's driveway. He told me not to go say anything just drop it and leave, and he would take care of it.

They wouldn't let Jackie pick up sand at Big Sandy since you had to back down into the sand pits with a dump truck which is really an art in it self since these pits are 50, or 60 ft. deep, and you have to back down a ramp not a road, and that means that if you go to far one way or the other your truck will turn over a couple of times before it hits the bottom.

Luckily I was very good at backing, but it was still a messed up deal, so I brought ole John some dirt to play with. It seemed that I was always the one that got called in to do the political jobs, you know the ones that Asa had me bring the tickets too instead of Raymond because they had to be handled a certain way. I didn't care either way. I would drop John's load, and go see him and his wife a few minutes who were both nice as could be.

Once this was done and I was leaving I would see ole John getting out his shovel and wheel barrel to go play in the dirt. I dropped him a couple of loads within that next week, then he had another surgery for his eyes.

I felt sorry for him, and whenever we came back to the barn we would stop to mess with him, and nobody at the county barn said anything about it for they all liked John. Jackie would drive his own truck, but Brenda, and Hubert went with me a lot. Hubert also drove a truck a lot, but on rainy days some of us would team up. Then Louise started working, and she was a 40 something year old black gal and again I was elected to be their driver. Yes we all smoked dope, and I was always getting in trouble with these gals. Oh not because they didn't do enough, remember I had two old men working with me at one time that use to work their tails off. No this was because we made too big of patches, and although we kept the amount of tonnage to around 5 tons Raymond didn't like what we were doing.

The problem was that we instead of doing what I call a washboard type of patching where you hit all these small patches, and your car feels like it is on a washboard, or we would find curbs with the same problem we would
make one long smooth patch that didn't jar your teeth out. We made these long, squared off patches that I packed with the trucks duel tires by spreading it with the truck keeping the asphalt evenly coming out then we all spread it leveled it, and I packed it. This drove Raymond Harper crazy for some reason that is until people started calling Asa, and complimenting him on how the conditions of the roads were improving so much. This shut up Raymond when he saw Asa giving me and the gals atta boys and girls for the jobs we were doing.

Once the weather started warming up I had to start driving other stuff like the old GradAll a Ditching Machine, and soft wheel packers, tractors, brush hogs, and such. The gals were now doing all the patching and Jackie would go with them sometimes, but now they were mostly alone working by themselves.

When the gals got behind I would go with them again and we would put out patch until they got caught up and I would go back to driving whatever Raymond wanted me to drive for that day or week.

I was told to drop a couple of loads of oyster shell at John's which I did and I offered to help John spread the 160,000 pounds of shell that I dropped but he was ok with me just dropping it and then coming in for a glass of tea that his wife gave me.

I remember asking him how things were with his eyes, and he said not good that now his eyes were worse, and he could no longer drive, or work at all. I remember looking into his clouded eyes as he looked off into the distance at the memories of his mind when he had his sight and he looked off into the distance as he told me this news.

I felt bad for John. He lived right in Orangefield within walking distance of a couple of mom, and pop stores, so he and his wife were ok. They had been married for over 60 years.

I came into the yard in my dump truck about a week later, and Delbert another worker came, and told me that John had hung himself in his tool shed where he also kept his mowers. He had walked to the little hardware store by his house, and bought a new rope, and committed suicide with it. His old wife found him when she brought him a glass of tea. The county barn shut down the rest of the day, but Asa took me to the Mansfield Cemetery, and showed me where John and his wife was given a plott by the Mansfields.
Raymond met us there, and we staked out the area, and this is because I would dig John's grave. I couldn't see going to the funeral it was just too sad for me, for I remembered his eyes. This brought me back to the fresh scars of my time in Vietnam and seeing the eyes of the guys facing death and my trying to keep them alive as they came to my chopper. I see the guns blazing and feel the bucking of the machine guns as I spit death out of my own to the ones that would die that day by my guns, I remembered the eyes the most and with John all I remember was the clouded look of his looking off into the distance and now I know that he was seeing his death in his minds eye. Now I was digging John's grave and it was just too sad for me for I loved that old man and he was a true friend even though I only knew him a short while.

I went into a week long binge of paint sniffing just trying to burn out the memories of that day and seeing John in my mind as he looked off. Now you might wonder how an addict that sniffs paint everyday goes on a binge? Well that happens when I take a whole week off just to sniff paint. I did like ole John though, and nobody said anything because they all had to deal with their feelings too, but since I spent so many hours a day with him and looking out for him, and Walford it really hit me and when I came back to work and they saw the deep dark circles under my eyes they knew that I had a rough time with this.

Even after 36 plus years I still see that haunted look as John looked off into what his future held, and I see the tool shed he showed me, and can still see how it was set up. I even know of which rafter he used to do the deed.Anyway I still question myself was this just another reason to sniff paint? Maybe not since at this time I haven't sniffed paint for almost 7 years and it is still a shock after over 36 years and I still see this plan as day.

Things weren't all peaches and cream at the homestead either. Maybelle always had her way of stirring up the pot. You have to understand what my mother-in-law was like. She was the kind of woman that when her feet hit the floor each morning the devil said "OH CRAP, SHE'S UP!"

Joanne and I finally got to do something like a honeymoon/vacation. We took off, and went to New Orleans La. after Mardi Gras, and we really enjoyed ourselves, and yes I did a lot of paint sniffing. Paint sniffing was an integral
part of my/our lives for we watched TV, made love, ate, partied etc.... all around my sniffing paint.

We rode the river boat paddle wheeler called the "Natchez", which went up the ole Mississippi, and had drinks, ate, and watched the landscape go by at a lazy pace. I even smoked weed with the guy that ran the boilers which I made my way to see since they had it open, and roped off, so you could see how it all worked, and for people like me that liked that kinda stuff it was great. The dude that ran the boilers was a long haired dude like myself and we hit it off so he told me about the boilers and the history of how they changed stuff over from coal burning and wood & fossil fuels. The water was only a couple of feet from the deck of the boat, and it was cool just watching the water go by.

After Joanne, and I spent our fun filled week there we went home, and upon going into the house we were shocked to see that Maybelle had went in our house, and snooped around our entire house, and she took out all of my old paint cans and bags that I had stashed in our dryer since the element was burnt out. The dryer was in our bathroom, so Joanne who always hung out at her Mom's used her dryer when we needed one.

Now we had our abode ransacked while we were gone. This really pissed me off, for this was not a place that we were renting this was our house and I was buying it, and she had no right to come into our house and snoop thru everything that we had.

I wanted to go up front and bust Maybelle in the mouth, but that wasn't an option. Joanne called her, and asked her why she had been in our house? She told Joanne that the trailer was parked on her property, and she could do what she wanted to do. I called the cops, and they came out. Of course I had put all of the old cans and bags away in a trash bag, but wasn't worried about them because what I did in my own home was my business, and since I wasn't actively sniffing paint at that time, or in public there was nothing that they could do to me.

The big question that needed answered was what Maybelle could and could not do. Before it was over with Maybelle found out as a home owner she had trespassed, and burglarized our home as well as vandalized our home. It was left up to me whether I would file charges, or not, and because of Maybelle's look as well as my wife's I let it go with the warning that this wouldn't be the case if she ever done this to us again.
She had tried to get the cop to arrest me for all the old paint cans, and bags that had clearly been used for paint sniffing, and the cop told her that me having that stuff wasn't illegal, and since I hadn't been caught by him he couldn't be arresting me. He told her she ought to be thanking me for not pressing charges because if it was up to him he would have. She shut up and went back into the house, and the cop told me that I needed to find me some help if I was sniffing paint for I really needed it.

Things simmered down some, but not much as you may have figured, for there was some contention between us, but I was going to show these people that I was not one of their children, nor was she or Joe going to dictate my life to me.

As you may be able to tell I could really be an ass when I was messed with, but because everybody tried to get along I tried to be nice.

Denise was the only person that never judged me being brought up also on what my in-laws thought was the wrong side of the tracks too, so they all kept an eye on us two thinking that either she was spreading her legs for me, or she and I was going to run off together. Of course Joanne and Denise got along to a point, and Denise'd come back to smoke a joint, or two with us. Jerry didn't smoke anything, and was like his Mom, and tried to control her. She bucked on that, and that's why she would come back there, and smoke for she knew I always had weed of which I bought mostly from an old trapper/fisherman/country worker.

You would actually be surprised at all the old pot smokers you run across in life, but that's another story.

Being married to Asa's second cousin had it's benefits though, and I was given "special jobs", and always drove like a bat out of hell, but was very good at what I did.

Making "pea gravel roads", was an art, and all done in reverse as you lay in the seat working your dump truck bed as you drive, and look at the man giving you signals working the spreader box on your truck. I laid lots of roads in Vidor which was prct. 4, and we were prct. 3. An older red headed dude named Artie always grabbed my truck to work because he liked the way I did the truck and almost never had to do anything except walk behind my truck. I kept the action smooth, and went where he signaled but most importantly kept the speed where his short legs could keep up. As noted this is all done
by driving in reverse while I raised the bed of the truck at a slow speed without standing the truck on its back side, so I had to drive and look out the window at my mirrors and work levers in the middle of the floor for the bed all at the same time which made me lay down and work the peddles and gas and drive and do the rest all at the same time to make these roads in parks and other places.

I was good there was no doubt, and was always asked for by other precincts. One day Asa came to me, and told me to take my dump truck home with a full load of osyter shell, and just bring it back the next day, so I did this. I was wondering just what in the world was going on and figured that Asa wanted me to drop a load of shell at the nursing home which I had done before.

When I got home I found out that Maybelle, and Joe wanted it spread under the tree at the back of their house where Jerry parked, and tie that in where Joanne, and I parked on out beside their house between a big oak ect.... otherwise make a complete driveway behind their house, and on the side without tearing down their house with this huge dumptruck. I knew what they really wanted and that was for me to spread all of this osyter shell by hand, but I had a trick for that and I wasn't going to be spreading nothing by hand if I could help it. Once Joe had showed me what he wanted I just said no problem, and that I would just spread the shell with the truck. Joe said oh no just drop the load and spread it by hand, and I told him I wasn't spreading 20 tons of osyter shell by hand just forget that, and I had already worked all day too, and of course I knew that they wouldn't help either, so I got out of the truck looked at the situation and saw what I needed to do, so I told him again no problem, but he needed to tell me how close my bed was to his car port as I went between it, and the big oak tree. I told him that the bed would take down a couple of limbs, but that couldn't be helped. He said that he didn't care.

Now to make matters worse Joe wanted to ride on the running board/step, and give me instructions since I had to kinda lay down in the seat to work the bed's levers, and PTO. I don't know why they had put these levers so far away from the driver of the truck but they were thus causing me to have to lay down in the seat to work the levers when I dumped.

I set the chains, and off we went, and in less than 10 minutes I had parked the truck kicked a small pile of shell down with my boot where it built up when I first started the spread, and since I didn't have room to
run this load out all in one direction I did it in forward, and reverse until the bed was empty which it had to be, because I had to get the bed to come down and it wouldn't do that because the weight shifted to the back after the bed started up. This was not an automatic either I just couldn't shift it in drive and reverse and go I had to work the clutch and gas all at the same time as well as shift the truck.

After that Joe, nor Maybelle dared say I couldn't drive, and even Joe would brag about it at times. Maybelle even talked Asa into having me bring shell back to the nursing home to layout a new layer of shell for the parking lot.

The oldster dudes liked that, and they came out from the Sun Room to look over the dump truck, and they reminisced about things that they did in the past. It was like a show, and tell, and these guys all knew me from my hanging out at the nursing home. They would climb into the truck cab, and smoke cigs, and laugh and joke, then I would get the load out, and they got to watch me spread this shell so this would bring on a whole new set of things to talk about.

Uncle Byron, and Aunt Iola Mansfield were both there at the nursing home. These were Asa's Aunt and Uncle, as well as cousins to Maybelle and Joanne.

Uncle Byron was 92 years old, and he was still sharp as a tack, so he was out there too. Since the nursing home life is kinda boring this was a real treat for these guys. The old gals would pick up the flirting end of it when I would come back inside, and it was a fun game everybody looked forward too. This just made everybodies day and I was liked a lot by all of these people.
CHAPTER 12

Things were cooking along with married life, and I enjoyed it, but there were still lots of problems both in marriage, and pranching about. My paint sniffing went unabated, and at times Joanne would try to go up against me while I was deep into my sniffing, and if she wouldn't subdue her urges to mess with me at those times there would be a terrible fight.

Now I don't know if she was just into some kind of kinky torture, or what, but she would periodically cause these rukuses, we would fight and a black eye later, or busted lip and then the marathon sex would take place, and the rougher the better.

I guess that this was one of her quirks, but I for one got annoyed being messed with while I sniffed paint which might have been her way of getting attention, and what she wanted. Of course it made me into a wife beater because she never hid her battle scars like a black eye, but what she wouldn't tell good ole Mom was that she got her juices flowing by messing with danger when I was high. It was sick I agree, but that was the way of things. We had a crazy, but good marriage, but her family, mainly Judy, and Maybelle would run their heads. Judy would even try to provoke me until Joanne would warn her that if she hit me I would knock her on her arse. Joanne knew this first hand because until she did that she could run her head all day long, and I would just keep doing what I was doing, so Judy would get toe to toe with me, and taunt me, but actually I wasn't raised to hit girls, but like I said if she put her hands on me she'd get hit, and she wasn't willing to push me into my hitting her because I'm sure there would be no wild sex after that, not unless they were both into that ??? Now I wanted to say all of this as a prelude to this.

It was about this time that Jerry and Denise were going to get married, and of course we were all getting ready for that which would be held at the nursing home. Jerry being a Mama's boy he was always going to Mom not Dad to get the things that he wanted.

When Jerry was a kid he had lots of surgeries as a kid, so he was pampered and spoiled all of his life. He was like a spoiled kid even though he was
This is how it went. John Terry still drove his old pickup to work from a few miles from the yard, and I would see cars hit the ditch when he was coming in from the opposite direction from me in the morning. I guess that I should have started picking him up because I could have went by his place by just making a big block, but I liked sniffing paint on my way to work or anytime I drove and John Terry liked to be independant so he drove his self and didn't ask for any help.

It was a good thing that I had this job because it caused me to have to take a break from sniffing paint by at least 8 hours anyway. From the time I cranked up my truck to go home until most of the night had passed I sniffed all of the paint that I could. Paint sniffing was a love/hate relationship, for I didn't like the way it made me feel after hours of huffing yet it was all I could think of when I wasn't doing it. It drove me crazy to run low yet when I had plenty it would drive me crazy trying to sniff it all up.

When I finally went to sleep the fumes being emitted from my own breathing would make me feel sick thus wake me up, and I would in turn spray a fix into a bag, and stay up either the rest of the night, or most of it, so at work taking these long breaks was good since I could kind of nap some.

Spending that much time with these old folks was cool, and I liked them both. John was quiet and reflective, but Walford was a mean old cuss that just liked to act mean.

I would go off away from the truck since of course you would need to take a restroom break, and what better place for a guy than a wooded area with lots of trees? During these short breaks I could smoke a joint which I wasn't worried would be smelled since both Walford, and John would smoke stinky cigars, and since most of the time I drove the truck at an old man walking and talking pace with lots of pauses there was no danger of running into anything.

They hired another young guy named Jackie, and he was a pill head, but goofy, and he had no aptitude on how different types of vehicles worked, but we got along ok.

During this time Raymond was told by Asa to let us drive dump trucks whenever we could, so the we could go get out commercial drivers license to drive legally. When we were ready we went to test in a dump truck. I made a 94% on the written, and a 96% on the driving. Jackie barely passed either, so now I had a commercial license, and a regular license, so although the com-

-161-
mercial license superceded the operators's license I kept it because it was good for 4 years and the other was only good for two.

When it rained I took John Terry, and Walford, but in an 8 yard dump truck to spread oyster shell on county roads that weren't black topped, and of course they knew where all of these roads were. John and Walford could only work so much because of their social security because it only allowed them to make so much money. As it got colder, and wetter we did more riding around although you couldn't keep these old guys hemmed up in the truck all day, so there was still work going on.

One day we had to take out a 3/4 ton pick up that didn't have a lift bed, so only one load was going out before lunch while our truck got worked on.

The bad thing about cold asphalt is it is like a rock when it cools off, and has to be chipped out with a pick axe because in this pick-up it packed up after you broke it up with a front end loader getting it in the truck.

Well being that I was the youngest I was the one that had to use the pick axe. We found a decent hole in the road a short ways away from the county barn, and we decided to put this patch material in this hole. John and Walford shoveled out the loose material, and as they got close to the cab the material continued to get harder and harder so I got up in the back of the truck and was using the pick axe to break up this material. This truck had a headache rack and rails along the sides of the truck so I had to keep an eye on this as I was having to swing this axe really hard to get it to break up this stuff.

As I got close to the cab there was about a foot and a half of material maybe two feet from the cab that was really giving us a hard time, so the oldsters stayed away from the back of the truck as I drove this pick axe into or tried to drive it into the asphalt. It was chunking pieces of material all over the place and on a full swing downward I hit this headache rack with a full driving swing and as the axe hit it the metal bar sprung the pick-axe back as hard as I swung it down and it hit me in the top of the head. Well connecting with my head wasn't bad enough it felt like it broke my neck too driving my head downward with the force of a kicking mule.

The force of this knocked me to the back of the truck and I grabbed my head with one hand and tried to keep myself from falling over the back side of the truck. I knocked ole John Terry back out of the truck as he was trying to climb into the back of the truck to see if I needed help. I grabbed
the side rails and kept myself from falling out to the cold hard black top road. I was now holding my head with both hands. I had took a solid hit and I knew it, and as my cap came off the blood started to flow, and all I could see was red, because the blood flooded my eyes, and I had busted my head open, or at least I thought this anyway.

The blood ran thru my fingers, and down my face, and all over my clothes. John Terry gave me an old red grease rag to help stop the bleeding. Walford was standing in the hole that we was filling, and a car stopped by him, and the driver asked if one of the old guys had hit me with a shovel? Walford told him Hell Yeah!, and if he didn't go on, and mind his own buisness he would smack him too!

Now Walford saw me sitting at the back of the truck with blood running thru my fingers, and this freaked him out since he hadn't seen what had happened.

The man's wife in the car wanted to know if I needed an ambulance, or if someone needed to be called, so I told them to call the county barn, and tell them we were comming in. Now John and Walford was arguing over who would drive, and neither could since John was in town we couldn't chance him driving, and Walford couldn't drive a stick shift, or even drive that I knew of since his wife brought him back, and forth to work.

This left me to do the driving. I had got the bleeding stopped or at least slowed down enough to put on my cap and this kept the blood out of my eyes. I told them to load up, and off we went. They were quiet as I had ever heard them because they weren't wanting to distract me in any way.

The county barn was a straight shot right down the road so I didn't need to do anything except get past one stop light and head into the barn.

Now hitting my head didn't even give me a headache, the cut on top of my head hurt actually stung, more than hurt, but my neck hurt because it took the shock of the hit by being compressed like a spring when that pick axe came back on me.

Getting to the county barn I had John, and Walford put up the truck, and good to their word the couple that had stopped had called the county barn, had turned around and went to the county barn too and was waiting for us.

Asa had called Joanne at the nursing home, and told her that I would need a drive home since they didn't know how bad I had been hurt. She wouldn't be there until I got back from the hospital.
When I got out of the truck at the front of the building and I went inside Asa and Raymond was in the building talking with another guy and when Asa and Raymond saw me and all the blood Asa said Oh My God, and Raymond came to help me sit down. Asa asked Son are you alright? I told him I didn't know, so he had Raymond take me to the emergency room of the Orange County Hospital where I was taken straight in and to xray to see what had happened. Raymond filled out papers and told them what had happened. As the little gal slid me around on the xray table, and took pictures all I could think of was sniffing paint which is what I would do A.S.A.P. after an hour or so, maybe closer to two hours that I was there. The doctor came in, and checked me out some more, and he showed me where the pick axe had chipped a spot out of my skull, but the good thing was that my skull was pretty thick there for some reason which brought on the thick headed jokes by the doctor, and hard headed jokes by Raymond. All in all it was a good thing for once to be hardheaded, and such an avid paint sniffer my brain was use to trauma thus never paid no mind to getting knocked around.

My neck hurt though. We went back to the shop, and Joanne was waiting for me. Raymond made me park my truck inside the yard because they didn't want me to drive home, so I did and loaded my paint up in my lunch box.

Joanne was talking to Asa, and you could just read her eyes, for she looked like a scared deer. I still had blood all over my clothes although I had wiped my face, and hands I still had it everywhere else, and I looked like I had took part in a murder.

We went home, and I sniffed paint on the way home, but of course Joanne tried to talk me out of doing that but I wasn't hearing that. I took a shower when I got home, and felt better, so Joanne talked me into going to the nursing home with her, so she could keep an eye on me.

I was ok now since I had an hour or so to sniff paint, so I didn't mind, and I liked messing with old folks, and messing with the other nurses. I was always joking around with everybody we all got along ok. I even helped take blood pressures, and the old ladies liked to flirt with me while Joanne gave them their meds, and she always acted like she was jealous, and these old gals would just cackle like a chicken.

They all acted like grandmaws when Joanne told them about me busting myself in the head with a pick axe. To get away from the place a little bit I
would make a food run, and take all the nurses orders, and go to K.F.C., or a burger place. Nursing home food sucked, so everybody wanted something different.

My head got tender though for a couple of weeks, and I had to take all the metal buttons off all my caps that was on top of them because climbing into the different trucks I had a habit of hitting the top of the door ledge when I got in. That's the part that stops the door, or that has the seal on it to keep the water out which is more pronounced on these dump trucks since there is more cab to them than a car.

I enjoyed driving trucks, or other equipment which the county has a lot of. Ole John Terry had cataract surgery on one eye, so was not able to work for a while, and Walford had reached his work limit for social security thus both of these old fellows were not working. Walford was ok with it, but old John couldn't stand being idle, and it was about that time when two new employees were added. They were two women, and one dude the old cow sheriff is what I called him, because he was like a game warden, but dealt with people's cows, horses, and other animals that get out of their pastures etc....

Brenda that I would find out later was actually his niece. Jackie the dude that went to get his license with me would go with me at first to do patch work, and when Brenda started she too went with me. Hubert never did. He liked his starch and ironed jeans, and shirts, and had worked as the cow sheriff 20 years, so he was already a county worker with seniority.

Of course when Jackie and I went out there was a lot of dope smoking since we were always out on the road, and holding our shovels up mostly what better job could you ask for huh? As a matter of fact there was a few more oldsters that smoked pot too.

Jackie wasn't too machine savy, but always wanted to get on things like the front end loader that we loaded the black top with, or other machines. When Brenda started whom was in her 30's she went with us, and threw patch. Raymond told me that I wasn't to give her any quarter because she was a gal, for the guys at the county barn didn't like the fact a woman was hired on, in fact there was two of them that was hired thru affirmative action, one black and one white.

Brenda was the first one to be hired. She too smoked pot, so Jackie and I both had a blast working with her since we were both younger than she was. She always dressed like an old man: in baggy clothes, and had big gloves.
as the work started hot asphalt will get you out of all these extra clothes, and working with tar, and other smelly stuff will also.

After John Terry was able to do some work again, but not at the county, Asa had me, and Brenda, and Jackie go get a dump truck load of 60/40 sand, and clay then drop it in John's driveway. He told me not to go say anything just drop it and leave, and he would take care of it.

They wouldn't let Jackie pick up sand at Big Sandy since you had to back down into the sand pits with a dump truck which is really an art in itself since these pits are 50, or 60 ft. deep, and you have to back down a ramp not a road, and that means that if you go too far one way or the other your truck will turn over a couple of times before it hits the bottom.

Luckily I was very good at backing, but it was still a messed up deal, so I brought ole John some dirt to play with. It seemed that I was always the one that got called in to do the political jobs, you know the ones that Asa had me bring the tickets too instead of Raymond because they had to be handled a certain way. I didn't care either way. I would drop John's load, and go see him and his wife a few minutes who were both nice as could be.

Once this was done and I was leaving I would see ole John getting out his shovel and wheel barrel to go play in the dirt. I dropped him a couple of loads within that next week, then he had another surgery for his eyes.

I felt sorry for him, and whenever we came back to the barn we would stop to mess with him, and nobody at the county barn said anything about it for they all liked John. Jackie would drive his own truck, but Brenda, and Hubert went with me a lot. Hubert also drove a truck a lot, but on rainy days some of us would team up. Then Louise started working, and she was a 40 something year old black gal and again I was elected to be their driver. Yes we all smoked dope, and I was always getting in trouble with these gals. Oh not because they didn't do enough, remember I had two old men working with me at one time that use to work their tails off. No this was because we made too big of patches, and although we kept the amount of tonnage to around 5 tons Raymond didn't like what we were doing.

The problem was that we instead of doing what I call a washboard type of patching, where you hit all these small patches, and your car feels like it is on a washboard, or we would find curbs with the same problem we would
make one long smooth patch that didn't jar your teeth out. We made these long squared off patches that I packed with the trucks duel tires by spreading it with the truck keeping the asphalt evenly coming out then we all spread it leveled it, and I packed it. This drove Raymond Harper crazy for some reason that is until people started calling Asa, and complimenting him on how the conditions of the roads were improving so much. This shut up Raymond when he saw Asa giving me and the gals atta boys and girls for the jobs we were doing.

Once the weather started warming up I had to start driving other stuff like the old GradAll a Ditching Machine, and soft wheel packers, tractors, brush hogs, and such. The gals were now doing all the patching and Jackie would go with them sometimes, but now they were mostly alone working by them selves.

When the gals got behind I would go with them again and we would put out patch until they got caught up and I would go back to driving whatever Raymond wanted me to drive for that day or week.

I was told to drop a couple of loads of oyster shell at John's which I did and I offered to help John spread the 160,000 pounds of shell that I dropped but he was ok with me just dropping it and then coming in for a glass of tea that his wife gave me.

I remember asking him how things were with his eyes, and he said not good that now his eyes were worse, and he could no longer drive, or work at all. I remember looking into his clouded eyes as he looked off into the distance at the memories of his mind when he had his sight and he looked off into the distance as he told me this news.

I felt bad for John. He lived right in Orangefield within walking distance of a couple of mom, and pop stores, so he and his wife were ok. They had been married for over 60 years.

I came into the yard in my dump truck about a week later, and Delbert another worker came, and told me that John had hung himself in his tool shed where he also kept his mowers. He had walked to the little hardware store by his house, and bought a new rope, and committed suicide with it. His old wife found him when she brought him a glass of tea. The county barn shut down the rest of the day, but Asa took me to the Mansfield Cemetery, and showed me where John and his wife was given a plot by the Mansfields.
Raymond met us there, and we staked out the area, and this is because I would dig John's grave. I couldn't see going to the funeral it was just too sad for me, for I remembered his eyes. This brought me back to the fresh scars of my time in Vietnam and seeing the eyes of the guys facing death and trying to keep them alive as they came to my chopper. I see the guns blazing and feel the bucking of the machine guns as I spit death out of my own to the ones that would die that day by my guns, I remembered the eyes the most and with John all I remember was the clouded look of his looking off into the distance and now I know that he was seeing his death in his minds eye. Now I was digging John's grave and it was just too sad for me for I loved that old man and he was a true friend even though I only knew him a short while.

I went into a week long binge of paint sniffing just trying to burn out the memories of that day and seeing John in my mind as he looked off. Now you might wonder how an addict that sniffs paint everyday goes on a binge? Well that happens when I take a whole week off just to sniff paint. I did like ole John though, and nobody said anything because they all had to deal with their feelings too, but since I spent so many hours a day with him and looking out for him, and Walford it really hit me and when I came back to work and they saw the deep dark circles under my eyes they knew that I had a rough time with this.

Even after 36 plus years I still see that haunted look as John looked off into what his future held, and I see the tool shed he showed me, and can still see how it was set up. I even know of which rafter he used to do the deed. Anyway I still question myself was this just another reason to sniff paint? Maybe not since at this time I haven't sniffed paint for almost 7 years and it is still a shock after over 36 years and I still see this: plan as day.

Things weren't all peaches and cream at the homestead either. Maybelle always had her way of stirring up the pot. You have to understand what my mother-in-law was like. She was the kind of woman that when her feet hit the floor each morning the devil said "OH CRAP, SHE'S UP!"

Joanne and I finally got to do something like a honeymoon/vacation. We took off, and went to New Orleans La. after Mardi Gras, and we really enjoyed ourselves, and yes I did a lot of paint sniffing. Paint sniffing was an integral
part of my/our lives for we watched TV, made love, ate, partied etc.... all around my sniffing paint.

We rode the river boat paddle wheeler called the "Natchez", which went up the ole Mississippi, and had drinks, ate, and watched the landscape go by at a lazy pace. I even smoked weed with the guy that ran the boilers which I made my way to see since they had it open, and roped off, so you could see how it all worked, and for people like me that liked that kinda stuff it was great. The dude that ran the boilers was a long haired dude like myself and we hit it off so he told me about the boilers and the history of how they changed stuff over from coal burning and wood & fossil fuels. The water was only a couple of feet from the deck of the boat, and it was cool just watching the water go by.

After Joanne, and I. spent our fun filled week there we went home, and upon going into the house we were shocked to see that Maybelle had went in our house, and snooped around our entire house, and she took out all of my old paint cans and bags that I had stashed in our dryer since the element was burnt out. The dryer was in our bathroom, so Joanne who always hung out at her Mom's used her dryer when we needed one.

Now we had our abode ransacked while we were gone. This really pissed me off, for this was not a place that we were renting this was our house and I was buying it, and she had no right to come into our house and snoop thru everything that we had.

I wanted to go up front and bust Maybelle in the mouth, but that wasn't an option. Joanne called her, and asked her why she had been in our house? She told Joanne that the trailer was parked on her property, and she could do what she wanted to do. I called the cops, and they came out. Of course I had put all of the old cans and bags away in a trash bag, but wasn't worried about them because what I did in my own home was my buisness, and since I wasn't actively sniffing paint at that time, or in public there was nothing that they could do to me.

The big question that needed answered was what Maybelle could and could not do. Before it was over with Maybelle found out as a home owner she had trespassed, and burglarized our home as well as vandalized our home. It was left up to me whether I would file charges, or not, and because of Maybelle's look as well as my wife's I let it go with the warning that this wouldn't be the case if she ever done this to us again.
She had tried to get the cop to arrest me for all the old paint cans, and bags that had clearly been used for paint sniffing, and the cop told her that me having that stuff wasn't illegal, and since I hadn't been caught by him he couldn't be arresting me. He told her she ought to be thanking me for not pressing charges because if it was up to him he would have. She shut up and went back into the house, and the cop told me that I needed to find me some help if I was sniffing paint for I really needed it.

Things simmered down some, but not much as you may have figured, for there was some contention between us, but I was going to show these people that I was not one of their children, nor was she or Joe going to dictate my life to me.

As you may be able to tell I could really be an ass when I was messed with, but because everybody tried to get along I tried to be nice.

Denise was the only person that never judged me being brought up also on what my in-laws thought was the wrong side of the tracks too, so they all kept an eye on us two thinking that either she was spreading her legs for me, or she and I was going to run off together. Of course Joanne and Denise got along to a point, and Denise would come back to smoke a joint, or two with us. Jerry didn't smoke anything, and was like his Mom, and tried to control her. She bucked on that, and that's why she would come back there, and smoke for she knew I always had weed of which I bought mostly from an old trapper/fisherman/county worker.

You would actually be surprised at all the old pot smokers you run across in life, but that's another story.

Being married to Asa's second cousin had it's benefits though, and I was given "special jobs", and always drove like a bat out of hell, but was very good at what I did.

Making "pea gravel roads", was an art, and all done in reverse as you lay in the seat working your dump truck bed as you drive, and look at the man giving you signals working the spreader box on your truck. I laid lots of roads in Vidor which was prct. 4, and we were prct. 3. An older red headed dude named Artie always grabbed my truck to work because he liked the way I did the truck and almost never had to do anything except walk behind my truck. I kept the action smooth, and went where he signaled but most importantly kept the speed where his short legs could keep up. As noted this is all done...
by driving in reverse while I raised the bed of the truck at a slow speed without standing the truck on its back side, so I had to drive and look out the window at my mirrors and work levers in the middle of the floor for the bed all at the same time which made me lay down and work the peddles and gas and drive and do the rest all at the same time to make these roads in parks and other places.

I was good there was no doubt, and was always asked for by other precincts. One day Asa came to me, and told me to take my dump truck home with a full load of osyter shell, and just bring it back the next day, so I did this. I was wondering just what in the world was going on and figured that Asa wanted me to drop a load of shell at the nursing home which I had done before.

When I got home I found out that Maybelle, and Joe wanted it spread under the tree at the back of their house where Jerry parked, and tie that in where Joanne, and I parked on out beside their house between a big oak ect.... otherwords make a complete driveway behind their house, and on the side without tearing down their house with this huge dumptruck. I knew what they really wanted and that was for me to spread all of this osyter shell by hand, but I had a trick for that and I wasn't going to be spreading nothing by hand if I could help it. Once Joe had showed me what he wanted I just said no problem, and that I would just spread the shell with the truck. Joe said oh no just drop the load and spread it by hand, and I told him I wasn't spreading 20 tons of osyter shell by hand just forget that, and I had already worked all day too, and of course I knew that they wouldn't help either, so I got out of the truck looked at the situation and saw what I needed to do, so I told him again no problem, but he needed to tell me how close my bed was to his car port as I went between it, and the big oak tree. I told him that the bed would take down a couple of limbs, but that couldn't be helped. He said that he didn't care.

Now to make matters worse Joe wanted to ride on the running board/step, and give me instructions since I had to kinda lay down in the seat to work the bed's levers, and PTO. I don't know why they had put these levers so far away from the driver of the truck but they were thus causing me to have to lay down in the seat to work the levers when I dumped.

I set the chains, and off we went, and in less than 10 minutes I had parked the truck kicked a small pile of shell down with my boot where it built up when I first started the spread, and since I didn't have room to
run this load out all in one direction I did it in forward, and reverse until the bed was empty which it had to be, because I had to get the bed to come down and it wouldn't do that because the weight shifted to the back after the bed started up. This was not an automatic either I just couldn't shift it in drive and reverse and go I had to work the clutch and gas all at the same time as well as shift the truck.

After that Joe, nor Maybelle dared say I couldn't drive, and even Joe would brag about it at times. Maybelle even talked Asa into having me bring shell back to the nursing home to layout a new layer of shell for the parking lot.

The oldster dudes liked that, and they came out from the Sun Room to look over the dump truck, and they reminisced about things that they did in the past. It was like a show, and tell, and these guys all knew me from my hanging out at the nursing home. They would climb into the truck cab, and smoke cigs, and laugh and joke, then I would get the load out, and they got to watch me spread this shell so this would bring on a whole new set of things to talk about.

Uncle Byron, and Aunt Iola Mansfield were both there at the nursing home. These were Asa's Aunt and Uncle, as well as cousins to Maybelle and Joanne.

Uncle Byron was 92 years old, and he was still sharp as a tack, so he was out there too. Since the nursing home life is kinda boring this was a real treat for these guys. The old gals would pick up the flirting end of it when I would come back inside, and it was a fun game everybody looked forward too. This just made everybodies day and I was liked a lot by all of these people.
CHAPTER 12

Things were cooking along with married life, and I enjoyed it, but there were still lots of problems both in marriage, and pranking about. My paint sniffing went unabated, and at times Joanne would try to go up against me while I was deep into my sniffing, and if she wouldn't subdue her urges to mess with me at those times there would be a terrible fight.

Now I don't know if she was just into some kind of kinky torture, or what, but she would periodically cause these rukuses, we would fight and a black eye later, or busted lip and then the marathon sex would take place, and the rougher the better.

I guess that this was one of her quirks, but I for one got annoyed being messed with while I sniffed paint which might have been her way of getting attention, and what she wanted. Of course it made me into a wife beater because she never hid her battle scars like a blackeye, but what she wouldn't tell good ole Mom was that she got her juices flowing by messing with danger when I was high. It was sick I agree, but that was the way of things. We had a crazy, but good marriage, but her family, mainly Judy, and Maybelle would run their heads. Judy would even try to provoke me until Joanne would warn her that if she hit me I would knock her on her arse. Joanne knew this first hand because until she did that she could run her head all day long, and I would just keep doing what I was doing, so Judy would get toe to toe with me, and taunt me, but actually I wasn't raised to hit girls, but like I said if she put her hands on me she'd get hit, and she wasn't willing to push me into my hitting her because I'm sure there would be no wild sex after that, not unless they were both into that ??? Now I wanted to say all of this as a prelude to this.

It was about this time that Jerry and Denise were going to get married, and of course we were all getting ready for that which would be held at the nursing home. Jerry being a Mama's boy he was always going to Mom not Dad to get the things that he wanted.

When Jerry was a kid he had lots of surgeries as a kid, so he was pampered and spoiled all of his life. He was like a spoiled kid even though he was
a grown man.

One day Joanne, and I were home, and of course I was sniffing paint. Maybelle was at the nursing home, and Joe was at work. Jerry wanted us to come up to Maybelle's since he lived there, and had no intention of moving off even after he was married, for he had moved into the old room that Joanne and I had stayed in.

The reason that Jerry wanted us to come up to their house was so that he could talk to us about his wedding plans with us. I for one couldn't care less about the little fags wedding, and neither could Joe, or Duke, and they were both just hoping that he would elope like Joanne and I had done. Of course Jerry wasn't having that either. The only way that Jerry could get me to leave the house was to cook me a steak dinner and he would talk to us while I ate.

I had already bought me a dumb suit that I wouldn't wear to anything but that stupid wedding, so to me it was a waste of money already. As I sat at the kitchen table with Denise drinking coffee, and good to his word I had a steak dinner Jerry was telling me that he wanted all of us to have matching suits thus expected all of us to buy another suit. Of course this brought on a lot of cussing which I was very good at, for I didn't want to go to his wedding in the first place, and was only doing so because Denise had asked me to. Jerry had now pissed me off with his ranting, and Denise was trying to shut Jerry up about the suit, and with me still being high from sniffing paint I decided it was best to put some distance between us because now Jerry was talking about calling his Mom to tell on me.

I went to the car port with Joanne, and was starting to lean against the wall asking Joanne why she had me come up there to talk to Jerry in the first place, and then I heard him lock me out of the house, and like a kid made a face thru the glass, and ran off.

Something just snapped, and I went to the door, and started banging on it, so Denise came to the door, and she saw that I wasn't going to stay locked out with a glass door, so she unlocked it, and I went past her, and saw Jerry on the kitchen phone. He had called Maybelle, and was telling her that I wouldn't buy a new suit. Both Joanne, and Denise grabbed at me as I went for him. I kicked the phone out of his hand, and it hit the ceiling then I got one hand on him, and started pounding him with the other.
Joanne got between us and right into the mix, and Denise was trying to pull me by my waist away from Jerry. I kept swinging over the top of Joanne's arms and body and when I couldn't hit him I turned the dryer around with his head, so both Joanne, and Denise grabbed my hitting arm, and Jerry tore loose from my other hand that had his hair, and he ran to his room along with Denise.

I jumped into the door trying to knock it down, but I was too lite in the arse at aprox. 150 lbs. Denise had locked the door, and she was begging me to leave Jerry along thru the glass in their door. I rammed my hand thru the glass, and grabbed down thru the broken glass since it was a lot higher than the door knob. Joanne was now pulling me by my other arm, and Denise was trying to get my hand out of the window, but I still got past them, and got the door open, and got into the room. Jerry was now trying to take the windows out of the holders to get out of the house.

This room was surrounded with slatted windows that rolled out to open up, so when he saw me enter the room he decided to try to run past me while Joanne, and Denise tried to hold me back. I was getting tired, but was still wired up from anger, adrenaline, and pain. I got a couple of good hits on his big head as he went by which knocked him into the wall, but he had his feet under him and he was moving, and ran into his Mom's room and locked the door there then. I had been so mad that all I saw was this dude and had not felt anything but anger towards this dude, but now I had gave it the best shot that I could and now the wind was spilling out of my sails. My strenght had played out, and I stopped trying to go after him. It was like someone had turned off a light switch.

I was bleeding like a stuck pig. My hand was cut open at the base of my thumb, and being such a shallow site the viens had been cut. There was a lot of blood, so Denise and Joanne both being nurses did what they do, and gave me a towel to wrap my hand in. I was standing in the kitchen when Maybelle, and one of her big fat friends showed up. Maybelle thought that her friend would have her back because Maybelle came to fight. That's the way it is when you rile up a bunch of coonasses.

Jerry had called her again from in her room, but wasn't anywhere to be seen. Maybelle saw the blood soaked towel, and jerked it off my hand which she shouldn't have done for the second round bell had sounded and the fight started anew.
Her friend got out of the way, for she wanted no part of all of this. Denise and Joanne again tried to keep me from hitting Maybelle, so I kicked her in the leg. This really pissed her off, so she grabbed a kitchen chair, and was trying to hit me with it.

The floor was slippery with blood, but Joanne, and Denise was able to get me out to the carport with Maybelle following with the chair. Joanne and I tripped, and I went down to my knee, and Joanne had my good hand. Maybelle was above me with the chair, and brought it down to hit me, but I grabbed the chair leg with my cut hand. Maybelle tried to jerk it away from me, and my hand being slick with blood slid down to the made on skid plate like disc that keeps the chair from poking holes in the flooring. This hung in my already bad cut, and we ripped the chair in two.

I ended up throwing half of the chair at Maybelle, but she, and her friend ducked behind the utility shed, and I missed her.

Now my hand was really bleeding at first, but now it was ripped into a two inch long "W", and the artery had been severed, and there was tendon damage. Joanne, and I left. Joanne was barefooted for she had lost a shoe in the house, and the other on the carport.

We went to a nearby Motel that was by the hiway, we had to cut thru one of my paint sniffing trials thru a small patch of woods to get there.

There was a phone booth that we had to run this kid out of that was playing in there. I had my hand next to my belly, and shirt, but there was blood everywhere. I called Paw Paw, and Granny, for I needed help, and I needed my backup. Paw Paw, and Granny was at his shop about half mile up the road from us, so Granny was in her Malibu, and she was pretty fast in getting there.

We had told her that I was cut bad, so she had brought an arm full of shop rags, and she came to a screeching halt saw the blood all over Joanne, and me and the phone booth floor, and yelled "GET IN BOY!" We loaded up, and Granny sped off. Granny could drive you better believe that! Her car was a street legal muscle car that Paw Paw had reworked the motor on, and it would fly!

We stopped at the garage long enough to get money, and to let Paw Paw know I had to go to the hospital. Off we went to the nearest hospital which was St. Elizabeths in Beaumont Tx. We didn't have to wait, and was rushed into a treatment room where they started cleaning my hand, and shooting a local anesthesia into my hand that quite frankly wasn't doing too much. I
don't know why except the doctor was rushing it trying to get the bleeding stopped.

The doctor came in, and I told him that my hand still had feeling, and the doctor told me that he was sure that it would be ok to start. Well it took five people to hold me down on the table, and I was half on and half off of the table. By the time this ass hole was done. How he put the artery back together, and repaired the damn hole with all the cussing, and fussing, and people holding me down is anybody's guess, but before it was over all the nurses with white uniforms no longer were white, and Granny even helped and was bloody as was Joanne.

I was fixed, but really pissed off again, and now went after the doctor when I was let up. You know have you ever had one of those days that you just acted like a mad bull? Well that was me this day. Oh yeah the doctor was slick, for he had put tranquilizers in some of the shots, so after I got up and ran a nurse into the wall coming out of the ER room the fight started to leave me pretty fast, but not the cussing. Of course ole Granny put a stop to my mouth by telling me to hush my mouth.

We talked to the administrater, and she apologized for what had happened, but Granny made me apologize for being as ass, so we went our way, but not before we picked up my pills which of course were strong pain killers.

We got back to Grammy, and Paw Paw's, and I took a bath to get the blood cleaned up, as did Joanne, and then Grammy. Clothes were washed, and I was out of it now. Joanne had made sure that I had a couple of pain pills on top of what the doctor had slipped to me in the shots, so I was pretty much out of it now, and they were going to make sure I stayed out of it for the rest of the day or so.

Their house wasn't very big, so I laid in the living room floor which is where Grammy liked to sit, and watch TV, and doze. There was enough room for all of us there it was just small.

I was sleeping very soundly with my head on a pillow next to Joanne when Paw Paw came home. Joanne told them what had happened, and gave a blow by blow rendition of the story, and Granny just looked at me, and said "Boy have you lost your mind?", and started laughing when I told her that they had pissed me off. Maybe she had figured out that we was there and came to threaten me with Joe saying that he had a gun, and was looking for me. Paw Paw was the one that talked to her, and told her that if Joe wanted to find
me that I was here, and shooting goes both ways. Paw Paw has a house full of
guns, and always carried a .38 cal. police special in his back pocket. He
told her to leave, and let things settle down, and let these kids settle
their own differences. He told her that her boy needed to grow up sometime,
and to just let things be.

She took off in a Huff. On a side note Joe wasn't looking for anybody,
and as a matter of fact thought his whimpy son's arse whipping was the funniest
damn thing he had heard about in 20 years. We let a few days go by, and called
a truce. We still had our trailer, car, truck etc.… there, and we both
had jobs that we needed to get back to. It was just best that we picked back
up, and moved forward.

Nobody gave Jerry any quarter after that. Jerry just had this way about
him that caused everybody to get pissed off at him almost daily for he was
just so irritating and acted like a spoiled child and even his sisters
would roll their eyes at his being a dumbass. Joe would tell me that I could
get squared off and have another go at him anytime he acted like a kid, and he
would in turn roll his eyes then.

Duke, being a trucker when he was in from the road would spend the after-
noons with us in the back yard under the shade tree, for these was our
gatherings without having to go to each other's house. Duke, and Joe would
make Jerry so mad he would go inside. It was pretty funny. Of course this
would not be the only time I raised hell on the hill.

We finally did have Jerry's and Denise' wedding at the nursing home,
but me Joe, and Duke wore what suits we had wanted to in the first place
and nobody bought or wore special suits for this deal.

Joanne and I even renewed our vows in front of everybody which is something
she wanted, but I was fine with it.

A couple of weeks later we were visiting my grandparents when Mom, and
Patty Jean, Nessa, and Joanna my older sister came to visit my Dad, and me.

As noted Joanna was my older sister, my Mom's name is Joanne, and then
there was Joanne my wife. Mom went by Mike since her name was also Michael,
the boys name not Michelle the girls name.

My family is weird what can I say?

Patty being a cut-up as was I did our slow motion run towards each other
like you see on TV, and as we got together had a fierce hug. Stuff like that

-178-
made everybody laugh.

Patty made me carry her back to the house, and Granny as always thought we were crazier than two Bulldogs on a skate board, but we were glad to see each other.

Patty told me that she had married Jack Davis which was Wayne's younger brother. Wayne was married to Joanna if you remember? Jack and I were friends, not as close as Randy Henson and I was but close enough, so we caught up with all our news, and sister's, and my wife got to know each other since as you know we didn't have a traditional wedding, or marriage.

I was happy for my little sister, and as life would have it this would be the last time I ever saw her alive again, or spoke to her.

It was now 1977, and things were going along. I sniffed paint so much in our trailer on Maybelle's and Joe's property it wasn't even funny. I still worked for the county when Asa's granddaughter's that lived in a house on their property found out that her husband had been found dead in a motel room in Louisiana. Asa had co-signed a loan for his pick-up truck a Chevy 1/2 ton 1973 short bed pick-up.

He knew that I had my old 56' Chevy, but asked if I wanted to buy the 73'. It was a nice truck, so I did, and got rid of the 56'. I did some work on hopping it up since I work on cars, and made a tire burning fast ass truck out of it. I put my "CB", in it, and tore up the hiways, and byways all over the place.

I raced everybody that even thought they wanted to race, and won most of the time. Needless to say it would run.

We got a call one day after I had got in from work from my Mom in Ft. Worth, Tx. She had started talking to me about Patty Jean, but broke down, and I couldn't understand what was happening. Joanna my sis got on the phone, and brought me up to speed, and she told me that Patty had been pregnant with her first child when we had last saw one another. I had commented that Patty weighed as heavy as a ton of bricks, and now I know why. She wasn't a big girl either. Anyway she had figured out later that she was pregnant. It seems that Patty did ok all the way thru her pregnancy, and went in to have her baby which went without a hitch until after her baby was born then complications set in. Patty crashed on the operating table, and she had something called "urinatic poisoning, or uremia" something like that where the baby's urine
had backed up into Patty’s system, and had caused her body distress. Patty’s liver had failed, so they did an emergency surgery where she had 28 units of blood, and after that she was in post op, then her lungs collapsed, and she had to be rushed back into surgery again, and she took 22 units of blood that time, and then was now on life support, for she could no longer breathe on her own.

I couldn’t speak anymore, so Joanne got on the phone. Patty had now been in I.C.U. for two months in, and out of critical condition, but she was taking a turn for the worse. I thought a turn for the worse! What the hell did that mean? My little sister had been so sick all this time, and nobody had said anything at all and now she lay dying in a hospital bed somewhere. The hospital had called in the family. Of course they had done this a few times I found out already, and still nobody had called me. I was fit to be tied my little sister had been sick all this time and nobody had called me! That was just like my family the inconsiderate assholes, so Patty was on the verge of dying, and I was over 300 miles away from her. I got back on the phone, and told Joanne that we were coming up there tonight, and she told me that even if I came then that Patty was now resting, Joanne told me that even if I was allowed to see her that Patty could no longer speak because she had a hole in her throat for the ventilator, I wanted to be by my sister’s side, but Mom came back on the line, and told me that someone would be with Patty Jean 24 hours a day. I told them that I would chill for a few days, but if "ANYTHING HAPPENED" to Patty they had better call me right then! I was planning to go up there on Sunday no matter what. After I got off the phone I just sat, and cried. I loved my sister so much, and it felt like somebody was trying to tear my heart out; my baby sister had lay in a hospital bringing forth a new life, and now was struggling to see that life, and had been for two months now. I felt that my sister needed me there by her side, and I was going. Patty was dying. My hanging out of a helicopter door flying at over 100 mph over the jungles of Vietnam being shot at didn’t effect me with the amount of pain I felt now, and not being with my sister as she struggled to live.

I went back to my trailer since we had got the call at Maybelle’s, and I started a new can of paint which was gone within 2 hrs. I got another, and stayed up the rest of the night. About 3 days later we got a call again from the hospital, and my Aunt Pat told me that Patty had, had a massive heartattack, but that they had got her back. It didn’t look good though,
so they had called me.
I told them that I was on my way, and to go in there and tell Patty that I was on my way and I didn’t care if she could hear them or not that they had to go in there and tell her that her brother was on the way to hang though.
Aunt Pat told me that she was unconscious and I told her I didn’t care just tell her!
They said that they would call me back in case there was a problem, and I told them I was going to gas up my truck, but to leave a message for me if anything happened.
I told Joanne to stay by the phone, and get Denise to go to the house and pack for us. I told her just to throw whatever she could find in bags if she had to and that would be fine.
I took off and went to Uncle Joe’s station and told him what was going on and he loaded me up with a full tank of gas and ten gallons more in gas cans as well as oil and water for the truck if it needed it. There was no charge. Joe knew that I would drive straight thru like I had a horde of demons on my ass, and he was right, I would keep the truck over 100 mph the whole way. I of course went to buy more paint and cigs. and got a lot of bags, and sandwich food.
Upon getting back I told Joanne that I needed a shower, and upon getting out and coming back into the kitchen Joanne was on the phone with tears in her eyes and streaming down her face, and she handed me the phone, and I asked what happened? Patty was no longer among the living, she had three major heart attacks this day, and her poor little body was just too wore out to survive the last crash. Patty had passed away fighting all the way to the end to live, but this was her death day, there was no cheating the reaper he had took my sister. God had called her home.
Nothing had to be said, Joanne loaded up the truck as I pulled myself together, so that I could drive. I glanced at the map to see the fastest route back to Arlington, Tx which burnt itself into my brain.
Maybelle asked Joanne to call her when we got there no matter what time it was. We left about 6 PM. My truck hitting on all 8, and I pegged the speedo past 100 mph. We were running about 130 mph. There was no talking except for my checking for ole smokey on the CB. I held the front door open for many a trucker that night until I out ran the distance of my signal on the CB and then ran the front door for new truckers I came upon. I had passed
the word of death had happened in my family, and so word had moved up the the line to watch out for my white chevy truck with the mags and extra tires in the back on mounts for I was flying. My twin exhaust that came out in front of my rear mags had a tinge of red glow to them.

Things were surreal after 100 mph things got quiet even with the glass pac's and the motor just got into a low growl. I remember seeing Joanne looking out into the night, the CB was keeping me informed on where the cops were, and the truckers was making way for me and flashing their lights to me as I flew past to let me know that they had us in their prayers, and I would now go with God as I left these guys in the taillights and I went over the next hill. If a trucker didn't move I found a way to get past them and again all they would see was my taillights too. I had other cars that tried to keep with me but my truck stayed pegged, and they soon too fell behind.

I could hear the truckers giving each other the heads up as I passed them giving each other an idea where I was at the time. I gave the truckers plenty of respect, but wasn't talking on the CB unless I had too. I was driving, and of course sniffing paint too, but I had over 500 horses under the hood and they were all at a full gallop, as a matter of fact there was a stampede going on under there. My baby sister was lying on a cold steel table and had died and I was going to be by her side someway form or fashion.

We got to Arlington at about 10 PM, and that was only because I had went to Dallas, and got turned around, but we got to Granny's (my Mom's Mom), for they had an apartment in Arlington, and so did Aunt Mona Sue at the same complex, so everybody was meeting there. After the hello's, and meeting with long lost cousins, I looked around to see where Kevin was. I found out that he had been trying to get home, and he was in the Army as well as in Germany so he wouldn't make it home in time for the funeral.

I got more in-depth info, on my sister's fight for life, and all I could think about was my not being there for her in her time of need. I was so pissed off at everybody for keeping me out of the loop, and for that I would never forgive them. My family all knew me and the relationship that Patty and I had, and they all knew that I was a person that would crank up the fight on any of them if they said anything wrong to me in the mood that I was in. I would only let a couple of people console me, one was my first cousin Tawanda who was almost full blooded Indian, and had beautiful black hair and blue eyes, and then my wife.
My step sisters showed up, and many others. The next day was a blur, and Joanne and I, Pam, and Millard being my ex-oldest step brother, and Pam my ex-girlfriend's 1st. cousin and one of best friends all hung out together at a nearby park, and it being cold so there was nobody there but us.

I couldn't deal with all the sorrow at the house with all the crying and everybody getting drunk and making an ass of them selves while somebody now dressed my baby sister in some **mumps** and made her ready to be put into the ground. I felt that Patty was sending me these visions as they did these things to her and was wondering where I was, so this just killed me. We spent a few hours at the park reflecting on the past, talking quietly and smoking a couple of joints to calm our nerves.

We went back to get ready to go to the viewing, since Patty had been, so close to death they had already planned for her demise which pissed me off again. Now you might have realized by now that when I refer to being pissed off bad things can happen because I get crazy mad, but out of respect to my sister I kept myself in check. The viewing started at 7Pm, and everybody went to the viewing, but Joanne and I waited on Wayne, and Joanna so that they could show us the way.

Once we got there I stopped before going in. I had to smoke a cig and steel my nerves, and after a few minutes I went in with Joanne my wife holding on to my arm.

As I came thru the doors of the funeral home it seemed like all of time had stopped, and all of those in the room that were talking in a hushed talk all got quiet when I stepped into the room. At the end of this room was if I remember right a gray casket with white satin on the inside. I stopped and looked around, and I saw Trina, Tammy, and Debbie were standing to one side. I hadn't seen Trina since we had broken up for good. Nessa, and Joanna, Jack, and others were by the casket.

I didn't say anything to anybody for they could see the hurt in my eyes, and that I was barely holding it together. As we walked slowly towards the casket people parted and gave Joanne and I a clear walk to the casket. Everybody stepped away from the casket except my sisters. Trina and Tammy and Debbie all looked me in the eyes and there was tears coming down everybodies cheeks, and now as I slowly walked to the casket the tears started to flow down my own cheeks and that brought on many tears from everybody else.
guess that everybody was just waiting to see how we would handle the death of my sister, but once it became even more real by the step there was no stopping the tears.

I felt like I was in a very bad dream I took step after painful step never blinking, and as I got closer to the casket Joanna, Kathy, Nessa joined me and my wife stepped back, and we all stepped up to my sisters side.

She lay at peace, still swollen from fluid buildup, but it was Patty. Tears ran down my face, my sister's faces and everybody else in the room. My sister lay dead in a casket. I raised a hanky that covered her hands, and saw all the bruising from the IV's, and needle punctures that traveled up both arms going under her sleeves. I reached into my pocket and took out my Purple Heart Medal from being wounded in action and folded it and placed it in her hands, and then covered them back up with the hanky after I folded her fingers around it. If there was tears before now there was a flood of tears from everybody and now everybody started to crowd around us all hugging and all crying. I told Joanna that whoever made Patty up with eye shadow got it wrong that she always wore green eye shadow so my sisters got their makeup out and redid her eye make up to green.

Nobody said anything to us her brother and sisters seeing her for the last time in this life, and while they redid her makeup others came to me and gave me a lot of hugs I placed my hand on tops of Patty's, and gave it a pat, and I told her that I was sorry that I hadn't been there, and had I known I would have been there and have stayed by her side, then I told her that I loved her, and slowly backed away from her casket not wanting to loose sight of my little sister.

Trina, Tammy, and Debbie all came up, and now gave me a hug too. I left with Joanne, and went back to Granny's, and went to Aunt Mona's to spend the night. They lived right next to each other in these apartments.

The funeral was the next day, so Joanne and I rode with Uncle Dean, which was Aunt Mona Sue's ex-husband because my truck would have been too loud for such a solemn occasion. As the funeral procession started toward the cemetery from the funeral home it started to snow actually kinda like rain and snow all at the same time, which matched the mood for it was a sad dreary day to be sure.

Nurses and doctors even came to the funeral that day that had been taking
care of her all that time, and I saw even shedded buckets of tears for her.

Patty was a sweet heart, and well liked. Even though she suffered so she
would... write notes to people when she could. I asked a couple of the
doctors what had happened to her, and he told me that although rare it was
not unheard of being poisoned by the baby's urine, but what was rarer still
was how hard Patty fought to live for the doctor said that the women usually
died on the table, so serious was the problem, but Patty had held on for
2 months.

I spent some time after the casket was lowered into her grave. It was
cold, and all I could think about was my little sister being left in that
hole in the ground, and I stood there and cried some more while my wife and
Uncle stayed in the car with his new wife, staying warm. I stood there alone
and looked around the grave yard, and at the snow staying on the ground and
and felt the rain on my face and thought that even the sky was crying too.

We left the grave yard, and my sister, and went home. I didn't drive
as fast going back to Vidor. I don't know why I drove fast going to Arlington.
I guess that I just wanted to believe that Patty was just in trouble and
that she was still alive and needed me. After seeing her in the casket I
knew better and I would never see her again in this lifetime.

My mom wanted to ride with us to Houston, but I told her no because I
was pissed off at all of them for not telling me that Patty was dying for
two months, so I went out cranked up that 500 plus Hp. V8, and lit up the
parking lot leaving that place.

I stopped at an Albertson's rounded up some paint, and bags, and we went
back to Vidor. I didn't want to talk about this stuff to my family in Vidor
for they loved her too, so I explained everything to them.

They too were not happy about not being told, so that they could go to
the funeral, but I told them it all happened so fast on my end that we were
only told at the last.

With all of that being said Patty's baby survived, and her name was or
"Amy", and Jack would raise her with plenty of help then after a year he
would remarry a girl named Regina.

I continued to work for the county remaking roads. Brenda, and Louise
did a lot of patching on their own now, but I still went with them a lot
because they didn't like Jackie who was kinda goofy. Patching roads is a
year round job, but it's harder when it's cold to do because the asphalt
gets hard, so I helped them a lot. Everybody knew how good I was with a pickax
so you know what they wanted me to use most of the time.

I drove a dump truck a lot, so we would go in that to spread oyster shell.
I also made lots of pea gravel roads, so we did lots of driving around.

My brother Kevin would soon show up in Vidor, and that would be a trip
for sure.
CHAPTER 13

A few months after Patty Jean died, my wife and I was having our ups and downs mostly over her mother which was always sticking her nose into everything. My job was keeping her nose out of our buisness, for my privacy was stanchly protected because of course I wanted to sniff paint without any interruption when I was home. The problem with this though was the fact that the more that I tried to keep her out of our buisness the more she dug into it, so this was a 24/7 job.

Since we lived basically in the back yard along the side of the property line with stepping stones leading all the way to Judy's, and Duke's then there was always people going too, and fro. We had stepping stones that led up to our front door too, but to deterr people from comming to the house I had two rock gardens, one on each side of the pathway that had catci, and had Spanish Daggers that grew in each one of them with white rock. They were pretty cool looking, and never needed watering, or messed with which I liked, and I never trimmed them because lets face it a trimmed Spanish Dagger just looks stupid.

If by chance I was poked myself I just bent the dagger that stuck me towards the ground, so people didn't like to come to our place because first of all I wasn't a good host, for when I got in from work I wasn't in a visiting mood.

You might think I was an arsehole, and you would be right, but being 20 years old married with my own home I wanted my own refuge, and because we lived in the back yard of my In-Laws both her older sister's and her mother's back yards I wanted everybody to know I wasn't the In-Law visiting place, my own family stayed away, and so would they.

I even kept tin foil on the windows, because everytime someone went by they wanted to look in the windows to see what I was up too, so I poked little holes in the tin foil where only I could look out of and they couldn't see in and this way I knew who was comming up to the house.
One warm spring day a few months after Patty's death a car drove up to our house, and as they did I could see my brother sitting behind the wheel! What a great surprise! We had been sitting in the back yard with Jerry, and Denise when they drove up. Kevin had come home from Germany with his wife, and child.

Of course we were all happy to see one another, and since I hadn't seen Kevin for a few years there was a lot to catch up on. I asked Kevin what was he up to, and he told me that he, and Ingrid was relocating since he was out of the Army now. He, and I took off to go buy beer leaving Ingrid, and his son Marco with Joanne.

Kevin had to tell Ingrid in German that we were going off for a little bit to buy beer, and Pampers, food and other stuff to go along with the shrimp and steaks that we were now going to have for supper, also this gave us a little brother time together. Of course Joanne couldn't talk to Ingrid, but they would have fun trying to talk to one another, for after putting Marco down for a nap, and after the long car ride from Dallas he would sleep soundly.

We smoked a joint, and that was a good ice breaker, so Kevin and I went to my truck, and cranked up the beast, and went to the Falls Beer Store, which was almost in Orangefield. As soon as we got in the truck though I told Kevin to look in the glove box which he did, and he got us a couple of new bags out of it for he knew what it was all about as soon as he saw the bags in the glovebox. Just as I was Kevin too was hopelessly addicted to the stuff that I was addicted to and I knew I didn't need to ask him if he wanted to sniff paint for we were brothers and knew each other's vices.

I dug out my can from under the seat, and we sprayed up, and went to the beer store, and did some driving around. I showed him where I worked, and we went and got new cans of paint then headed back. We stopped by the Cajun Grocery, and got some fresh boudine, and more beer since we had drank up a few brewskies already, and headed home.

On the way back I showed him the KKK's office, and that was something that just took him aback since that was not a common sight in other parts of the state.

When we got back we brought a can of paint in with the groceries, and I took it to the bathroom where I showed Kevin where I kept it stashed, so he could get a fix when he needed it. You might think that this was weird,
but you have to remember about what this book is about, this is an addiction, and a very demanding addiction at that, so my brother and I had to design our lives around this addiction thus it gave us no quarter either.

Of course I always kept a can of paint in my bedroom too since I sniffed in front of my wife too. We had a huge consol color TV that I had got us on a rent to own type of deal from some place. I had never been in their store either. I had just called this gal at this store after seeing their ad on TV. It was a Curtis Mathis TV place, so one day while sniffing paint I talked to this gal at the store and instead of picking it out myself had her just do so for me.

I did a lot of TV watching on our 19" TV at night in our bedroom because I suffered bad from insomnia because of my addiction, so we had nice stuff to watch as we had our meals, and keep Marco entertained. He was still very young not walking as of yet.

Kevin told me of his Army life in Germany, and he, and Ingrids meeting in a club, and we all got a good laugh about that.

Ingrid had been a Go-Go dancer in a club which translates to a titty dancer in todays age, and lingo. She would try to talk to us, and we had a lot of laughs because her english was no good at all. Kevin would fall into speaking German as fast as he spoke english. Kevin had spent almost 6 mths. trying to get back to the U.S. with his wife, and kid because he couldn't get their papers straight, part of it too was that he had went AWOL a couple of times also while over there.

They had caught up with him once in Paris France, and another time in Frankfrut Germany. Then he had been busted for hitting a 2nd. Lt., so he too was having a lot of trouble with authority. He had used Pattys's death to finally get back to the states with his family.

After we had broke the ice, and visited, and settled everybody in Ingrid, and Marco safely away in the back bedroom, and Joanne in our bedroom, Kevin, and I then sniffed paint at the kitchen table, and caught up some more while we sniffed paint. People may not understand how we were able to make conversation while we sniffed paint, but you have to remember we were able to function under the influence quite well.

Kevin then told me that he was again "A.W.O.L", and on the run from the Fed.s and after he had been back in the states a couple of months, he was
suppose to go to a Fort in Colorado to muster out his last 6mths. of his hitch. I told Kevin that he needed to get that taken care of, and then we could look into getting him relocated. I told him not to worry about Ingrid, and Marco that they could stay with us until we got him taken care of, and that's one of the reasons that he had stayed on the run, because he couldn't leave Ingrid and Marco with just anybody, and he couldn't leave them on the an Army post either because they would most likely lock him up for a bit.

Nobody else wanted to take any of them in, and that is just like my family so I told Kevin not to worry for there was never a question that I would take them in, and this was a done deal.

We would set up Kevin's base of operations at our place, so he would have a valid address for his legal issues, and family for immigration if need be.

Kevin spent about a week, and a half with us, and I told Joanne what was going to happen, and what we needed to do to support my brother, and his family while he took care of his issues.

I told Kevin that he should have went to Colorado to finish his hitch, and then we wouldn't need to be doing all of this. He agreed, and we planned for him to go to Fort Polk Louisiana in Leesville, LA. I told Joanne that she was going to have to help Ingrid understand the things that were going on, and understand that she was from another country, so be patient.

Kevin was going to leave her in our care, and we would see to it that she got back to him when needed. On the day that Kevin was to leave I went to work as always, and was driving a dump truck that day, and just so happened to stop at a McDonald's in Vidor when I saw Kevin at the red light before the underpass to IH 10. I could tell that Kevin was sniffing paint, so I got on the horn since I was parked in the parking lot by the road, and I stood on the running board, so he could see that it was me honking at him.

He looked around all wild eyed, and saw me standing on the running board, and smiled his "Cheshire Cat Smile", at me, and waved. I waved back, and pointed in the direction of Louisiana indicating where he needed to be going, and to quit procrastinating. He got the idea, and headed East.

This memory is burnt in my brain, and little did I know at that time but this is the last sight I have of my brother, for I would never see him again.
That will come a little later though. I went on doing whatever I was doing that day, and I think that I was making roads in the Vidor City Park working with the prct. 4 workers. They had their own drivers, but I was always asked for by the other precincts because I really did handle a dump truck with ease, and precision, and making roads backwards was my forte'.

Kevin would call later, and tell me that he was at Fort Polk, and was housed at temp. housing on the post where they report for duty. He said that he was under house arrest, and restricted to the company area which we already knew would happen. He talked to his wife a little bit, and would call us to keep us informed as to what was going on. Meanwhile Ingrid was trying to be helpful by cooking supper for me, and Joanne when we got home, and since we neither spoke a lick of German she would try her broken english on us which surprisingly I understood better high on paint then sober.

Things went ok for a while, and after a couple of weeks Kevin was sent to Fort Sil Oklahoma where he would be put into the stockade, or something like that, and he would be recieving a "Dishonorable Discharge", which he didn't care one way or the other about. Kevin would be up there for a few months.

In the meantime Ingrid, and Joanne started having trouble thanks to Maybelle whom always liked to stir up trouble. Maybelle was always pissy toward Ingrid if Joanne took her outside to sit with the family, and Joanne started getting jealous because I would get on all of their butts for picking on her. I would have to take her side because she had nobody there to help her, and I knew what they were doing and she didn't.

Joanne and Ingrid would argue when I wasn't around, and Ingrid being hot headed too as a German would cuss her out in German. They would be fighting (arguing), with each other, and I would have to sit them down to sort out what the hell was going on which was hard, but usually I'd figure it out, and most of the time it was Joanne's fault because Maybelle had wound her up like a $3.00 dollar watch.

I would be outside with Joe, and Maybelle. Joe would not ever say much with Maybelle saying too much, and we would hear something hit the floor and seeing that Joanne wasn't outside I went to check on what was happening.

Upon going into the house I saw Joanne had Ingrid in a headlock, and was at the stove by the hot pots, so I had to go break them up.
I had to take an eating fork away from Ingrid because she tried to stick Joanne with it and backed her away with it. Ingrid was trying to tell me something pointing to her arm, and then I saw two deep puncture wounds on Ingrid's arm which I grabbed a few paper towels to staunch the blood.

I looked on the floor, and saw a huge BBQ fork, or roast carving fork on the floor, then using the high math I learned in school I put two and two together and knew that Joanne had stuck her with the big fork, and they started fighting.

Joanne was 5ft. 8in. at aprox 165lbs. Ingrid about 5ft. 2 in. and maybe 110 lbs. I took care of Ingrid's arm, and had her hush while I tried to find out what was going on with Joanne. Joanne wasn't in a talking mood, so I talked to Ingrid, and as Ingrid tried to tell me what had happened Joanne started running her head which I then told to shut up since I had gave her the first chance to speak. Ingrid was glad to see me yell at Joanne thought that I taking up for her, and started talking smack in German, so I yelled at her too, to shut her up then I proceeded with this tirade for the next 30-45 minutes straight. This cooled both of their heels a bit, and I finally figured out what had happened. Ingrid had been cooking her and Marco something to eat, and Joanne poked her in the arm with the big fork because she didn't want the kitchen dirtied up, so she was just being a bitch, for a better want of a word.

Ingrid wanted to pack up, and walk back to Germany which I wouldn't let her do with Marco, or herself. Kevin did call that night, and I explained what had transpired, and what Ingrid wanted to do thus he then talked to her, and straightened her out, and then he told me what he had told her.

First of all she had to know that she couldn't go wandering around the country with an 18 month old child, and she couldn't speak english, or walk to Germany since she would have to get on a boat. No she was gonna end up in a shallow grave somewhere, so we got it thru her head that she needed to chill, and then I got Joanne about being a bitch. Nobody was happy, but I wasn't going to have this type of discord being caused, not by Ingrid, or my wife but Maybella was stirring up my wife because nobody liked Ingrid, because she had invaded their little world of the Chandlers like me and Denise so they thought that they could cause us problems by being snobs like they always was.
Ingrid had done nothing to any of them, she was just different because of where she was from, and she was an ocean away from her home, so that should have told everybody of her love for my brother, so I took up for her. One good thing about all of this is, so did Denise so she at least had some help against all of these ass holes.

This of course pissed everybody off, but being a paint head I could care less about their being asses because they knew that they could only tick me off so much then the real hell hit the hill.

The bickering would continue to flare up, and Ingrid would use it to her advantage at times, but I could tell when she did, and when she instigated it I would get on her too. I felt like a Referee at a boxing match because Joanne and Ingrid grew to really dislike one another. I hated to come in from work and have to deal with the fighting everyday and the pissed off people all around me each day. Finally after putting up with this for a couple months, and he repeated tries to take her child on the road I talked to Kevin at Ft. Sil Okla. He had been able to arrange housing for her and the child, and he had even talked the Army into giving him a $700,00 dollar loan, so he was going to be allowed to muster out of the Army without prison time, or jail time for being considered a deserter.

I still recieved his mail for important matters too, so I bought Ingrid a bus ticket to where Kevin was, by an express bus so that it didn't have to stop at every town headed in that direction and she didn't have to change any buses. I told the bus driver that she couldn't understand any english and explained that she was going to Ft. Sil. and he said that he would see to it that she got headed in the right direction.

I gave Ingrid $100,00, so she could buy food, and diapers, and I gave her written instructions to show only to bus officials, or the police if she had a problem. I informed Kevin after I saw her off by the phone that she was on her way and what her set up was and when she was suppose to get there.

Luckily she did get there without a hitch and Kevin called me to tell me that she was ok. Kevin eventually did get a Dishonorable Discharge, and I felt bad for my brother for that is something that really messes you up on any really decent type of jobs you might try to get, or govt. type jobs.

From what I could tell from what I had read in his paperwork that he had really pissed them off so much that he was banned from any Govt. Instalation,
and couldn't even drive thru them, or get close to them. Hell he was lucky that he was able to go to the Post Office after that. He didn't care though because he was too big of a bag freak, and he kept the paint fumes in his lungs as did I, and things like that just didn't matter as long as they didn't effect our paint sniffing.

Patty Jean had died in 1977 at the age of 17 years old. It was now 1978, and Kevin had got out of the Army, and the weather had gotten warmer again, and I was again doing a lot of brush hogging in the county, and working with a dump truck as well as other machines. We made a lot of road repairs as well as new roads, and I drove water trucks, packers, tractors, sweapers etc...

The gals were still there, and working on different things now. I was a Vidorian, so I had another black co-worker, or to that Raymond would send me to Vidor to brush hog roads with. We had stopped on the outskirts of Vidor at lunch to eat after cutting in Cloverleaf addition in Vidor where he had sent us.

Raymond came up on us, and he called me over to his truck, and started eating me out for having lunch with this black dude he had sent with me. He asked what I thought I was doing trying to get this guy killed? I told him that he was at fault since he had sent this guy with me into this pitt of vipers. He asked me if I knew that the Klan was around? and I asked him if he had been smoking cow turds, or something since he knew that I lived in Vidor. He said that was why he had sent me because I was from there, and nobody would bother us with me there. I just looked blankly at him, for had I not had a drivers license with me that had a Vidor address on it a couple of times when my truck was stuck in the mud or ditch I myself would have been beat up, or killed by these crazy bastards, and I've had them climb out of a car more than once with axe handles, and chains on me until I was able to show them I lived there too.

I told Raymond that he was putting both of us in danger and if they attacked that dude, then they would also attack me too, and I would be in as much trouble., so I told Raymond that he needed to back off of me that we had went where "HE", had sent us.

Now Raymond told us to head back to the county barn post haste. We did, but Raymond didn't push the issue since Asa also knew that he had sent that dude with me more than once, and truth be known he had told Raymond to go
get us out of there before something had happened because Asa being an old man knew more about the Klan than anybody because he had grown up with them all his life.

That was a serious offense back then, and Asa made sure that Raymond only sent blacks to Vidor with entire crews, and then only one or two, to help clear grave yards, and such. Needless to say that anytime after that I was only sent with ole crazy Jackie which also lived in Vidor.

I still really liked working for the county, and it was a job where things were always changing and I never had to stay in one place so this was cool.

One day my co-worker and I was on Baily's Fish Camp Road. Will was my co-worker that day an older black man. We had to fix a washout on a small bridge. This was nothing but a shell road that goes into the bay between Texas, and Louisiana, and it goes thru a salt water marsh that is on both sides of the road. One side of the marsh comes right up to the road, and the other side there is a small canal about 15ft. wide then the marsh. It is great for crabbing, but you had to watch out for Hammerhead Sharks. Will and I was out there to fix this washout, and we had smoked a joint, or a couple of them as a matter of fact since we were out away from houses, and were just taking it easy. Heck we were county workers go figure.

As we were fixing this bad spot a beer truck came up from Baily's Fish Camp at the end of this road on a peninsula where people launched boats, and bought bait, beer etc.... The driver told us about a big gator that was on the road aways up the road, and wanted to know if we would be getting if off the road before someone hit it? I told him that we didn't have anything to do with gator's, but that we would go take a look at it to see what was up.

We finished the patch job by dumping the rock into the washout with the one ton because it had a lift bed. We patted it down with shovels since I couldn't pack it with the truck, and we got in the truck with our big whirligig light flashing a yellow caution, and off we went. This road is 3-5 miles long, so we smoked another joint wondering what was up with the beer truck guy because we saw no gator. As we passed a curve we saw a large black object on the marsh side, or my side of the road. It looked like a log. I told Will "My God Will! That's a Dinosaur! Maybe even a TREX!", I pulled up the road a little ways, and we walked slowly back on the other
side of the road away from it. This was the biggest gator I had ever seen in the wild. I love gator meat, and am not scared to tackle one, but this guy was at least 14 ft. long if he was an inch, and had to have weighed 500 lbs. its head had to be almost two feet across, and his front legs was at least as big as my own legs, this was a huge, huge gator.

This guy was halfway up on the road, and halfway in the swamp with its mouth open, and very much alive. My mind reeled. I wanted this big thing. Being high as a kite I asked Will if he liked to eat alligator" He said "Hell Yeah!" He also said that he had six kids, so I told him that we would kill the gator and take it to his house, and we would ice it down and skin it after work. Then we would sell the hide to Delbert Shepard, he worked for the county but was also a trapper/commercial fisherman, and he already told me that he would give me $11,00 dollars a sq. ft. for any gator hide I could get. He said that he could get up to $22,00 for a sq. ft. for a hide after it was cured right. The money would just be extra I wanted to eat it being a coonass ya know, so what to use to kill this big guy? We had two flat bladed shovels, and a potato fork which is a four prong fork bent at a 90° angle like a garden hoe. That was it!

I told ole Will though that I had an idea. We would smack the gator in the head with these shovels, and knock it out, or stun it then I could cut its throat with my razor sharp lockblade. That was all fine and dandy, and we both thought that this was a mighty fine idea.

I told Will that he had better hit this thing when I did that way it wouldn't know who to go for, and he promised that he too would hit it. We drew back with the shovels, and on the count of 3 I swung, and so did Will, and the shovels connected with its hard head, and ricocheted off its head, and then I knew that we were in trouble because it didn't even phase that hard headed lizard! With the adrenaline running full tilt thru our viens we smacked that guy over and over, and it stood up, and I and Will beat it back down then before long we tired out finally only putting a small nick on this things head. I can say this for sure. This thing was plenty pissed off too!

The gator was up on the road with his head far enough that I could use the trucks duel wheels to crush his head, and I told Will this since we had failed with the shovels, but wanted this gator even worse now.

I told Will that I would get it this time. Will got a ways back on the
road to watch, and I got in the truck. It had big mirrors like trucks had back then for pulling trailers. I rested my arm on the window ledge with the window rolled down, and lined up the duel wheels. I lit up that big 390 cubic inch, and had a perfect run straight to its head, but the gator had another trick up its sleeve. As the wheels got to its head it jerked back, and jumped up all at the same time, and snapped it's mouth shut, it had tried to catch my arm which I had to jerk back in the truck, and its snout knocked the mirror off the bottom mount. Tore it right out of the door it did.

I had no idea that a gator could even do that much less one this size but I can say this for sure he scared the hell out of me! Now if you think that was dumb watch this next act.

Now that the juices were flowing so much after putting the mirror back in the screw holes on the mount I told Will I was going to make the gator bite on the tator fork and when it went thru its upper snount we would drag it out of the swamp.

Now you need to remember that this thing weighed at 500 lbs. and it was pissed off, and truthfully it probably could have pulled the truck into the swamp if I had it hooked to it. Even though this may have been a true fact I still got the tator fork and tried to get it to bite down on it. The problem now though was the fact that I couldn't get the gator to bite on the tator fork, and I couldn't get it to open its mouth enough for my plan to work.

It sat there and hissed at me every time I got close to it or tried to get it to bite this potato fork. I scratched my head and wondered how I could get this gator to bite or open its mouth so I could catch it? I then decided that I would wack it on the nose a couple of times. That did the trick! It hissed and opened its mouth some. Will was now over there laughing his butt off at this sight. Once the gator and I had an understanding and I knew what made the mouth work I wacked it some more because I still couldn't get the tator fork in its mouth. Once the gator had his mouth wide enough that I could get the fork part in its mouth I placed the handle under my arm, and held on tight with both hands on the handle.

As the prongs entered his mouth the fork must have touched his tongue for the mouth snapped shut faster, and harder than a steel trap, and it was like you see when a person steps on a upturned rake, for the handle on the tator fork was under my arm, and when it straightened up it threw me over

-197-
the gator's head, and I ended up with one foot on one side, of it and the other foot on the other side so I was straddle it with the gator between my feet and legs. Now the gator decided that he really didn't like me that close to him, and I knew that I didn't like this idea either, but this gator started snapping like a mad dog and throwing its head this way and that. I on the other hand was high stepping in every direction that I could to stay away from those teeth and trying to figure out the best way to put some distance between me and this marsh and this crazy meat eater without getting ate doing so. I high stepped it and danced right off this things own head and got myself right on down the road at a pretty fast clip I figured because even the gator was wondering where I had went, for one second I was there, and then next I wasn't.

I told Will "f" that thing if it couldn't take a joke, and this brought on Will's coughing laugh because he had laughed so hard that it had caused him to have a coughing fit.

I saw a little dog coming our way. We saw a lady crabbing a little further up the road, so we left the gator alone, and went to tell the gal that if that dog was hers she might want to call it away from that gator. She had been watching us, and didn't know what had our attention. We told her it was a pissed off gator, and we were going to call the county barn to let them know we had a big gator on the road, and he was a hazard, not to mention pissed off too.

She got her dog to come back, and I told her not to let her dog play in the water either, and as a matter of fact somebody had caught a 6 foot hammerhead shark just up from her and left it on the side of the road. I told her that it was still up there and if she wanted to see it just go look, but I warned her that even though this was a good place to crab just keep her eyes open because there was all kinds of things out here that could cause her and her little dog harm. She packed up and left. I guess that it must have been something that I had said?

We went to the store and called the barn asking Raymond to get animal control out there, and he just told me to leave the gator alone before I got ate.

We went back to the gator to keep people away from it, or dogs, and within 5 min. here came almost everybody at the county barn. Don LaBlanc had the
new GradAll ditching machine, Bob, and another black dude, and Hubert Marshal all had dump trucks with big rocks in them, and they were going to patch another part of the road, but had heard of this gator, and had to come see it before it ate me.

I wanted Don to use the GradAll ditching machine's bucket to chop its head off, but he wouldn't, so I got in the back of a dump truck, and proceeded to go "cave-man", on it, and started throwing big rocks at it. Don told me to not use the rocks because he needed them. Bob Haily, and the rest started laughing at us, so we left and went our way as the gator lay there.

Once at the barn one of the old guys told me he could have got the gator, and I said Oh Yeah? How? He said he would have bopped it on the head with a ball pien hammer, and that would have stunned it. I thought to my self that I would have loved to have seen him bop this thing on the head with a little hammer, because I knew that we had bopped it on the head about 30 times, and didn't stun it, piss it off yes, but stun it no way buddie. Of course I had to see this so I told him that I had a hammer in my truck so lets go, and he then said no because I had it mad now. I was determined to get this monster of a gator after work, and I had a 20ga. shotgun behind the seat of my truck along with chains, and ropes because I got stuck a lot is why I had all of this stuff, but alas it was not meant to be, because the gator was long gone, and I had to reflect on this while I sniffed paint and figured that this is why this gator was still alive that he was just some kind of lucky at living to have gotten away with being so big, for I for one would have been eating him had things worked out differently. Well I had to just stay out there and sniff paint for an hour or so, and then go home. I always had shrimp in the freezer, so I opted for the instead of fresh gator.

That was really the biggest gator I have ever tried to get, but not the last one by all means.
As things progressed in our marriage Joanne became pregnant with our first child. She had been married once before, for about 6 mths., and had lost that child, so she carried our first child aprox. 4 mths. then miscarried. The doctors told her that these things happened, and we went about our buisness.

I wasn't sure whether I was ready to be a papa. I had this weird way at looking at life mostly because I kept my face in a bag of paint anytime that my eyes was opened. I sniffed paint from the time that I got off of work till I went to bed, and the only reason I set it down then was because my body was so wore out I just couldn't go any further. The paint bags would go under my side of the bed on the floor wafting fumes up as I slept, and they would make me feel sick which would wake me up, and I would then sniff paint to get over those feelings, so I would be up the rest of the night in most cases.

My throat stayed raw, and my kidneys were always on the verge of shutting down, and my lungs stayed full of fumes yet I existed. I worked, I ate, and lived.

I took the loss of our child with a nonchalant look and told Joanne that we could have fun making a new one since my French Blood kept me primed, and ready. I had to just set the paint down long enough to do so, and that in itself was a chore to do.

My wife, and even my self couldn't realize at the time that my paint was my true lover, and my paint can was my whole world. Oh don't get me wrong I didn't sit like some zombie unless I was deep into a trip, but most of the time I kept myself on a functioning level because this level kept me cognizance enough to know what was going on around me. Most of the time that is, for I was never to far away from Zobieism.

Somewhere in here Joanne gets pregnant again, and so having insurance I sent her to Giglio, Beatty, and Jones, a set of prenatal/natal doctors. This is all they did, and each time a woman went in they would see a different doctor out of the three. This way all 3 doctors knew each woman's situation, and depending on who was on when the birth came, or if two happened at the
same time there always seemed to be a doctor open.

They were expensive for me since it was a hundred dollar pop each time she walked in the door insurance, or not, and this was now 1978, and money just didn't go that far when I was only a county worker. Joanne was coming along now and things seemed to be going good enough that we finally realized that there would be a child soon in our home, so we were getting ready for that, and even I was looking forward to it.

I didn't stop sniffing paint, but I was providing for my wife, and future family, and going thru the motions of putting stuff together like a crib, and setting up a bedroom as a nursery.

One day I was at the house when Joanne came home, and told me that she was spotting blood, but nothing bad. I told her that I didn't know what that meant, and she said she didn't know either. I asked her what she did at work, and she said that she had been passing out meds, and had this big woman that needed a small lift to get in bed that wanted to lay down. Joanne hit the call button to get the orderlies in to put her to bed, but got impatient waiting on them, and tugged, and pulled on this big gal with Denise's help to get her in the bed.

Joanne then said that she had felt this sharp pain, and then later was spotting blood. Things seemed to be ok though, because she wasn't hurting, so we didn't set a new appointment with these doctors. She had an appointment already set the next week, so as she seemed to be ok we went back to doing what we do.

I was at work the following week, or so, and had came in for another load of black top, or had some repairs for the mechanic to make on a tractor, or something when Raymond Harper called me to the side and said my wife needed me. I asked him why, and he said go into Ama's office, and call her, so I did. She told me that she had saw Jones on this visit, and after he examined her he just bluntly told her that the baby was dead, and patted her on her bare butt, and told her she was young, and would have more, also he told her she now needed a D&C which would make it even harder for her to get pregnant.

Well this set me off to boiling that this doctor didn't even consider this news as devastating, but Joanne did, and she was already hormonal, and now she knew that she carried our dead baby in her belly. Well I don't need to go any deeper with that let's just say she was a wreck!
Well now you have read before when Jerry wanted me to rent, or buy a new suit the way I got mad then, well this was 100 times worse, and my Indian, and French blood was ready to go to war, and I was crazy mad, and Raymond came in to talk to me, for he already knew what the deal was, and he came to tell me "you crazy little coonass don't go doing anything stupid!" I told Raymond that being in the mood that I was in I was most likely going to do something stupid anyway, so I told him that I need to leave, and he said to call him later. I just said probably not, and smoked my tires leaving the yard. I passed the Village Grocery at 100 mph plus which was only a mile from the yard.

I usually stopped there to get a cold one to wash down the trial dust on the way home, but not today.

I had already sprayed up a big fix of paint, and was planning to beat that doctors ass which of course would be an aggravated assault, but I didn't think of it like that, I thought of the train wreck he made of my wife, and he patted her bare ass, so I was mad on so many different levels that I couldn't even count them.

That's where my Indian blood came in. I was out for retribution, and woe to anybody that got in my way. My rational thinking was gone, and the more paint I sniffed the meaner I got.

When I got home and rounded up Joanne she could see death in my eyes, and she begged me not to do anything that we would get another doctor. I told her to give me the phone number to the doctors office, so I could find out how long he would be there, and told them that I was coming there and that we was going to have a talk about his bedside manner, and that they had better have my last payment my wife had spent in that place ready for me when I got there. I told them that I would be there at 4PM. on the dot, and he had better be there.

We loaded up in the Malibu, so if I went to jail Joanne would have a car to drive home, and not my truck since she had a problem with the power it had.

We parked in the parking lot behind the office, and I checked to be sure that my lockblade was in my pocket, for I always carried a knife, and this one was an Olsen lockblade that I opened oil cans with yet it kept a razor edge. I gave Joanne a kiss, and went to the front door of their offices.
at 4Pm. on the dot, and actually waited for a couple of minutes so that I did enter the place exactly like I said that I would. I burst in, and went into the waiting room like a mad bull. The ladies waiting to be seen all pregnant sat along the wall with wide eyes, and hands across their bellies, and the other to their mouths in surprise. I told them to stay put that they were safe, and that I was there to see that rufflebate doctor. I started to go to the back and hunt this doctor down because I hadn't seen him so I didn't know what he looked like. The receptionist had been the one that I had talked to eariler, and she even scared as she was blocked my way, and placed a hand on my chest asking not telling me not to go back there.

She said that the doctor wanted her to apologize for him, and reimbursed our fees for the day, and that he knew that he was wrong. She reached down to her desk since we were standing next to it still with her hand on my chest. I told her it wasn't going to fix the train wreck he made out of my wife, and it was for that reason that I was there. About this time I saw something or somebody in a white lab coat go out the back exit in a hurry. I knew who that was, and told the receptionist that she wasn't slick keeping me from getting to him while he slipped out the back door.

Really though I didn't know what room he was in, so I really was glad he went out the door. I didn't really want to freak some gal out while she had her legs up in stirrups, and there was 3 doctors there plus waiting rooms, so it was good that he went out to the parking lot. I took my check from her, and spun around and told the gals to keep their panties up because these doctors liked playing with your bare ass, and telling you your dead baby was rotting inside you, and left.

By the time I got to the car the doctor, and his Benz was gone. Joanne's eyes were as big as saucers, and she told me she saw him run out to get in his car, and she thought that I was coming after him, but I told her that although I was pissed off at this guy I didn't want to hurt one of the gals in there, but they might re-think the doctors they now had since they saw, and heard the exchanges that were made and the gal telling me he admitted what he did. I heard a siren, so I figured it was time to move on. The siren wasn't for me. In the end the doctors offered to do the D&C at no cost besides the hospital stay, and Jones wouldn't treat my wife anymore.

I couldn't argue with that because she still needed this operation like right now! So we agreed and set it up.
The next day Raymond, and Asa talked to me, and I explained the situation, and Asa being Joanne's 2nd cousin albeit a lot older was glad to see that I was trying to do the right thing, and he would be sure Maybelle got the inside scoop on things that I didn't tell her personally. The good thing was Asa liked me more than Maybelle did, so he always told her good things about me.

Raymond just told me to take off what time I needed. The next day Joanne went into the hospital, and had the procedure done, and after I saw she was ok, and resting I went and found her a "pekingese puppy", since she had an old pehingese that had died after we married.

Once I bought the puppy I put a pink bow on its head, and took her to my wife's window which was on the ground floor. I saw that she had a couple nurses in her room, and they seeing the puppy opened the window and snatched the puppy and took it inside. Joanne had a private room so they could do this. Now here I was standing empty handed by the bushes next to a window at the Woman's, and Childern's Hospital, and I thought "boy without the dog I looked like a pervert peeking in windows." The nurses came, and gave the dog back which was then named "Candy", and I took her home. I picked Joanne back up the next day.

Maybelle wanted me to come up to the house to eat something, but I would not do it. I had plenty of food in the house plus I didn't want to interrupt my paint sniffing time, besides the Judy had bought me a "Hotdogger", that I loved using, and I ate a pack of hotdogs, no fuss, no muss. I'd snatch the hotdog off with a piece of bread that had mustard spread on it, and I would eat it just like that while it was still smoking hot.

I also had a couple of dogs already besides Candy now one was a dachshund, and the other a german shepard half grown puppy. The dachshund's name was "Hutchencpocket" "Hutch", for short, and "Hulk" was the other.

I picked up Joanne the next day, and of course after she was home the topic was about babies, and she wanted to keep trying after she could have sex again which we had to wait for a little bit for.

The doctor told her that he had turned her uterus somehow in a way that would help her out, but I'm not too sure the dude was on the up, and up, but we had to take his word on it. About this time Judy came up with this bird called a "cockatill", and it looked like a small "cockatoo" with a crest
that raised upon its head except it was gray with a yellow head, and had pink cheeks.

We had went back to Judy's, and Tara my niece was playing with it outside its cage, and I thought that was too cool.

Most of the time you just watch birds in a cage, but you could interact with this one, so now I had to have one of these for myself. I had just spent $125,00 dollars for the puppy that I gave to Joanne, and now I asked Judy where she had got this bird and how much it was and it was $65,00 dollars.

We went to the pet store and bought a cage , so we could transport the bird, and keep it till it could be handled, and so we did buy one like theirs and then we went to Duke's and Judy's, so the kids could show me how to get it out of the cage without hurting it. We had to let it calm down a little bit, but I was able to get it out of the cage. I thought that I was doing pretty good letting it sit on my finger, and I was trying to get it to climb from one finger to another like a ladder, and as I did this a couple of times the bird decided that my finger looked like something he wanted to bite and bit it did! That thing bit the crap out of my finger which I then slung the bird off of it because it hurt like hell!

Tara, and Jody her brother caught the bird and put it back into the cage, and as I nursed my finger, and everybody laughed Duke asked me what I was going to name it? I said "Tequila", since that stuff also sneaks up on ya, and bites ya in the butt, so my bird had a name, and a weird bird it was. It was almost a dead bird because if I could have caught the little bugger right after it bit me there would have been no need for the cage.

I took it back to the house, and decided it needed to calm down some more, so I lit a joint, and blew a few puffs of the evil weed in its face.

It just sat there amongst the smoke then it shook its head, and moved its beaks like it was grinding its teeth. I am glad it didn't have teeth at the time it bit me, but that was what it looked like it was doing.

Needless to say it did calm down, so I started handling it, and it was cool this time. I clipped one wing like the bird book I bought told me ,and then we got to know one another.

My bird I think was a burnout after a while because it liked seeds from the weed, and it liked to chew on the stems which got it high too, and it got so goofy that it would see me rolling a joint, and come running, and

-205-
since I sat on the floor a lot in front of the couch it would climb up my up my pants leg, and perch on my knee, and raise Cain until I hit it with a couple of shotguns from the weed smoke, and this made my dope fiend bird happy, and it would shut up.

Ole Tequila was worse than a puppy, and it would wait on me to come home from work on its cage, and when I got there it made a Bee Line to me, and rode on my shoulder like a pirate's parrot that you always see in the cartoons and some movies.

This bird was never locked up unless it pissed me off somehow, and since it never bit me anymore no matter what I did to it he stayed free, and I even took him outside where it flew, or fluttered to the ground, and picked up sticks, and broke them with its beak, and then spit them out because he preferred marijuana stems the most, and the sticks just didn't taste the same to it I guess?

The bird wasn't scared of my dogs either, and like me they found out what those curved beaks felt like. They learned that unlike me it would bite them more than once.

Needless to say he was my bird since Joanne never wanted to hold it, and he was a cool bird, goofy but cool. More later on him.

Now Jerry, Joanne's and Judy's little brother had to have one, so he went, and bought a solid white one that was a lot older than the ones we had gotten, and this bird was mean as hell. It bit Denise, and Maybelle, and Jerry over and over, so they kept it in a cage which I believe made it meaner, of course my bird was mellow too by the weed smoke, and it was always around paint fumes because I always was sniffing paint.

Things were about to get bad though, and it would be a turning point with us all. One week sometime in the near future I had been really sick (my kidneys were on the verge of failing) although I didn't know this.

I kept on sniffing paint like a fiend, and had missed about a week of work. It had been raining all week and it was just miserable. I had a bad set of tonsils, and have always had since I was a kid when I had rammed an arrow with a rubber suction cup on the end of it down my throat by running with it in my mouth. I ran into the washer, and it hit the arrow jamming it down my throat tearing one of my tonsils part of the way loose, and putting a hole in the other, so besides my almost self imposed tonsillectomy that
then caused me to have tonsillitis as a constant reminder that you don't run with an arrow in your mouth.

Once I started sniffing paint I just got use to the pain, for paint fumes being caustic kept them chemically burnt, and sore, but of course if you sniff enough paint you no longer care if there is pain which seemed to go away!

It didn't take high math to figure out that I was zoning out, but my body had other things going on too. I had recently spent 3 weeks in the hospital because my nervous system was frazzled, and wore out from my paint abuse, so I literally had a nervous breakdown.

After that my health was up and down, but one day I had been taking meds before going to work. These meds were a strong nerve medication, well stupid me already high on paint took a handful which I decided was a good thing.

You know common sense with me is so rare at times it's kinda like super powers, but this day I didn't have any. I got a couple of miles from the house before I knew even on paint that I had messed up, and overdosed myself!

I made the first turn around I could, and stashed my paint. I was in trouble, and this stuff was hitting me fast and hard. Maybe my high tolerance to drugs because of my paint usage was a blessing this time because I was able to hold together enough to get home, but not before I stopped a couple of times on the road and made myself throw up, and then I lit the tires of that 500 horsepower motor and got to the house.

Joanne was at her mother's, and she heard my truck zooming in then she and Maybelle who had been sharing coffee and still in their nightgowns and robes saw me stumbling toward the house, and they ran, and waddled to where I was, and Joanne being a medication nurse knew I had "Overdosed" on something. She asked what it was I had taken as they helped me in the house. I told her my nerve meds She made me throw up by sticking her fingers down my throat some more at the front steps, and could see the broken capsules, or what was left of them.

I was then standing by the bed, and passed out falling backwards. About 16 hours later I woke up to a quiet house. Joanne was watching TV in the living room with the volume down low. It was dark in the house with only the light from the TV, and from the kitchen that was on.

She saw me awake, and came to talk to me to see why I had tried to kill myself? I told her that I was just a dumbass, and wanted to cop a better buzz
to see what they would do. Now I knew. Sometimes life just sucks the jelly right out of your donut. I felt like crap, so I dug out my other paint can from my stash, and got me a fix. Joanne tried to talk me out of doing that, but the paint fumes actually made me feel better believe that or not, so Joanne decided to fix me something to eat which of course I had to put the paint down to eat, so after dinner I again went after the paint.

Now this was kinda like a side track from the other subject I had started on a while back. I can't help it, those were crazy times, and you need to remember that while reading this that this is a story about an addiction to inhalants that spans over 40 years, so my memory does go into blank pages then sometimes later comes back into a story that I had forgotten but needed mentioning.

Anyway back to dramapalooza. I had been sick about a week with my tonsils basically bleeding raw from the caustic burns of the paint fumes. My kidneys as mentioned a short while back weren't out, but they weren't good thus toxins were building up in my system, my blood turning acidic, and worst of all I had, or was running out of paint! Now I was home with my stupid bird, and dogs some outside, and some inside. Judy was home with her kids. Duke was in from the road. He was a long hauler truck driver who barely made any money because he liked to sleep in motels with hookers, and lot lizards instead of his truck. He spent most of his pay checks by drawing against them while on the road. Maybelle was at home too.

The only ones that weren't was Joanne, Jerry, Joe, and Denise. I being high, and left to my own devices decided that Judy wanted me, and wanted to have hot: horney sex. That's why she stayed home. Well I made a good ole fashion lewd phone call, now called "a booty call". We talked a few minutes and then Duke came on the phone, and he told me to go to bed, and sleep it off, so like any good drug addict after hanging up I forgot about it, and went to get me a fix figuring it was just her loss.

About 20 minutes later here comes Maybelle, and Duke. I let them in, and Maybelle was in a tiff! Duke thought it was funny, but Maybelle was bonkers.

Maybelle was sure that I had some kind of evil drug in the house, so she was waving her hamhock arms being crazy, and Duke told me I had to be really messed up, and looney to boot to try to talk Judy into having sex with me while he was home. Note he said while he was home. I knew his secrets
see.

Well as you may have figured I was in no mood to mess with these people, for they were messing with my high. I was almost out of paint, and that was now my priority. I had been getting ready to go get more. Now I have a crazy fat behemoth of a Mother-In-Law tearing my doors off the rollers, and a Brother-In-Law, looking at me with a sneer as she does so, so I tell them to get out of my house.

Maybelle comes and stands next to Duke, and started to yell at me, and so I reach around the bedroom door, and grab my .410 ga. shotgun that has 3½ inch magnum slugs in it, so it's like a .44 cal. bullet. As I jack a shell into the chamber I bring it up, and across Maybelle's face, and point it blank at Duke's face. At this distance it would have blown Duke's head off since I was almost touching his nose with the end of the barrel. Duke was the bigger threat, so I figured to keep him at bay most of all.

Maybelle was really freaking out now, and I told Duke, and Maybelle to leave again, or I would shoot them both! Duke outweighed me by at least 100 lbs.

I weighed about 150 lbs. and he was about 250 lbs. He started to grab the end of the barrel of the shotgun, and I pulled the trigger, and by a stroke of luck for Duke, and myself I had tripped the safety on when I jacked a shell in the chamber. I fully intended to blow his head off, for now I was totally pissed off at them coming over to my house and Maybelle tearing the doors off the rollers.

Duke gets the end of the shotgun, and wrestles me to the bed because I was at my bedroom door. He gets the gun away from me, and he, and Maybelle get out of the house, Duke with the shotgun.

If I was really pissed at first I am now furious, and Duke along with Maybelle are standing in the front yard. Maybelle didn't think that the gun was loaded, but Duke started unloading it in front of her, and she liked to have fainted. I flew out of the house and flung open my Olsen Lockblade knife, and came at him slowly in a knife fighter's low crouch, and told him that I was going to cut him into 500 pieces. I was no longer high, and he could tell that so he threw the useless shotgun down, and took off towards his trailer, and Maybelle took off the other way at a faster waddle than I had ever seen her move before. She had her chubby legs moving as fast as they would move her out of danger.
I decided that now would be as good a time as any to make an exit, and besides I needed more paint, so I went in the house, and got my truck keys then went, and fired up the truck. I had an old can that had a fix, or two left for emergencies, and figuring that this just might be one of those times I sprayed up, and left.

The first thing that I did was go by Uncle Joe's gas station, and get $3.00 worth of Ethel gas since my truck ran on leaded gas, and only the best. This way I had a little running gas, so I could drive around, and find me a good place to sniff my paint. The next stop was Wood's Supermarket. I had to go steal me a couple of new cans of paint and get me some bags.

Now I was feeling better since I had gotten out and started moving around some, not to mention that I sprayed up a big shot of paint. I was still sick, but because I had new cans of paint it was like I had a set of fresh batteries to my mind.

After a few minutes in the parking lot I headed down old Hwy. 90 going to IH 10 where I would then get on the freeway, and go to a wooded area that had new roads being made, but were closed because of the way the weather had been. Since I always drove on stuff like this I knew that my truck would handle it, so at this time Jerry had now bought, or rented an old daycare center off old Hwy. 90. Joanne was one of the teachers, and there was another gal that worked there too.

I don't know why Joanne, and the other teacher were leaving, but I passed them coming out of their short deadend road, and being in no mood to stop and talk I passed them heading toward IH10, and its first on ramp. They came out, and started following me. At this time though I had my eye on a cop car that was coming towards me from the other direction, so I tried to be cool.

When I saw the look on the driver's face it told me that he was going to come after me. I knew that the ole crapola was about to hit the proverbial fan, so I turned my cap around backwards, and made sure that my hair was out of the way, and out of my eyes. I saw the cop turn around in the road that Joanne and her friend had came out of. Joanne and her friend was still behind me for they hadn't paid attention to the fact that a cop was now on their backsides. The cop came around fast and passed Joanne which freaked her out a little for one second he wasn't there then he was.
I had already started to accelerate putting distance between us. The cop is now behind me as I hit the on ramp of IH10 merging with then traffic, and I was now at 65 mph. I didn't see any lights behind me, so I wasn't real sure that the cops were after me, but that gut feeling said they were. I sprayed another fix of paint, and because I had a painted back window scene that was made for pickups that let me see out, but you can't see in. I sniffed as I drove.

I had racing mirrors on the truck, and for some reason my driver's side mirror was pointed kinda down, so I couldn't see the cars coming up on my side. My mirror in the middle of the front windshield had fell off like lots of them did back then for the epoxy they used on the rearview dried out, and the mirror fell off.

As I cruised along Joanne, and her friend were still on the feeder, and now matched my speed at 65 mph. I saw them looking over at me from the road they were on, then I heard a loud noise like a back fire! I looked at my gauges, and saw no redlines, of lights flashing on the dash or gauges. I punched the gas, and didn't feel any cutout, or missing, but because I had a loud truck I didn't know what I'd heard? I saw Joanne looking behind me, so I got down so that I could see in my side mirror, and there the cop car was lights going like a million dollar slot machine that had hit the Jackpot, then I saw this cop hanging out of the backseat car window with a .45 cal. pistol aiming at my tire!

Well now this was a nice pickle to be in, and I knew already now that this cop had shot at me, or my truck that he would have no problem doing so again or worse, so I power shifted into a lower gear, and lit it up just as he shot at me again.

I left them like they were standing still, and shifted up, and put my sock into the carburetor, and was soon cruising at over 100 mph. My speedo only went to 100 mph, but because of the distance it would travel past 100 mph I knew I could at squeeze 130 mph. maybe 140 mph out of the truck. This was about the time of "Smoky and the Bandit", craze, so it always excited everybody to see a good high speed chase going on.

I wasn't running from the law just to run, for he had already shot at me twice. so the way I figured it they were crazy and I wasn't giving them another chance to shoot at me again.

-211-
Getting shot at ain't no fun, and I had really now seemed to be having a bad day, so I got on the CB, and told the truckers to give me some rooming room. I told them I was in the white cowboy cadillac with the bubblegum machine following close behind and a crazy bear waving a loaded pea shooter at everybody. I heard bring it on up cowboy caddy, and that's all I needed.

As I got close to two trucks one would pull back enough for me to squeeze in and as one truck would slow up enough for me to get in front of him I'd shoot in and punch it and he would close the door.

The cops weren't having that kind of luck though, and they were having to find their own way around the truckers, most of the time the cops would have to pass the trucks on the inside lane shoulder, and sometimes in the grass.

Once I was clear of the truckers, and cars the road opened up, for people on CB's had pulled off to a road side park, and the others seeing cop car lights pulled off to the side of the road. This left me a wide open road, and now the race was on for real. As I passed the roadside park at about 130 mph. I honked at everybody for there was gals on top of the tables waving shirts over their heads, and other flashing their knockers, and horns honking headlights flashing, and you just had to smile.

As you drive down the freeways I know you have seen these dirt roads between highways with signs that say emergency turn around, or for emergency only. I figured that this qualified as one, or the other, so at 95 mph. I tried to make one of these turn arounds within sight of the rest area, but my wheels wouldn't grab or at least the front ones wouldn't because they were in dirt and gravel, while the back ones were still on the concrete road, but it did cause a lot of smoke and a big dust cloud from the burning tires and rubber from my tires as they slid down the road. I was sliding sideways at 95 mph. and saw the cop car sliding also sideways, but he was going to crash into me, so I cut my wheels into the skid power shifted my Indy Speed Shifter into a lower gear, and punched it again lighting up the tires since I had slowed down to around 50 mph. both back tires broke loose in the gravel and I threw rocks, and dirt all into the cops open window, and again left them literally in my dust!

This chase had now been going on for 25 miles, and I knew all of the county roads like the back of my hand. I was coming up to the state line
a few miles down the road, and once across the state line was a really long bridge that goes over marshes, bayous, and such that was full of gators, and sharks etc.... so I knew that wasn't gonna help. I had one more exit I could take that would take me to the Orange Hospital, then it dawned on me I was sick, and could have been going there all along when the cops started shooting at me for no reason, then I wouldn't stop for I needed medical treatment literally. I looked down at the gas gauge and it was below empty, now that was gonna change everything, so the chase was over I flew off the freeway and saw the cop car next to me, and I grabbed my steering wheel, and was fixing to ram their car back up onto the freeway when I saw the pistol pointed at my face, so I slammed on my brakes, and the cop stopped as fast as I did, and he jumped out. I put the truck in neutral, then the cop shot both of my rear tires out with three shots each while walking up to me putting a new clip in his gun, and said "that ought to fix ya hot rod". My door open they got me out, and handcuffed me, and set me back in my truck seat.

My motor died, it was out of gas. I looked around, and I'll bet there was twenty cop cars all over the place. I was spitting up blood, with my throat bloody raw and my kidneys messing up etc.... I was a mess.

The ones that had been chasing me was the Captain and Lt. of the Vidor Police Dept. and after they put me in their car and headed back to Vidor they talked amongst themselves trying to figure out what they could make stick with charges. They charged me with "Aggravated Assault on a Police Officer with a pick-up truck, and Evading Arrest".

One of their underlings took me to jail where I informed the jailer that I had been on my way to the hospital when these arse headed rednecks started chasing me, and shooting at me. The cops there asked what had gotten into the Vidor Cops? The reason for this was for as they chased me they were chasing another car toward Beaumont shooting at them also. The jailer stated that I had made a request to go to the hospital, and the Vidor Cop said they were now the arresting officers, and he was done with it. The Orange Cops said fine, and that when he left I would be right behind them, so seeing that they intended to release me if he didn't take me to the hospital, and knowing that his bosses would be mad at him he decided to take me to the hospital. He was really pissed at this and loaded me back up in the car causing me to hit my head as I got back in the car, and the jailer told him that
he has seen the shape that I was in when I left there, and I had better not come back in worse shape than I was already in, by being abused by him.

I was really in bad shape, or worse than I had thought. Upon getting there first being in a cop car handcuffed causes a stir, and is embarrassing. Some of the nurses remembered me from the time before from busting my head with a pickax, but now I was escorted by a smart aleck cop, and he came in there trying to tell the doctors, and nurses just to look me over, and get me the hell out of there so he could take me to jail because he said I was just shamming, and didn't want to go to jail.

They at first took me into the E.R. triage room to give me the once over, and started asking me what was happening to me, or why had I needed to see them? As I lay on the bed, and started telling them how sick I had been, and that I had a bloody raw throat that they confirmed the doctors could smell the paint fumes being extruded thru my pores, and breath even though I hadn't told them. IV's were started, blood was drawn, and things were stepped up a notch. I was in kidney failure, and didn't know it. The cop kept asking if this was really necessary, and that he really needed to get me back to the jail, so that he could go back to Vidor and report to the Captain, and Lt. about all of this. He told them that they were the ones that had to chase me all the way to Orange. The doctor was in flames, and told him to get out of the E.R., and he made him take me out of the cuffs. He said no, but the doctor told him that they may run the streets, but he ran that E.R. and he could stand outside of the room.

He still wouldn't leave, so the doctor left the nurses to work on me, and as they put in IV's they asked me what the deal was with the cop? I then told them that I had been coming here, and his bosses the Capt. and Lt. came up behind me, and started shooting at me, and after they did that there was no way I was stopping for the crazy bastards. I told them that the Vidor cops were crazier than a rat in a coffee can, and they had to agree. Sure it was a lie, but not one far from the truth, for I was in kidney failure, and very sick, and even if I had been in jail they would have had to bring me to the hospital, but this story though was thought up as the police chase was going, and the "why", I ran.

Of course crazy cops hanging out of windows with a loaded gun shooting at you will make you try out the 500 plus horses under the hood too!
The doctor came back, and told the cop to pick up the extension phone by the door. He did, and after talking a few minutes hung up, and came to uncuff me, and stand outside the door. He was madder than a wet cat in a toad sack, and wouldn't say anything.

The nurses told the doctor about the chase, and what they had done, and you could see that he wasn't a fan to the Vidor Police Dept. I am sure that there was more than one person he had to work on subject to lead poisoning via the Vidor Cops.

The labs came back on the blood work, and after the doctor looked at them more IV's were put into place, and a couple more nurses came into play, some with backless nightgowns, and others that started to unhook my pants, and take my shoes, and socks off. I was basically being stripped by hands everywhere. I thought "Alright a Party" I didn't know why these gals wanted me naked, but I was game!

The cop saw all of this action and asked what was happening, and the nurses gathered around my bed like a fence with some putting their hands on my chest, and the doctor told the cop that I had to be admitted for no less than 24 hours, and that my kidneys were working but they were in distress and that my blood was full of lead, and that my system was possibly poisoned by it, and he had to flush my blood to see if the toxins could be reduced, or my kidneys would fail completely.

Oh yeah this really pissed off this cop because now he had to pull hospital duty. Needless to say he wasn't a happy camper at all, and he got on the phone again to call the station.

I was sick, but I wasn't sure how I was suppose to feel with kidneys messing up? I felt like I always did after a bad binge like the one I had been on, my throat hurt, but all I knew was that I wasn't going to jail this day.

I was taken to a room, and given food, and a menu of what I could order, since I hadn't ate for a day or so even though I was at home I was very hungry.

The cop stayed out of my room which really wasn't a real hospital room, it was an I.C.U. room. It was by the nurses station, and they were constantly coming in there to change IV's, and talk to me. The cops changed over, so now there was another cop who also was a smart aleck, but soon found out that everybody there really weren't happy at all that they were around. Let's face it folks the Vidor Cops back then weren't a nice lot. They had at least
10 cop cars, and half of them were totaled out from car chases, and even the one that chased me couldn't get over 85 mph. I just couldn't get away from that radio.

The next day the other cop that had brought me there in the first place came back to do the honors of taking me to jail. This dude made sure that I was standing, where everyone could see him handcuff me with my hands behind my back, and had this big sneer on his face as he did so. Oh the doctor wasn't done though he came up with a packet of medical papers which he let the cop check out, and my meds. that he had prescribed which he gave to the cop. The papers he slid under my arm. He told me in front of the cop that he, and the others that had worked on me would testify in court for me, and to just tell my lawyer, and he gave me a list of names and phone numbers, and said also in front of this cop that if they took it away from me just to have my lawyer call there. I wasn't sure what was fixing to happen, but I sure didn't like the sound of all of that! So off to the Hoosegow I went.
CHAPTER 15

Upon getting to the Orange County Jail there was nothing special about it. I was booked in, mug shot etc.... and given my charges which was mentioned earlier. I was given a $20,000 dollar bond, and while I was being booked in the cop, or jailer that was there told me that there was a black bondsman there that was bonding somebody else out that would be a good one to talk to because he was easy to deal with, "meaning he took collateral, like rings, and watches, or other stuff of value". While we waited on him the nurse interviewed me in the medical office to see what my meds were, and take info.

I talked more to the jailer who wasn't in a hurry to lock me up since the whole jail probably only held about 40 people. We talked, and I stuck to my story, and had half of the cops in there laughing at the antics these cops pulled. We talked about the high speed chase and that drew more laughs too. There wasn't any reason to hide these facts because they all knew about the chase, but now I had the medical proof too to back up my story so it all became a joke.

They also knew that I was a county worker too, you see a lot of cops as a county worker, for they are always stopping to talk, and I was always looking for a reason to take a break, so some of them had seen me around.

I talked to the bondsman, and gave him my $300,00 wedding band to hold on to. He told me instead of the 10% percent that most bonds were, that because I was a county resident, and owned my home that I only needed 3% somewhere about $600,00 which I didn't have at the time. I was able to call Joanne, and since a shotgun had come into play the crazy phone call to Judy was all but forgotten.

She came up to see me, and leave me some money, and I was able to smooth things over with her, after a couple of visits. Maybelle called the station after I called Joanne at her house, and told the Chief that she didn't want me calling Joanne at her house then he came back there, and got on me and the jailer that had let me make the calls, but we made a joke of it after that because this guy would let me make all the phone calls I wanted.

I was going to get out of jail, but Joanne didn't have the money to get
me out of jail, but Joanne, and her dad had got my truck out of the pound.

The cops had ruined my mag wheels, and the detectives had cut holes in my tires getting the bullets out, but I had two tires on tire mounts in the back of the truck. They took my truck home.

I stayed in jail 21 days total, and had enough of that. I called the bondsman, and told him I had my county paycheck waiting for me at the county barn, and he said that with that he would get me out.

I called Joanne, and told her to come up and get me which she did. She wanted to get my check, but I told her that the check was what was getting me out of jail since she hadn't done it. The bondsman had me released, and I rode with him to the county barn while Joanne followed him. He wanted to be sure to get his money before he let me go.

Once we got to the county barn I went in the county barn, and they were all glad to see me, but Raymond took me to the office because they had some type of small award dinner going on with the county workers, and commissioners.

Raymond told me that the county had let me go, and had two pay checks for me. Had I thought about it I would have hidden one of them. They offered me a plate of smoked duck, and Joanne, but I said no thanks, and left.

I walked out of there, and remembered I had two checks which the bondsman then had me sign over to him, and then he gave me my wedding band since now he had my checks in his hand. Off he went, and the off we went too.

We got back to Vidor, and I was able to apologize to Maybelle, but Duke was again on the road, and I told Judy that I was sorry too. Of course we hugged off which started up the jokes from Jerry, and Denise, and Joanne made sure that there wasn't more hugging going on than need be. Everybody thought that this was funny. Ole Joe just kinda hurrumphed lit a cig, and took it all in stride that we were all crazy coonasses. He knew that I had pulled the shotgun on Duke, he also didn't believe that they should have went to my trailer, and tore stuff up. My shotgun was gone as was my Olsen lockblade. The police had them, so I let them keep them.

I had to find another job now, so I went to B.F.I. (Brown & Ferris Inc.) and got a job driving a Mack truck hauling dry chemical waste, and one of my main loads was carbon black from Shulman's. This stuff was really nasty, it got on everything. It was so heavy that it raised the front wheels off of the ground as I tried to pull up 40 yard box onto the truck, and there was a steel wheel with hydrolics that pushed the wheels back down.
I was told that I could work all the overtime that I wanted, and this was fine with me because I was by myself, and could sniff paint without worrying that my new boss would find out.

I had the dispatcher double my runs, so I worked 16-18 hours a day. I was off on the weekends, so I was bringing in pretty good checks for back then.

I was bringing home around $400.00 a week where I was only bringing home around $225.00 every week at the county, and that was not all of the time either.

I told Maybelle that I wanted the trailer put in my name since I had paid it off, but she told me that she was keeping it in her name even though it was now paid for. I told Joanne that I knew that this was going to happen when we bought it like we did, and she had refused to just co-sign the note, or put any type of paperwork on it. I told Joanne that this was her Mom showing her true colors and I hope she enjoyed the fact that her Mom didn't just mess over me but her too.

Joanne was mad too because we had lived there 2½ years and I had paid all of this as well as my own truck notes and had paid the trailer off completely, and all Joanne paid for was her own car notes. So we packed up, and moved out which pissed her Mom off a lot, and we rented an apartment in Bridge City about a ½ mile from the B.F.I. yard.

Joanne was again working for a nursing home, now one called Green Acres in Vidor, and another one owned by Ms. Mayberry, and ran as well by Maybelle.

Maybelle didn't like Joanne living in Bridge City but that was just tough. I was doing ok at B.F.I. until after one and a half months there, and then the boss decided I was getting way too much overtime, and then decided that I was too slow to do work given to me to be done in 8 hours. I didn't tell him the dispatcher gave me twice the amount of tickets to do daily than the other drivers. I saw the dispatcher looking kinda scared like she would get in trouble for giving me this amount of work so I didn't say anything about her doing this for me. I just told the dude to cut my check for the hours that they owed me, and I went on my way. I was a truck driver, and someone always needed a truck driver, and I knew just where to go, and got a job at D.X.I. only a few miles past the county barn that I had worked at.

I knew the yard manager whom use to run the yard at Western Commercial
Trucking in Beaumont where Duke had drove at one time. I got a sweet deal here too!

On the day that I went to talk to Taylor they had a truck inside the shop. It was a White Freight Liner conventional that was being rewired, and it looked like it had been thru the wringer too.

Once the hello's had been done, and Taylor was showing me around he told me that they could use a driver. He stated that he would be putting the White back on the road in the next week, or so, and I told him that I wanted to get started now.

I saw a beautiful glossy black Peterbuilt conventional with brushed aluminum wheels (something new at the time), and chrome hubs with black button-tucked leather interior with twin air ride Captain's Chairs also button-tucked, with a double wide sleeper which at the time was about 60 inches wide, and not like the apartment type styles of today. The point is that even today this would be a beautiful truck.

I asked Taylor who's rig it was? He said "his". I asked again why is it parked? He said because he himself couldn't take it out, and said that everybody there already had their trucks on the road. I told him "Hell put me in the truck!". I told him that he couldn't make no money with it sitting in the yard, and I needed to make money too, so this would be a win win situation. He said that if he put me in his truck that I'd have to split the load profit of which was 10% of the gross. He said if I let you drive it how would you do so?

I just smiled at him and told him if he let me drive that rig I would make sure that the turbo's were sucking my socks off. He said that was what he wanted to hear because you can't make no money pussy footen around when your trying to burn away the miles. He did say that I would have to take care of any moving violations that I got, but I told him there would be none.

We went in the office, and signed contracts since it would be an owner set up, and I got $3,60 an hour plus 22% a mile loaded plus 3% of the gross which translates to $1,200 $1,500 a week providing I had a load, coming and going. I would be driving a small 5 state area, and be home most weekends. I asked him one important question? How was he going to act if I put in a lot of hours by requesting more loads, and hours, and he said that he would keep me buiser than a one legged man trying to outrun a Rhino!
He said that as long as I kept my logs correct, and current that he didn't care as long as they passed a D.O.T. check. So I should keep an extra set logs is what he wasn't saying.

I would be hauling a tank with hot cooking oil, so I knew that D.O.T. wouldn't be messing with me too much. I asked him about putting in my CB, and he was Ok with it as well as using my 13" color TV that ran on batteries, or DC voltage and he had a hook up like a cig. lighter that I could use in the sleeper for it.

That all being done I then went home, and informed Joanne about this new deal. You would think that she would be happy about this, but she wasn't. Duke had already been screwing over Judy by sleeping around, and spending his check up on the road, and I told her to quit comparing me with him, and asked her when did I spend my pay checks? She couldn't say I spent up my checks because we sat there together, and paid the bills together, and I always made sure that if we didn't have enough money to cover all of them that week, that they got paid first the next week. Needless to say we kept all of our bills paid. You see there was a major difference between me and Duke, Duke drove to sleep around and I drove so that I could use paint non-stop, and get paid for doing it. I loved to sniff paint, and drive while I sniffed paint so it just made sense to me to make money while I was doing it. To me the pay checks was the extra part of my sniffing and didn't pay attention to them until I got home again.

Joanne knew that I already drove my butt off because she saw the hours that I put in, but she still wasn't happy about that either, and I told her she just had to get over it. Needless to say that we were having marital problems because of my almost shooting her crazy ass Mom, and outrunning the law embarrassing everybody, the county, Maybelle, and by having almost a full page article in the local paper the Vidorian, that didn't help. I also found out that while I was in jail that Judy had tried to hook Joanne up with another man that supposedly spent the night talking to Joanne on Judy's couch.

We had a big row about this, and I told her that life is like a bowl of peppers. Always remember: What you do today may burn your butt tomorrow!

I also told her that one day there might just be payback, so that was what she was scared of. She didn't seem to realize though that I really did
love her, and had I wanted someone else I truely could have had them. I had some very pretty girlfriends, and she knew it although Joanne wasn't ugly she was overweight more than she liked to be, but I never said anything about that, for she was overweight when we were married. Joanne still wondered how I had found out about this dude that she had been with? Jerry had clued me in with it with his goofy way of saying stuff, but Denise told me on the cool what really happened when we had a chance to talk alone. Denise liked me, and I her, and we looked out for each other like a brother and sister, so I went to driving for D.X.I., and after a month there, or so making decent pay checks, and settling into our new schedules which because of the hours I put in I was home as promised every weekend, and maybe twice a week depending on the runs. The good thing with this was the fact that Joanne always had money in her pockets which made her happier, but she still bitched about my being gone a lot.

Taylor, at D.X.I., was making money because his truck stayed on the road, and he saw to it that I kept loaded going, and coming with only short dead head runs.

We were still having trouble, but getting thru these rough times ok in the end. I found out I had a court date coming up, so I had to stay close to home to find out what was going to happen to me on this wild chase. On the day of court my truck was in the shop getting oil, and filter changes the tires checked etc.... so my going to court was a good time to do maint. on the truck.

There was no way of knowing whether I would be coming back? I may end up in jail, for the charges were serious. Aggravated Assault on a Police Office two counts with a pick-up Evading Arrest, and Reckless Conduct. The day of court Joanne and I were waiting on a bench across from the court room, and we were both dressed nice with me wearing the suit that I wore to Jerry's wedding, and Joanne a nice dress.

Now we were sitting next to where the county commissioners court was also, and while we were waiting for court the commissioner's court let out, and all the county commissioners let out, and leading the pack was Asa Mansfield which had been a commissioner for over 20 years, and was very well liked.

Well the first thing he saw was us. Joanne was his second cousin, and I was very well liked by these commissioners, and we all got together shaking
hands while Joanne was hugging a couple of them, and everybody was all smiles.

Now while we was greeting each other quietly since court was in session. I saw this young snappy dressed dude coming up to us, and he had this rogueish look, like he was prone to being mischievous which I could relate too. He waited until we stopped the pat's on the back, and hand shakes, and said hey to the commissioners, and then he introduced himself to me. He was the assistant D.A., and was wondering if I would like to talk in his office informally about what had happened that day? I said I don't have a lawyer, and he just smiled impishly, and said let's just see if you are going to need one?

For some reason I liked the dude instantly, and we took off to his office leaving Joanne sitting with Asa. Upon getting to his office he sat back, and sitting side ways behind his desk put his feet on the corner of his desk, and kicked back in a nonchalant way then picked up my files, and asked me about what went on that day?

After explaining about the chase, and the cops shooting at me etc.... he just shook his head. He asked did I try to run over these cops? I said no that they had a gun pointed at my head, and I slammed on the brakes! Then I told him about the cop shooting out my $400.00 dollar mags after I had stopped, and the truck had died.

He told me that he had reports from the doctors, and nurses, as well as the jailers concerning my condition, and the fact that what I told him matched what was reported although he liked my rendition because it was more colorful. He said "Guess What?" I said what? He said this is your lucky day! Your here, and you owned up to what happened, and said quite frankly if they had shot at him he would have probably took off too, but I was there, and the cops weren't, nor were they going to try to prosecute for fear of looking like assas.

I had doctors, nurses even commissioner's that were ready to testify for me, that's why Asa, and Raymond Gould, and a couple of the others were there in the first place. The D.A. said he had talked to my Granny which I didn't know, and laughed when she said the cops told her that little S.O.B. could sure drive! So the charges were dropped, and then he asked his secretary to bring him a coffee, and asked if I wanted something? I kicked back too, and said sure burbon, and coke. He laughed because we were both messing with his secretary and she brought me a coffee too.

The D.A. told me that you know it was wrong pulling a gun on your brothers-
in-law. I told him that it was wrong for them to come in my home to tear it up too. He asked if I was working? I told him Heck Yeah! Then I told him that I was a truck driver. He asked if I thought that I could do a year of basically unsupervised probation? I said will you give me my shotgun back, and he said afraid not, so I said sure! He smiled, and we shook hands, and I left his office.

I went back, and told Joanne what had happened, then Asa, and Raymond Gould shook my hand as did the drainage commissioner. The rest had now left.

While I had been talking to these guys there was a very pretty blonde haired gal standing dressed in a black satin pants suit with folders against her chest by the court house door. The Asst. D.A. came, and told me the judge was almost ready, for he was disposing of a public intoxication case, and that we quietly could go in and sit in the court room.

Joanne, and I, sat in the middle of the court. I could read the judges name plate, and it said Hon. Pat Clark. He was giving this dude that had been picked up before about being drunk in public, and now in court he was again drunk, and trying to talk his way out of jail.

This gal I just spoke of, sat on our bench, and got my wife's attention. She wanted to talk to me. I was watching what the D.A., and judge was up to, and Joanne whispered in my ear, and asked "what does that bitch want?" I looked at her crazy, and asked "Who?" She pointed to the blonde chick; whom was signalling for me to come over. The judge was looking over his reading glasses at me as I slid over, and the gal then told me that she was going to be my probation officer, and to tell my wife to keep her panties out of a wad, and that she needed to talk to me about what we needed to do at the bench.

Joanne was already firing dagger looks at this gal, for she instantly hated her. They were like two alley cats fixing to fight over a fish bone, and the claws had come out, and the hateful looks being cast by each caused me to winch because I was stuck between the two of them. I figured that yep I'm going to jail before the day was out.

I slid over to tell Joanne to take a chill pill, and who the gal was, and told her I had to go sit with her while we talked about what needed to be done, and I slid back again. The judge kept looking at me, but he didn't say anything, but the D.A. thought that it was funny, and had his impish
look going because he could see Joanne's jealous looks.

This didn't daunt Gale my new P.O. she was barely speaking loud enough
to hear her, so I had to lean in close to her. Oh my wife was ready to do
Jackie Chan stunts now, but kept her mouth shut. It was now our turn to
go up there, and after the legal wranglings, and word banters between D.A.,
and judge, and P.O. I just kept saying yes sir, and no sirs. It was all confusing
but everytime I was to say something Gale would squeeze the back of my arm
for all three of us was standing right next to one another, and if the judge
lost me the D.A., or my P.O. would clear it up, for I had no lawyer, so
they would explain things to me. Joanne was totally out of the loop, and that
made her madder than a hen you shook off of the nest.

Once I was released into the custody of my probation officer we had to
go to the probation offices to work out the conditions. This was weird, for
I had Gale on my right side walking with her arm thru mine, and my wife on
the left doing the same thing, and they were talking at almost a yell back
and forth.

They were calling each other bitch, and skanks, and then Gale finally
won out telling Joanne that it was going to take both of us, or them to keep
me out of trouble because of my paint addiction.

I felt like these two gals was establishing who had me, and who didn't,
and I had no say so in the matter. We got to the probation office without
them tearing each others clothes off in a cat fight in the middle of the
street. I had to take my big belt & buckle off, and empty my pockets into
a tray before going into the offices. My P.O. saw my new 7" inch lock blade
K-Bar that I had in my pocket, and picked it up shaking her head going "tsk-
tsk", while opening it. She said I couldn't carry that in my pocket,
so I told her I had a belt holster for it, and she said that would be ok
to that because I used it for work also. I just couldn't carry it in my
pocket.

Once in her office she sat in front of me, and Joanne picking up on some
skank signal from Gale smarted off, and they started up again. They almost
got nose to nose over who was the biggest skank, and Gale won out when she
told Joanne that she knew where I was having problems now, and that Joanne
was my problem, and she told Joanne that she just needed to get use to the
idea that I had another woman in my life calling the shots for the next year,
and that one phone call from her could send me to jail.
This brought Joanne back to earth, and then I had my say, and explained to Joanne that I wasn't going to put with going to jail over her being mad because I had a woman P.O., and that we had no control over that, and I was lucky that I had worked the deal that I had with the D.A., for I could have been facing 20 years in prison, but because of how things went I wouldn't even have this probation on my record once I lived it down.

I had to tell Gale what type of job that I had, and explained how much I was on the road. She stated that I didn't have to report unless I was going out of state, and then I had to get permits, so I told her that we would be seeing each other a lot then. Gale then said that whenever she was in Bridge City she would call me, and if she had time stop by to see me, and see how things were going.

That was fine with me, and off we went. Papers signed I was free to do what I needed to do, and the first thing that I did was spray me a fix up.

Joanne nagged a little, but was basically glad too that things were taken care of now. Joanne and Gale had an on-going battle, and were always in a tizzy about me, but Gale won out always, and I believe she got off on it because she antagonized Joanne on purpose.

It got to when Gale called, and said that she was in the area when I was home Joanne would take off, and go to Vidor to visit her Mom. They had no name for each other except "that bitch", this, and that, and this was their favorite sayings.

I swear they were crazier than two cats with their tails tied together and thrown over a clothes line, they always wanted to tear into each other for some reason.

Gale called one day, and of course Joanne true to form got mad, and decided to go to Vidor because Gale said she was coming over. Now a side note a lot of times that when Gale called and said something like this it was just to make Joanne mad, and she would never even come over at all. As I said before she just liked to piss Joanne off and this would do so without fail.

Gale really was a nice person though, and had a sense of humor although off-color at times, but one thing for sure she didn't like Joanne. It was kind of funny after a bit.

I was home from the road just coming in from Dallas, and I would be leaving the next day for a 3 day run all over Texas actually going to El Paso, and back with assorted stops along the way, so I wanted to chill and
sniff paint, smoke my weed, and play with my doper bird Tequila. Sure I sniffed paint as I drove down the highway, and smoked weed when I took a break on that, but sniffing paint was like part of the job. I was taking Black Molleys (speed), and sometimes acid when I could get it, but paint sniffing was a way of life, and I liked it, but also hated it all at the same time. When I was sniffing paint as I drove I had to do other stuff also, and that was to stay alert to traffic, and for cops, and speed traps, so getting to sit around and sniff paint, and not have 80,000 lbs of truck behind me was all I wanted to do at home, so Gale calling wasn't too bothersome, and after I gave Joanne $700.00, so she and her Mom could go shopping for tent type Moo-Moo's because she wanted to buy her Mom something new made her happier than she was at first. Her Mom wasn't that big, but at close to 400 lbs she was still a big woman. I hadn't told Joanne but I still had $750.00 dollars in my pocket that I wasn't giving to Joanne, for after I got back, and got paid for that run we needed to pay bills, so Joanne while she was out would also buy food on her way back.

I smoked a joint, and gave my bird a couple of shotguns, so he would be quiet, and I rolled a couple more joints, and put them in my little wicker basket that I had a plastic liner in that, and it was on a small end table that was between our easy chairs. I put the lid on it, and forgot about it. The basket was about the size of a small bowl.

I went to sniffing paint again, and watching TV, and was well into my high when the door had a knock at it! I thought of just ignoring it, but it dawned on me that Gale had called earlier! I thought "Oh No She Didn't!", but looking out, or peeking out of the window proved that "Oh Yes She Did!"

Well we all know that common sense is like deodorant, and the people who need it the most never use it, so I was lacking my goat be gone this day for sure, because now my P.O. was at the door so I decided to play it off by—saying thru the door. "I hear ya knocking, but ya can't come in", She didn't think that was too funny but wasn't mad either, for I forgot that it was pretty cold out there standing at the front door.

I had already put my paint behind the stereo, and I opened up the door which she was glad about because being that close to the Gulf of Mexico the cold is a wet nasty cold and it goes right thru everything you wear, so she
welcomed the warmth of the apartment. The house stayed warm because of my
bird, but I liked it cooler for sure, but Tequila, and Joanne liked it toasty.

We said our howdy's, and she took off her coat, and sat in my chair which
was bigger than Joanne's. She asked how I was doing? I told her ok, and then
I noticed my pot stash sitting there by the lamp. She was looking at my bird
sitting by the big stereo doing his thing. I kept it on, and very low because
the bird liked to listen to it, and liked to whistle, and sing along with
music, or at least he thought he sung, for he more like garbled stuff, so
it was too low to hear unless you was next to it, but it had big sound lights
on either side of it that flashed to the music, so you would see them
do this now and then at this volume.

Tequila, wasn't paying Gale any attention because Joanne never held him,
but I did, for as stated before he was my bird. Now Gale was asking me about
him. She wasn't being official, and she had no paperwork, for she had just
decided to visit I guess since she had never been to my place.

Gale was just making small talk, and then she noticed my little wicker
basket, and before I could stop her she picked it up, and opened it. I thought
"Oh S#@t!", this can't be good, but then she saw the two joints, and a lighter
and a small toker pipe there then she picked up one of the joints smelled
it, and made herself at home, she got the lighter, and lit it up! I surely
wasn't going to tell her no! Then all hell broke loose. Tequila came running
on the floor with his wings spread like an attack bird. Gale took a big hit
on the joint which freaked me out. Tequila climbed up her pants leg, and
was freaking her out, and I had to stop her from swatting him, so I took
him from her leg. Tequila could really make a lot of racket for a bird, so
he was doing his noise making bit now because I had took him away from the
joint and the person with it.

She handed the joint to me and I took a hit, and then blew it in my birds
face which shut him up. Gale then proceeded to explain to me that although
weed was illegal she wasn't all freaked out over it, and thus had took a
hit of it to level out the playing field otherwise if I got in trouble so
would she. She said that I was in my home, and not bothering anybody, and
she would rather I did that then the paint sniffing, so Gale, and I had a
whole new aspect to this relationship, and it was no longer a probation officer /
cilent type a deal, but now a friendship.

-228-
I had to give Tequila a couple more shotguns to keep him shut up because he didn't think that he had got his share yet, and I really didn't want to hear him screech because you could hear that all the way down in the parking lot when he did that.

I gave Gale the bird, and showed her how mellow he was then he wanted to pick at her diamonds, and chew on her gold chain. He wouldn't hurt it. She gave him back to me, and I tossed him toward the stereo, and he was again a happy bird.

Gale decided to get up and wander around the house looking in the fridge, and snagging us a beer making herself at home. She gave this to me, and I myself was dumbstruck with this gal, and I wasn't sure what was going on, for I didn't know how to take all of these weird signals. She went to the bedroom, and saw our big king size bed which she made a couple of lewd remarks about, and I told her I rarely slept in it, and thought my truck sleeper was more comfortable. I told her while I was on that subject that I was working a lot, and the holidays were coming, and most of our drivers at D.X.I. had families, and wanted to take off, but I wasn't going to spend the holidays with my In-Laws no way buddy, so I was taking extra loads, and getting paid extra too! Joanne and I were still having rocky times, and she had already left me once, but she liked the money I was making, and she didn't have to deal with me all the time, so she came back, but what bothered her the most was the fact that it didn't bother me if she was there or not because she forgot that the paint always dulled my emotions and the paint really was my lover more than anything.

I didn't change one thing that I was doing, and that I figured was the beauty of being addicted to inhalants the paint can was my biggest concern, and it was my life, and I loved to drive going here and there, and the sound of the stacks roaring with the feel of the powerful engine pulling 76-80 thousand pounds down the highway as fast as I could get that thing to go.

I spent hours and hours in my thoughts sniffing paint, and cruising and that was what I did, and I didn't have time to worry about whether my wife wanted to be there, or not, and since she had already slept around while I sat in jail because of her own Mom and brother-in-law as far as I was concerned all bets were off. I still loved her, but I wasn't going to let her, or her family control me with emotions or otherwise.
I told Gale that I needed to come in the next week, and get permits to
go out of state. I had a run to Kentucky to make, then back to Dallas, then
back to Orange stopping at Dallas both ways, then I was going to Little Rock,
then Lexington. She said ok, but I needed to bring my truck in, so she could
inspect it. I said "Inspect It?" She said she had heard me talk about the
truck I drove, so she needed to see it, so she could get an ID sheet on it in
my records. Sounded good to me, so I said ok.

Gale left, and had me in a quandry the rest of the day, but the way I
fix this was to sniff more paint, and after I felt more at ease I mapped
out my next days route sniffed more paint, and talked to Joanne about the
stupid African looking clothes she had bought, and what had happened that
day. Oh yeah I told her about it, and I thought that she would freak out
about me smoking dope with a very good looking blonde and being alone with
her most of the day, but all she was worried about was that the bed wasn't
made that day. Man I can't figure out the gals at all, so I didn't try. Joanne
asked me why I had showed her the bedroom? I told her that I didn't show
her anything I just followed her around as she checked out the apartment,
and I told her if she had been worried about the gal then she should have
kept her butt at home, or at least made the bed before she left because she
knew my P.O. was coming over, so I got thru that without too much problem,
and took myself on the road again as planned.

Once I got back I spent the next weekend off. 1979 was coming up, and
Thanksgiving was upon us. I was going to be on the road, and although I loved
drive it is also a lonely time because I still loved the holidays. I tried
talking Joanne into riding with me, but she like her sister, and family loved
to bitch about me, and Duke being truckers. Duke barely eked by spending
most of his money, and I stayed high, and wouldn't stop to spend mine.

Joanne loved spending it, but hated my trucking. I went in as planned
to see Gale with the tractor which I had to park behind the probation office
since the rig couldn't be parked in front.

This road was the Orange Counties main road to the jail, so there was
no parking on it, and we were almost across the street from both the court
house, and the county jail, both of which I had seen enough of.

Of course I wanted to stay away from this area, so I was hoping to get
on the road post haste. I had a 2200 mile round trip to make which translated

-230-
to about $3,325 dollars for this trip alone, and this was very good money for back then, but of course I had to stay on the road and keep my foot in it the whole time. Of course some of this money went towards operating cost, but that was what I would make with the deal that I had with this company.

I went in the office dropping my lock blade, and wallet, change and cig.s in a drawer that slides out and back in like at a bank, and the person that did this was behind a dark smoked glass, and I would pick my stuff back up when I got inside and saw my P.O.

Gale met me at the front, and was wearing a pretty green satin pants suit which was tight enough to not leave much to the imagination, and being a hot blooded coonass I notice things like that. You might have figured out that this gal liked wearing satin because she seemed to always be wearing this kind of stuff, although it did look good on her I will say that.

We go into her office, and we talk as she sets up my travel permits. I was dressed nice as always when I went on the road, at least to start with anyway. I took showers at the truck stops etc.... Gale gave me a line about wanting to look at the truck which I had left running in the parking lot keeping it warmed up, and luckily almost nobody was needing in this small parking lot.

My Tank trailer was at the yard being loaded with 200° cooking oil. It would still be 160° when I reached Dallas 375 miles later to drop it off, and pick up my next trailer. Gale goes out, and stops when she see's this huge Peterbuilt all shiny black, and chrome growling like a lion with a low rumble of unleashed power waiting to be released. She ran her hands over the waxed finish of the fenders trialing her fingers along the lines, and you could tell she was entranced with this monster.

She went to get into the cab, but it was locked, so I unlocked it, and I told her to be careful when she got up there because it was running of course and it would tear up a lot of stuff if she knocked it into gear.

I helped her get into my side of the truck, and went around and sat in the passengers seat let me say again that this is a very nice truck folks with air ride captain's chairs, leather button tucked interior, a quad stereo, sleeper etc....

Gale then took the VIN number down, and other info, and she started asking me whether I had riders? I told her I could, but I didn't have any. I didn't
like having people with me, for obvious reasons, and I liked to sniff paint. She kept asking me questions about where I stayed; and where I ate, or showered, and how long I would be gone then return, and I stated that I had already told her all of that, so why all these questions? I wasn't sure what was going on, and why she wanted to know all of this stuff again. She would soon tell me though. She said look Tim I am just gonna ask you. Do you want some company? She said I want to go with you. I said that you know that I am working huh? There isn't long stops, and there's less restroom breaks, and you know that I really don't want riders. She asked "why?" "Do you have something to hide?" I really didn't like the way that she said that, so I told her of course not! She said look Tim I won't be any trouble. I want to use up my holiday time, and I really want to go. I said look Gale I will be sleeping in that sleeper, and she said there's room for two, and I know your not gay, so what's the problem? I thought she's got me there, then I said you do remember that I am a married man don't ya? She said sure I know that and it doesn't bother me. All I could think of now was all of the hours I would go without a fix if she went with me, so I said what the hell where's your clothes? She said it would take her about an hour to get cleaned of her paperwork, and Jen her roommate, and co-worker would cover for her as she got her clothes, and that was that! It might have been wrong, but I felt I had a score to settle anyway, and I really didn't want to say no to a crazy probation officer, and what the hell it might just be a lot of fun, and I wouldn't be alone now during the holidays.

I had to fuel up, so I went to the Union 76 to do so, and this gave me an hour, or so to sniff paint then stash it in my cargo hold with my chains.

When I got back Gale was all twittering talking all excited like she was off on an adventure I guess. Of course I knew how she felt I loved driving that big rig, and I always felt the same way everytime I climbed in that truck and started the motor up.

We loaded up, and I was loaded up on Molloys already, and a hit of acid which was really low keyed for although it was a four way hit it took me 12 hits, or 3 four way hits to get off proper. I wasn't going to be doing any paint sniffing so I needed to get some miles under my belt and the best way for me to do this was to be high.

That is the way I thought folks back then, remember I lived to use, and I thought that I always had to have something in my system, but of course
I also knew that I wouldn't be doing any paint for a while and I would start to withdraw if I didn't keep something in my system to fool my body, and this would ease the withdraw from the paint until I could get to use again.

This use of drugs was just to mellow me out, I also had 1/2 pound of good smoking dope which is only 4 oz. for those that think it's a lot of weed, for it really isn't.

We got all her clothes loaded and we took off, and I picked up my trailer, and even this awe struck her how you can actually feel all that weight behind you. It is always on your mind, and with liquid in the tank you have to shift it out to keep it from sloshing in the tank even thought there is baffles in the tank, and if you shift wrong it tends to shove you forward, and back as you try to shift, and it feels weird.

Gale found the bag of weed, and started rolling joints which she was pretty good at in the cab of the truck. We lit up, and then I lit up the horses under that huge hood, and streched them out to a full run.

I loved the sound of that big turbo whistling and the roaring rumble of the twin stacks, and looking in the mirror seeing the twin trails of black smoke coming from turned up injectors with sparks flying out of the stacks as it burns the soot away from city driving build up. I played truckers songs called "Road Music", and we got to laughing when "East Bound & Down", came on by Jerry Reed. That was one of the main hit songs from "Smokey and The Bandit", so Gale had to ask about the high speed chase I had with the Vidor Cops, and all of the embellishments which made it even more hysterical, and smoking weed burning the hiway up in a big rig made it that much more funny.

All in all Gale was a lot of fun to be with, and she was so full of crap I didn't know how to respond to her at times. True to her word she was no trouble at all. The only thing that I wasn't use to was not having to keep fake logs up, and having to take extra time off as down time to rest, but had I been on paint, and alone I'd push it 15-18 hours straight before a refuel, and break to get more paint, to eat etc.... but with Gale I still stayed on the road, but we stopped to eat, and top off the fuel tanks, and rest. Gale and I did tear up the sleeper sheets which to me at the time was just an added benefit to having a sexy willing blonde to wile away the hours with you. It was wrong people I know, but this whole book is about
living life as an addict and of making the wrong choices in life. My whole life at this time was all about living on the wrong side of life, and what was good and proper, and since this book is what happened in my screwed up life then this just went with the territory.

I didn't feel guilty about it although I still cared for my wife it just felt natural the way Gale and I got along. We spent Thanksgiving at a truck stop eating chicken fried steaks gravy, and french fries, and since the yard wouldn't be open till the next day we spent the night at the Lexington Keys Truck stop. After showering, and going back to the truck I climbed in my side of the truck, and was waiting for Gale to climb in when she did, and all I saw was a big ole pistol come over the seat! I then saw Gale following behind it. I asked her what the hell is that? She just laughed. I told her that she was crazy, and asked her if she knew what type of trouble we could get in with that thing in my truck? She said relax that she could carry it legally, and she then produced a reserve deputy sheriff's ID, and Badge! She said some times she had to be able to pick up someone for violations thus was able to arrest people. This gave me a new respect for this fun loving blonde.

The next thing I started to wonder about was where in the heck did she keep this "HogLeg", hidden all of this time? I'd seen her without a stitch of clothes, and the clothes that she wore she had to be melted and poured into them, so just where had she kept this piece hid? It had to be in her boots because there sure wasn't anyplace else she could have hid it!

I did see her put it in her purse though at times. This new fact though didn't stop us from our smoking weed, and frolicking across the countryside.

I got us back to Texas, and took Gale to the yard where my pickup was. Once I parked the rig, and turned the paperwork in now ready for a day off we loaded up my pickup with our clothes. My truck was sitting inside the truck bay. the yard was closed when we got there because it was after hours.

Gale looked at my white pin-striped truck with shiny new mags that the Vidor P.D. had to buy for me for use of excessive deadly force after I was stopped and not trying to resist. Gale trailed her fingers along its side like she had done with the big rig, and smiled, and she said. "so this is the pickup that outran those bumpkins for 25 miles huh?" I told her it would have been more than 25 miles had I had more gas, and she laughed. She said
other than the tail pipes sticking out in front of your back tires, and mags that it didn't look so special. I told her it's not what you see that counts, but what's under the hood. I said that motor has three types of mount supports keeping the horses from jumping out from under the hood. I had regular rubber motor mounts that had grade 8 bolts going thru them, and into the frame, plus I had the exhaust chained, and then turn buckled also around the frame to keep the motor from twisting loose. It seemed to work ok.

Gale said that she wanted to drive it, so I said ok if she thought she could. We were out in the middle of the country and there just wasn't any traffic where we was at all.

When the 500 plus horses woke up, and the glasspac's sounded off inside that truck bay she liked to have jumped out of the truck. I told her to keep the motor reved up a little until she heard a loping sound. She put it in gear, and killed it coming off the clutch. She restarted the truck, and got a little further, but she had us bucking like we were on a bronc then she killed it again.

I told her I don't think that my truck likes ya. She said get over here, and show me what it can do. We switched places, and I cranked it up, and automatically you could tell it knew I was behind the wheel again.

I took it out to the road which was deserted. We as stated was out in the boonies. I told Gale here we go as I watched the RPM's creep up toward my set red line, and then I dumped the clutch, and lit up the tires, and almost instantly power shifted my Indy Shifter into 2nd while the truck squatted as the tires put out blue white smoke in the security lights, and then the tires caught, and grabbed after heating up, and we sling shredded down the road while being pressed back into the seat, and feeling that power was such a rush!

I shifted out the truck, and when we passed the Village Grocer which was a couple of miles down the road we were well over 100 mph. Gale's eyes were big as saucers, and this was just too funny. I took her home, and had no problems finishing my probation with Gale as my probation officer.

I felt that sometimes sleeping with the enemy is literally what you had to do to justify the end results. That's what a paint addled addicted mind thought anyway because my paint addicted monster did what ever it had to ethical, or not to survive.
Gale would later be fired for getting pregnant later by another of her wards, also later on the sheriff of Orange County would be found to be making deals with Meth Cooks, and cutting into their profits.

There's a lot more corruption in these little Klan towns than people think, so don't be shocked when you read this, for everybody is not always what they seem public official or not.
CHAPTER 16

During this period of time Joanne, and I were in complete turmoil, but not because of my indiscretions, but because of Maw-In-Law meddling as always. Joanne, left me three times, and I would just give her money, and tell her bye! That made her madder than a sack full of wet Bobcats, and off she would go.

I knew that when the money would run out that she'd be back. Needless to say bills weren't being paid on time either. I lost my truck keys some place, and started walking back and forth to the auto store to pick up paint, and it was cold as a freezer around there. My paint sniffing was so bad that even after walking a mile, or so to the store the clerk could tell I was high from sniffing.

I would hold open my palm to let him count out my change for the two cans of paint that I bought each time. For some reason I couldn't count change while high on paint, but the rest of the money like the dollar bills and such I could.

What little I talked just made it that much worse, because being high and frozen on top of that made me slurrr my words really bad, so the dude at the store told me that it would probably be a good idea to open a few windows when I was using this stuff in the house. Then he told me that I ought to buy a case of paint instead of having to walk to the store every day or so.

I told the dude that I repainted car parts with the paint, and he just smiled for he knew a paint head when he saw one.

The apartment was getting bad. I would try to cook myself food, and mess up the food, and then I would just leave the kitchen dirty. Being high as a kite all the time eventually the whole kitchen was messed up.

One day I had bought this big ugly Red Fish from the market, so I decided to cook that. Well that didn't work out too good either. Being as high as I was I wandered around the apartment and tried to figure out where my truck keys was, and all I did was watch TV. I was into a really bad binge that lasted for a while as you can tell.

-237-
I tossed bird seed around on the floor in the carpet, and my bird fended for himself. I was going downhill fast. I lost my job at D.X.I., and got harassing phone calls from my mother-in-law, sister-in-law, and wife. I would just hang up on them.

I couldn't find my keys, so I could go get more paint, and gas, and then light a shuck out of town. The more people tried to make me leave though the more stubborn I got. The fish I tried to figure out how to cook was a big one, and I tried to scale it, but didn't like the scales flying all over the place, so I would cut pieces that were scaled off, and throw them in hot grease to cook and then the hot grease would spit, and sputter, and hit my bag of paint thus melting small holes in the bag and causing paint, to leak all over me, and everything else. I wouldn't know it till it started to burn my leg where it leaked on my pants leg, from the chemicals in the paint. Needless to say there was paint on everything in the house, and even my bird sported silver spots from paint.

I got mad at the fish thus proceeded to stuff it into the garbage disposal to try to chew it up, but only succeeded in clogging up the disposal, and getting the fish stuck in the opening of the disposal. The fish was half in, and half out of the drain part of the disposal, and it was left there to stare at me everytime I came in, and out of the kitchen. That's right I just left it there. My sinuses were full of paint fumes, so I couldn't smell the rotting fish anyways.

I decided that I wanted to eat Tequila my bird, but he had no problem staying out of my way since he was never locked up. He would come see me whenever I'd settle down, and by then I had forgot about eating him. He seemed to know me well and knew when to stay away from me.

I still couldn't find my keys, and decided to go pick up some more paint at the auto store, and again the dude tried to sell me a case of paint, and I had thought about it, but didn't want to carry a case of paint all the way back to the apartment.

After getting back to the apartment the manager came into my apartment with another person, and I found out that she was trying to rent out the apartment to another person. Joanne had told her that we had moved out.

The manager decided that she would show the other person another apartment and said that she was sorry for just walking in on me, but that Joanne had told her that she was coming today to get our things, and that she could
go ahead and show the apartment. I know what they were trying to do though, they had hoped that the manager would run in on me as she did, and then she call the cops for me being in there. Well it didn't work out this way although some of it did happen the way they thought it would.

I knew that I had to get out, but I still couldn't find my truck keys, and it was really cold out there in the weather. I knew that Joe, and Maybelle and the rest were now coming to the apartment, and I figured that a fight would soon be ensuing; so after the manager left, I got my Parka, some warm socks on my feet, my paint and bags, and decided it was time to exit stage left.

I was just going to have to cut my losses. I couldn't find my keys, so I couldn't take anything. I found what money I could, and gave Tequila another handful of seeds, and placed him on the light shade, and took off walking.

I had just passed the county barn as the guys were pulling out in dump trucks, and ole Bob Hailey a crazy old man, and friend of mine stopped to pick me up, and he asked what I was up too? I explained my situation, and told him that I was headed to Dallas.

He said that he, and Hubert Marshel would help me get my things, and they would make sure that I got what I needed from the apartment. I had helped get their niece Brenda, and her kids to them safely after Hubert had a fight with some roughins at the apartments. Anyway I thought about it, but saw a caravan with all my in-laws, and Joanne heading to the apartment to forcibly evict me I guess? Bob shot them all the one finger salute, and they all saw me riding in the dump truck. I just liked ole Bob a lot he was such a goofy guy.

There was no going back for my things now. Bob stopped at the Village Grocer, and we bought cig.s, and we then left. I had a couple of joints, so lit one up to share it with Bob. He let me off after we got to Vidor which was where he was going, and I found my way to IH 10, and headed out hitch hiking in the dead of winter. Believe it, or not rides came at a pretty steady pace, and I was soon past Houston which was 100 miles from Beaumont, Texas.

It started getting late, so I was always looking for a place to hold up for the night. There was special requirements for my paint sniffing needs, and first of all a big store needed to be close, so I could restock my paint supply the following morning since I would sniff my paint up in the night
trying to stay warm, and not feel the hunger, or thirst that I had on these
types of situations. Even though my stomach shrunk I still got hungry, and
water was another problem, but I drank out of ditches, of filling stations
water hoses when I was thirsty. This was before bottled water took off, so
where ever I stopped to sniff paint for the night it had to be where I knew
what direction I was going, and a big store had to be close, and there needed
to be some place to spend the night where I was out of sight and out of mind,
it could be an old barn, a port-a-potty, a large dog house anything.

This day somewhere between Dallas, and Houston at a hole in the wall
place, no town just a couple of stores. I found a small curio shop that had
an old car behind it. I then found a small metal building that had a toilet
in it without water in it. It was just a small building next to this shop.

There was no path to it, so I knew it wasn't used. There is a trick to
staying out of the clutches of nosy lawmen once you find a place to roost
you sit tight till daylight. Another thing is it started snowing, so that
made sure I stayed put, for once snow gets on the ground you don't want to
put foot prints in it all over the place.

I stayed all night in this make shift toilet, and I took the rotting
penelling off the walls, and started me a small fire in the sink which by
the way was a bad idea, for the porcelain sink, or whatever it was made of
started popping hot chips all over the place then cracked in two, and fell
off the wall. I kept the small fire going in the part that fell, but it got
too smoky, so I cracked the door to let the smoke leak out a little at a
time. I then let the small fire burn it self out, for it wasn't doing any
good in the first place.

I sat on the toilet all night with the door open a ways, so I could look
out. This place was on a corner of an open field with a road running next
to it, so I watched what traffic there was all night. I left the next morning
as it became light enough to do so, and just in time too, for as I crossed
the road someone pulled up to the little shop, and got out of their car.

I kept on going to the big store (Supermarket) across the street. I as
always went in, and headed to the Veggie section got my bags ate a few grapes
for the moisture then went to the cheese section got a pound slab of LongHorn
Sharp Chedder Cheese, and then on to the automotive section, and snatched
two cans of paint, and on the way out opened a box of Strawberry Frosted
Pop-Tarts slipped them in my parka's pockets, and was back out of the store,
and headed down the road all within a couple of minutes. I caught a ride within sight of both the curio shop, and supermarket, and I was on my way again.

It took me two days on the road at this pace to get to Dallas actually Arlington Texas. I wasn't in a hurry, and could have made it all in one day had I wanted too.

I went to the apartment complex where Grammy lived, for she had been there for years, and I knew she would still be there. My Auntie Mona Sue lived in another apartment with her brood, and my Auntie Pat lived down the street in a house with other cousins. When Aunt Mona, and Uncle Gator saw me they of course invited me into staying with them. Mom, and Kenneth stayed with them also Kenneth being my Mom's new boy toy husband in which whom I went to Jr. High with, and used to mess over all the time at school in front of my roughin friends.

Kenneth was a year younger than myself, and a sorry lazy piece of crap. He had stayed with Joanne, and I in our trailer when Mom first got hooked up with him till I sent him packing because he wanted to lay up and eat our food, and not work after I found him jobs.

I explained what was happening, and asked them if I could stay a month, or so, and I would help out with bills etc.... Gator still worked for T.P.& L. (Texas Power & Light), as a highline crew foreman, so was still making decent money. Kenneth actually found me a job a couple of days after I was there at a place called "Freeman Steel Towers", and my job was to help put up, and erect high power line towers that you see going across the country.

This was ok but we got rained out a lot. After a couple of weeks of this Kenneth drop up, and that cost me my ride to work, so I got mailed my paycheck.

That was ok though I didn't like the job at all being stuck out in the middle of no where putting up these towers. I only helped put up a couple of them anyway.

Gator on the other hand had other ways to make spending money. He sold copper, and knew all of the best places to pick up 200-300 pounds of it in a little bit of time, but it required us climbing a few poles where new lines were being ran across the country, but that was no problem. I would help get this copper, and we'd sell it, and I would only take enough money to buy me a carton of cigs, and to have some spending money. I gave Gator, and
Aunt Mona the rest of my share for them selves.

Kenneth saw what we were doing, and wanted in on it. Gator and I had a system already, and Kenneth couldn't climb poles, so all he would do is pick up rolls after we cut it down. He always whined about doing that, and he always wanted a full share. Gator had disdain for this dude as much as I did, and he could see why I use to hounddog him in school.

Gator had his bad points, but all in all he was good people. None of us is perfect.

His crews loved him, and he work along side his crew too. He was almost killed when he hooked his climbing spikes into a hot primary line with 12,750 volts running thru it. That liked to have cooked him alive, and he was hurt for a while. I respected him for always staying with the type of work that fried him and that he loved so much, but sure he would take advantage of the company from time to time, but I never faulted the man for that. Of course I'm not the best judge of moral character either, but again it was still wrong I guess.

Gator, would later on go to prison for a half a million dollars worth of stolen copper over the years, and a couple of counts of grand theft auto. He got 7 years in prison for all of that. I think that the electric company that he worked for just wanted to hang somebody for this type of stuff, but if the truth was really known who can say? I personally don't think that he had that much in thefts.

I liked staying at Auntie Mona's, for it was a good crash pad, and nobody asked about my whereabouts. I showed up found me a pillow, and a spot on the floor out of the way, and just crashed. I rarely ate there, and was gone for days at a time sniffing paint. If I was around after a good rain I would go with Gator on a copper run if not that was ok too.

Most of my cousins were running around there, so since all of us was close we would be found hanging out here, and there together. I think that I got all of my cousins to do paint with only one of them becoming a stone cold hippy type dude that loved drugs, and booze like myself. Needless to say I wasn't a good role model for anyone. All of my cousins are younger than I was, so I had no excuse.

Sniffing paint was all I lived for. I'd stay up all night in the woods in the freezing weather. In the mornings just as there was hoar frost on
the ground and my coat, and clothes was also covered with it from being out in
the elements all night. No I always didn't seek shelter. I stopped, and sniffed
paint where ever "it" dictated I do so. I wasn't in control of it, it was
like this other person running the controls, and I was just alone for the
ride with no say in the matter. The demon ruled my life, and just like so
many people have found in their addictions I also had the demon's in my
can as they had demons in their bottles of booze.

I would look at the sparkling ice on my coat sleeves in the sun light
of the early dawning of the morning light, and be awe struck at how pretty
it was, then I realized that I was half frozen, and would try to get up out
of the lotus position in which I sat almost all the time. This made my knees
really stiff, so I got up, and stumbled around like a zombie in the woods.
It's a good thing that I was out there for it took a little bit to loosen
up, and warm up some.

After about a month of this type of existence I went to a small store
by the apartment complex. I called Joanne who was still staying at her Mom's,
and talked to her a little bit to see how she was doing. She asked where
I was staying, and I told her in a motel called the Palms on College St.
in Beaumont, Texas I told her that I was working at some made up job, and
she said that she wanted to see me. I told her that she would see me when
she saw me. I still wasn't ready to mess with her although I was missing
her. She told me that her, and Linda, her best friend was getting an apartment
together and would be sharing the rent. Linda was Ms. Mayberry's daughter.

Ms. Mayberry owned the nursing homes that they worked at. Joanne gave
me a phone number that I could reach her at that wasn't at her Mom's. I hung
up, and wouldn't call her for another week or so. I kept living off, and
ran in the woods stealing food, paint, and cigs. I still stayed at my Aunt's,
and had called Joanne again a couple of times. I still remembered how Joanne
had treated me and had left me more than once, and had me thrown out in the
cold with nothing, so I wasn't in a hurry to give back in yet. Joanne found
out that I was up there instead of down there where I had told her I was.

She wanted me to come home, and I told her I probably would be willing
to do that if she would grow up, and keep her family out of our lives. I
told her all this leaving me whenever she felt like it wouldn't work anymore.

We worked it out, and she decided that she would drive up there to pick
me up. She didn't tell me when she was gonna do this, and with me that meant nothing, for I went right off to sniff paint, and I would worry about that stuff later.

We were due another change in the weather, and although I hadn't been around a TV, or Radio to know being out in the elements as much as I was you could just tell something was coming.

This kept me close to the apartment complex, for there was a new house being built close by them, and by the store that I called Joanne at. I knew that with the way things was there would be nobody working there, for all that had been done with this place was that it had walls around the outside and a roof.

I went in there at dark, and no sooner had I went in there it started to snow. At first it was just a light powder then it started to get harder, and then it snowed and snowed. It had been very cold, so the snow was sticking.

It doesn't snow in Texas where I was at like it does up north, but it was a pretty good snow storm for us. People in Texas don't drive too good when it rains, and they drive even worse when it snows, so traffic was a mess.

I stayed put, and there was two to three inches of snow outside the house, so I didn't want tracks showing my coming, and going. There was a lot of traffic by this house, so I knew that some of that traffic was cops, and if they saw foot prints going into this house they would check it out, so I figured why make them get out of their cars when they were all warm? If they had to they would be mad and that would mean a trip to the polky for ole me.

As I stated before this house only had the outside walls and roof, there were no windows or doors. The insides was just framework no fixtures it was just a shell.

I stayed there till about midnight, and decided to go to a patch of woods out past where my cousin David lived, for it would be a lot quieter there.

As I left, and was walking down this neighborhood road I ran across my cousins Diana, and Danny, David's little sister, and brother. They were both in thier teens, and were running the roads looking for me. You might have figured out by now that daylight, or dark made no difference to us we were all the types to run the roads whenever we felt like it. The roads
were where the action was, and there was nothing to do except walk around.

Dianna had told me that my wife had called hours ago, and was stuck on the road between a place called Midlothian, and Ennis. I got a map out of Gotor's car and figured out where this was.

There was this guy walking with my cousins that was 16 years old. He had been staying with my Aunt Mona, and Gator with his young step mother, so she said that, and she had said that she was waiting for her furniture to show up in her apartment, and to have the power turned on there. I only knew her because I had woke up on the floor one night at Aunties, and this cowgirl was all cuddled up next to me. I didn't think anything about it, and the next morning after we all woke up Aunt Mona was making jokes about this gal all cuddled up next to her nephew.

Well this dude now offered his step mom's car to take me to find Joanne. He went, and got her car keys, and off we went. This dude drove of the way, but it got to hard for him driving in the snow, and ice, so I took over.

We finally found this small town, and talked to a couple of cops that had snow chains, and were talking at a store in the parking lot that was still open. I told them what the deal was, and told them the tag number that I remember to this day which was MFV-292, and gave them the description of the car.

They had us wait while they checked out a big bunch of traffic that had stalled on the freeway close by, and within ten minutes had located her. What Luck!

They freaked her out by spotlighting her as she sat on the side of the road waiting on the traffic to clear in front of her. They told her to stay put but didn't tell her why, and that they would be right back.

They came back, or one of them came back to show us where she was. The cops spotlighted her again, but this time they didn't stop, but just show me her car.

We stopped by her car, and I got out of the car, and got into ours. Joanne was a little freaked because of the cops, for she had a bag of weed for me in the car, and thought for sure that she was busted.

It took us the rest of the night, and part of the next morning to get back because of the slipping, and sliding, and after sliding down hills all night doing backward donuts we decided to wait till daylight. The problem
here was the fact that her car had bad tires, on it first of all and she had been burning them up in the snow and ice before I had got there, then there was ice under the snow on the upper sections of the hills, so as I would climb the hill and get right to the top my car would lose its hold and start sliding backwards and do donuts all the way back down the hills. Other cars stayed way back from us as we tried to make our way up these hills. These were slow motion backwards donuts too with the headlights shining all around the area as we went down the hills. There was nothing to do about it I just controlled the car as good as I could and we rode it out.

We finally parked on the side of the road up on a hill that we hadn't slid backwards on yet, and waited for the big trucks with chains to slush up some of the ice, and then we were able to get traction, and was able to get back.

After we got back to Aunt Mona's this crazy gal confronted me in my Aunts living room. She started yelling at me telling me that she was going to file car theft charges on me for taking her car to get Joanne.

I told her first of all her car was sitting in the parking lot, so it wasn't gone, and secondly that it was her so called step son that took her car not me, so it was he she should be yelling at! I told her I only accepted his offer to take me and find my wife. At this time she decided slapping my face was called for, but let me tell ya that this is a mistake ladies some men like myself will put you on your butt with a broken jaw, for I react to violence towards my person, so Aunt Mona, Joanne, Gator even my Mom all jumped in to keep me from caving in her nose. They all knew me, and this gal looked all bewildered when they got her out of reach, and tried to cool me down by giving me a cold beer.

Aunt Mona kept me in close contact with her arm over me because she knew I wouldn't hit her, and Gator took the gal to the kitchen, and explained that she'd better cool it because even he knew that I'd flip out, but he too would hit a gal if she pushed it.

They decided that now would be a good time for her to leave since now her anger was was aimed at her step son. I still don't know about that situation, because I don't know where this dudes Dad was.

We visited the rest of the day letting the snow melt off, and then we left. I stopped by Skaggs, and picked up paint, and road supplies in case
we got stuck on the road again at least we would have something to eat and drink.

I got us back to Vidor, and Joanne showed me where the new apartment was. She lived with Linda Villareal, who had a boyfriend named Robert, but he didn't stay there except now and again when he was making a booty call.

After we got home which was really late we went to bed. Everything of mine was there except my truck, for the bank had repo'd it. I fixed up Joanne's Moped, and used that to putter around on, but I needed to find a job.

Uncle Joe had at one time drove for Dr. Pepper, and so told me to try them. I went to the Coca Cola plant in Beaumont, and applied to be a truck driver. There was me and two others that applied that day, and we were sent to take a polygraph test after applying. Yep I knew what they were now.

I had no reason to lie about anything. The test was to see if you stole from employers etc.... They had even asked about smoking weed, and drinking which I admitted to. To make a long story short I went back to the office manager that had sent me to take the test, and he called me in his office, and told me that he was going to give me the job because I told the truth on my test whereas when the drug questions came up the other guys liked to have broke the machine lying.

He told me that honesty was what he wanted, and he asked me to refrain from smoking weed on the job, or property. I said sure thing, and that was that.

I went to work for Coke, or Coca Cola at the Omega Plant next to a meat packer. This was a big warehouse that we loaded 18 wheelers at. I wanted to drive, but they had a seniority deal there, so I had to work in the warehouse.

This job was pretty cool working for the company not the work. I met a couple of weed smokers, and so fit right in.

I had also met my next door neighbors at the apartments, and we too had hit it off. They were a couple about Joanne, and my age, and had twins that were crawling around. I don't remember their names now, but he smoked weed too, and he (the husband that is), ... and he started fronting me a couple of pounds to sell to make ends meet. This was all low keyed, and was this used mostly to pay for the weed I smoked and to pay bills, where the pay checks ended.
Linda was funny, and she loved selling weed to her yuppy friends. Nobody ever came to our place to buy anything. My neighbor and I used to love to smoke meats on the front walkway that went to our two apartments. We were the only two apartments up there, so we had it all to our selves. There was a set of stairs that led down to the floor level and that was the only way up to us.

This was all pretty cool. My neighbor would go to welding school at night, and I would keep an eye out for his wife, and kiddos, and my wife at night, in case the neighbor wife needed anything.

We had stores close by, but she didn't have a way to go to them. Linda had a car, and Robert as did we, so we all looked out for each other.

On weekends the neighbor and I settled up on our deals, and had contests to see who smoked the best meats, and it was a perfect way to sit outside, and burn joints, and drink brewskies too, and nobody ever bother us.

We had a new guy move in downstairs one day, but we never paid it much mind until one day he pulled up in a police car! This was the same Lieutenant that had been chasing me while his Captain shot at my tires! Had my white pick-up been there he would have figured out who I was, but as it was he didn't have a clue, and didn't know me.

He came upstairs to say hello to me, and my neighbor being neighborly we all shook hands, and joked around, and even offered him a beer which he couldn't take for he was on duty, but he did take a piece of smoked sausage, and made a sandwich out of it. He liked to have fainted it was so good he had said. We just smiled, and made nice with him, and little did he know at the time that I sat there with 2 lbs. of weed in my little Igloo cooler next to my chair and I don't even know how much my neighbor had in his apartment. Neither of us got freaked out because of this cop standing on our front porch he was only interested in one thing at that time and that was scarfing down that sandwich, and we even gave him another for the road.

He left making two new neighbor friends, and we both thought what a moron, and we had a good laugh while I gave my neighbor, and Linda and Robert, as well as my wife, my rendition of the "Smoky and The Bandit" car chase that dude and I had been in, and it was pretty funny when you were high on weed.

We never had any trouble with this cop neighbor although we did keep our open for this guy, and he could always come get a sandwich on the weekends.
or a piece of brisket that my neighbor or I would have because he loved smoke BBQ and we didn't mind giving him a chunk of meat if it kept him out of our hair. This dude never did figure out that I was the guy he was chasing that day.

I never did sniff paint in the house because Linda, and Robert was there a lot, but I had the old Moped running, and I could head out a few hours a day, or more to get my fix, and of course anytime I drove the car, or went anywhere with Joanne I always had my paint.

My job at Coca Cola was ok, but it was really hot in the warehouse, but there was lots of possibilities with this big company, and I actually started looking forward to some of the things like owning stock, and moving into some type of management position, but alas things like that are pipe dreams for an ole paint sniffer, for fate would again throw me another curve.
CHAPTER 17

After I had been working at the Omega Plant for Coke about 2 months, and it had warmed up good we were now about halfway thru that year, and things were looking pretty good. We started having extra money now for with my work, and the little extra I made on what weed was sold it amounted to a little more than a regular paycheck after everything was paid off, so no big time money, but the bills were paid, and food was in the house at all times, and we had a little money to all go to the Disco's with Linda and Robert on date night, and all go dancing, or go to the beach on the weekend. That's until we were in a big wreck in Beaumont.

I had gotten off work as always in the afternoon about 3 Pm. or 4 Pm, which is probably closer to the time it was. Well I worked basically across Beaumont on the outside of town by the mall that had the Montgomery Wards that I had worked at before, and by the Twin Drive In.

We had to drive back, and then get on IH10 then head to Vidor. Well this was all fine, and dandy it was a no brainer, and the traffic flowed pretty good at this time, and just before you got to the Neches River Bridge Magnolia Ave. fed into IH10 from Bethlehem Steel, and Mobil Oil that had also let its workers off.

Magnolia Ave. also went under an overpass that ran next to the old park I spoke about ways back.

Well as always I sniffed paint as I drove which believe it or not may have been a good thing this day because I always tried to get to the front of a pack of cars, or stay where there were gaps of cars far enough away, so that I could hit my paint now and again. This day was no different.

Traffic was getting heavy, but the pocket of about twenty cars, and a Tandem Dump Truck was all travelling together at about 50 mph, and cars were lined up on Magnolia merging with IH10 traffic going toward Orange, and Vidor, and we all had to go over this one big bridge.

I worked my way thru the traffic, and yes I had my paint down I wouldn't sniff paint while I was close to cars, so we were almost at the front of
the pack of cars getting past this dump truck, and the other cars. I took
the inside lane since it was clear, and I had an open road now, and was starting
to speed up, and put distance between us, and the pack of cars behind me.

A Gremlin X was next to us with a nice looking gal, and her little boy,
and she had some type of smaller car was in the front of her. Traffic was smooth
and the day was clear. Joanne was leaning against the passenger door facing
towards me talking, and about that time something caught the corner of my
vision as I looked over to see Joanne, and see where the gal was I mentioned
before.

Being next to this car I wasn't hitting my bag, so it was down, and out
of sight. As I looked over something looked strange as I glance at my rearview
mirror, so I threw my head back and looked over my right shoulder behind
us, and I saw all hell breaking loose!

Everything went into slow motion I couldn't believe my eyes, and the gal
in the next car saw my look, and looked back too. I didn't have time to tell
Joanne what was happening, so I grabbed her smock lab coat, and snatched
her off of the door, and all the way next to me with her face only inches
away from mine, and I just let her scream at me while I kept an eye on the
concrete median, and fence that kept you from going over the edge of the
overpass.

I kept an eye on the mirror too, and got over as far as I could. This
all happened at a fraction of a second for what I saw was this. The tandem
dump truck was going thru the middle of all of the cars we had passed out
of control. I saw a black pickup fly up, and over the over pass end over
end, I saw a cloud of white dust, I saw cars being chewed up on the left,
and on the right, and as the dump truck barreled down the freeway out of
control and tearing cars up on both sides of the freeway I knew that there
was no way that we were going to be missed and I didn't have enough horse
power to punch it and out run this wreck about to happen.

The truck was going to hit us, and on Joanne's side of the car. As I got
close to the median he hit the Gremlin, and the truck started to turn over on
us, top of us as he hit us too. Joanne felt the impact and tried to look
over her shoulder- but I held her fast next to me. The truck started chewing
up the whole right side of our car, and the impact forced me into the concrete
median, and then there was a shower of sparks flying past my window that was
up luckily except for the fact that my head hit it. Joanne was screaming "Oh God!" "Oh God!", and I held her and controled the car one handed, and I had to keep my eye on the truck as he chewed the car up on the right side he had already chewed the door open that Joanne had been against, and now I felt blood running down my face and saw the sparks still flying next to the car door on my side. The truck was turning over now so I did the only thing I could think to do, and that was go to war with this truck., and I then cut the wheel into the truck and started to push him back with the Malibu as hard as I could get the car to push. As long as I shoved back the truck couldn't get room enough to finish the turn over so I made that poor car shove with everything it had and Joanne kept screaming that we were in a wreck now like I didn't know that already! Her door flew open as the trucks tire hung on it and it was all crunched up as you could look outside at the wheels turning and eating the car. Joanne was fighting me now and I had to hold her or she wouldn't go out the door too, so I kept the car pushing the truck and I hit another concrete median that wasn't lined up good and smashed my head again in the window and it almost knocked me out and I almost let go of Joanne, but I held on and forced the truck back onto its wheels and after he came off of the Gremlin next to us it went over the side of the road with the gal and her boy the truck flew on past us and on to another car in front of us, and I came to a stop still up against the median with my side of the car smoking I now yelled at Joanne and told her to get out of the car!, she just looked at me I had blood all over my face and she just sat there, so I kicked the car door open and shoved her out of the car and she fell out on top of another man knocked out and laying in his blood next to the car and as she fell on him he woke up and Joanne screamed and took off faster than a six legged Jack Rabbit and headed over the guard rail and down the grassy side of the overpass. After the truck had came off of us he had bounced back and forth on his wheels until he could get it stopped and now the driver was running back to my car. All sounds stopped. all movement stopped, and it looked like a war zone. There was a big chunk of car on the hood of our car. and this guy laying next to our car, there was car buzzers sounding that keys had been left in the cars. Our car was dead as was all the rest. Our car had a strange tilt to it, and was looking like somebody had a field day with a monster grinder on it. The door wouldn't close all the way now either.
I started yelling to people that we needed help up front, and I yelled for people to stop all the traffic, and not let anybody thru there because as people will do they thought they could drive thru looking at all the people laying in their blood. There were cars turned over and in pieces, and dust was still all over in the air making it hard to breath. I was yelling for people to bring rags, and blankets for people, and for somebody to call the Fire Dept. That didn't need to be said though I heard them coming even now.

I saw gas spraying in the air from the car behind us... it was ripped into three pieces, there was no roof left, for it was gone someplace his hood was on top of our hood. I couldn't move this guy next to our car because he was really hurt and bad but gas was trailing toward him, and under our car. I don't know if I did any good, but I went around turning off electric systems by turning the keys off, and giving the motor battery a quick look to make sure that it wasn't grounding out to the closest cars.

All traffic was now stopped, and people were everywhere trying to help and even someone came up to me and mopped the side of my forehead but I had already stopped bleeding, or got close enough to being stopped that I wasn't worried about it any longer. I was trying to help the guy next to our car when other people came up from parked cars trying to help. You could hear sirens coming from everywhere now.

Once I saw that this guy was now being helped I went to look for Joanne who had ran down the hill, and called her Mom at a Scuba shop. I saw fire trucks coming, but they hadn't got there yet, so I grabbed Joanne, and brought her up the hill, and I saw the woman that had been in the Gremlin. She was crawling toward her little boy with blood all over her. Her little boy was laying unconscious on the side of the hill in the grass. I had Joanne help this gal who was about 6 months pregnant. She was crying trying to wake her baby boy up.

The fire trucks pulled up, and I yelled at the firemen telling them there was a man laying in gas next to my car, and that we needed foam, or something, so I helped them bring up the hose along with a bunch of others that were now down at the bottom of the hill. The trucks couldn't get on the bridge so they had pumper trucks and the hoses were heavy.

A cop showed up and then another and even more now. The first one there asked me if I had been in the wreck, and then he saw the blood all over my
left side and all over my uniform Coca Cola shirt I had on. He asked me if I was alright? I told him yes, and there were more serious injuries up the hill.

He asked me where my car was, and I showed him, and he asked me to see if it would start, and was drivable? The firemen had now already washed and sprayed the gas away from the car and was working on the guy away from my car, so I got in it, and it started up, so I pulled it over to the shoulder and out of the way so that ambulances could get in there.

This was a 13-14 car wreck maybe more. The truck had hit a black pickup that was now laying on the road under the overpass upside down on it's roof and there were people trying to get the man out of it that was in it.

The pickup had been backing up on the side of the road to a VW that had stalled. The truck is the cause of all of the dust too. He had a couple of bags of concrete in the back of his truck when he was hit. The VW that the pickup had been trying to help was knocked off of the hiway also and down the hill along with the pickup. The dump truck then hit an Impala that was behind us that got tore into 3 pieces, the Gremlin's driver side was smashed, and the entire right side of our car was smashed, and you could see where the tires, and rims swirled on the paint job as it ate the car up. I couldn't close the door without tying it shut. Cars were being rated 1-7 L1-L7, our car rated L5 in damage 7 being took off in pieces. There were cars further back. One was an El Camino, another a station wagon etc.... it was total chaos.

There were cops, Firemen, Ambulances, and now news media. I had a Coca Cola uniform shirt on, and had finally rounded up Joanne, and was talking to the cops, and tow trucks were all over. Maybelle hadn't got there yet, so we were waiting.

Traffic was backed up for miles in every direction except on our side coming from Orange, or Vidor, but this is the only direction Ambulances, and tow trucks were able to come from and use.

As we sat there by our car the news people ran up to us, and wanted to know if we had seen what happened? Joanne was still in pain, and her arm was wrapped up. I told them we were in the wreck, so they took video of our car, and I told them what I had saw in those few hellish minutes, and both sides of our car looked like hell but we were ok. After Maybelle got there

-254-
she took Joanne to the hospital, and I got a piece of rope from the tow truck driver, and was told by the police that I could leave if the car was drivable and safe enough. They looked at it and deemed it ok, for all of the lights, and signals worked, and I saw no metal cutting the tires anywhere, so they said I could leave in it.

There were three cars that was able to drive off that day. The dump truck was ok of course and could drive off too after the reports were done.

We would have to all pick up the accident reports later after all of this info was sifted thru. Maybebells even tried to get me to go to the hospital because I had hit my head on the glass window in the same place that I had the time I had been hit in the door of the Van I drove for Montgomery Wards.

I told her I was ok. I really wanted to get to a fix of paint, for I was actually shook up really bad, but nobody could tell. Nobody knew what I had done to keep that truck from rolling over on top of us, and Joanne couldn't see what was happening as I held her away from the car door that was chewed open. I saw the metal and smelled the gas and knew that we would burn to death if we caught on fire. I was messed up but didn't show it. All the wreckage the blood, dust, and seeing the woman crying all bloody crawling to her child all that, and more was going thru my mind. Joanne screaming as I held her off the door it was all just too much.

Joanne was mad over the fact that I had wrecked in her car and she thought that I had caused the wreck, but after seeing the chaos of the wreck, and how it all happened she shut up about it. She knows she would have probably died had she went out backwards under the truck as it tore her door open, and it chewed up our car and her too.

I never said anything about it. I drove around for a while checking to see how the car handled. It drove ok, but the frame was warped, and the car was totaled, but we could still drive it till the insurance came thru.

I got home and Linda, and Robert heard my bird screaming or screeching when he saw me. Yep Joanne had got him when we split up. and brought him to the apartment.

He always watched at the window like a puppy dog, and seeing me I could hear him screeching. Linda and Robert had seen me on the news, and after I came home, and my bird let her know I was home she came outside as I looked the car over after driving it as I did my neighbors wife with the twins.
They all gave me a big hug, and they asked about Joanne whom was still at the hospital with Maybelle. I would see my ugly face on the news for the next couple of days over, and over, and it was embarrassing. I'm a Texan, and have a bad accent already, but being on TV is even worse, and I really sounded him-a-fide for sure! I could tell I'd never make my way to Hollywood!

We got some pretty good laughs out of my bird because he would screech everytime I was on TV, because the dumb bird liked to watch TV on a pillow next to me as I sat on the floor leaning on the couch.

I believe that my bird's brains were fried worse than mine, so with the car messed up we only drove it short distances, and we had only owed $450,00 to finish paying it off, but the insurance rated it us totaled, and wanted it by giving us a $4,000 thousand dollar settlement. I couldn't keep driving over the big bridge going to the warehouse, so I picked up my last couple of pay checks, one being my retirement account being closed. There wasn't a lot in it, but there was enough for me to buy a used Toyota Hilux pickup. Joanne needed to stay close to home with the car until we got the check from the insurance company. I had to field the phone calls from all kinds of people, and their insurance companies doing depositions, recorded, and in person.

Most people were opting to settle, so we never went to court on any of the cases.

Now being out of a job didn't bother me, for I sniffed paint a lot, but before long I was starting to get behind on bills because I had to buy a couple of parts for my truck.

The insurance still hadn't paid us, so I went to look for work. The weather was warm, and it was time for crop dusting, and planting, so I went to M&M Air Service, and talked to them. We had used them along with FarmAir while I was living in China, Texas, for we had one of the largest ranch/rice farms in the Beaumont area, and they remembered my old step daddy Poodle (Wiltz James Theriot Jr.), but everybody called him Poodle.

One of the pilots remembered me from when I was a kid, for I always loved the planes, and we always used planes. I got a job as a flagger, and after a week or so the owner saw I already knew what was happening because I was raised around this stuff, and started having me teach others how to flag airplanes in the fields. Let me tell ya this though it ain't rocket science.
and the flagging is rather simple, but it is hard work. What it consists of is you dropped off at one end of a rice field usually at the very edge, of the field, and then you have another flagger at the other side of the field that in most cases you can't see.

The pilot makes a run about 25-30 feet above you to get his bearings, and then passes you and starts his run. He then lines up on your waving flag, and the guy, or gal across the field and starts his dusting run with either rice pods, fertilizer, or whatever he has. As he goes over you, you cover yourself with the flag which is solid white because this stuff stings everywhere it hits ya, the face, arms etc. . . . When the pilot passes you take off running along the edge of the field in the mud, and water so many steps about 15 steps is normal because that is about the width of the wings of the plane, and start flagging like a crazy person. The pilot passes the guy, or gal at the other end of the field, and goes straight up, and circles back, and is now lining up on your flag, and coming at you about 20 ft. off the ground looking for a strafing run, and you watching the pilot's hand outside the Agcat cockpit. He will give you a signal. If his hand is held high, and he holds up fingers, up to five you take that many more steps on the next run. If he holds his hand down you take less steps, by the amount of fingers he shows ya.

If the edge of the field angles you run 10 steps forward then whatever steps you need to do to keep the run right, and this is called stair stepping a field, and this all has to be done before this guy turns the plane back around and lines back up on your flag. Let's just say this you get a real workout!

There is no breaks until the fields are done, and when the plane takes off to get a refill, another takes its place and you keep running in these fields. Don't get me wrong sometimes there are small breaks as some of the places they have to land is a good distance away, and it takes time to refill a 500 pound bin, as well as to refuel a plane. With our rice farm we had two private runways just for this type of operation, and they were staging areas for the crop dusters, and they used these runways even when other farmers needed a place for plane to land too. Poodle was a good dude and they all knew him and he would let anybody use these areas when they needed it.

I love crop dusting planes, and they reminded me of Snoopy, and the Red
Baron, and these pilots all think that they are flying Aces with their scarves and goggles along with their leather helmets that they wear.

I will say this though. I have total respect for these guys, for they fly their butts off, and what they do is very dangerous, but they make it look like a piece of cake. They fly above the ground so low that it looks like you can touch their wheels, and it is really something to watch up close like that. You ought to hear these things too because these planes are really loud!

As I stated before I started showing people how to flag in these fields because during the season there is a lot of fields to do, and as you may have figured out not many people stay with this very long either.

You have to be careful though because there are lots of snakes, and lots, and lots of leeches, and my favorite alligators of which my crews thought I was crazy because I tried to catch the smaller ones of 3-4 ft. long. Ya'll already know by now that I like to eat them. Then bugs are a lot faster than a lot of people think though, and I missed most of them, but there were a few that ended up as supper that was for sure.

Once they had enough people trained I would only flag once in a while, and Rob (one of the pilots), got in hot water because he would land his plane at the end of the field when we was done, and have me get on the wing, and he would take off with me holding on sitting by the struts, or next to the fuselage of the plane. I might add that Rob had known me since I was a kid.

The liked me to load, and fuel the planes during the operations, because I wasn't scared of the planes when then came in.

When you loaded a plane everything has to go like clockwork. The plane lands, and comes to the staging area, and as soon as he spins the plane around I would run up, and get on the wing next to the fuselage. This is all done at a run, and the pilot usually stands up in the cockpit, and has his hand ready to give me a hand up, for there's no time to put down a step, and such.

As soon as I'm up I signal the hopper truck that has been loaded with 500 - 600 pounds of seed, or fertilizer while I guided the boom, and truck in between the tail, and wings. The pilot has opened the loading hopper lid on the plane in front of the cockpit, and I have to keep the truck from hitting the plane because everything is very close. Once the hopper is over the plane I stop the truck, and the start unloading as the plane gets loaded I help
shove the material away from the loading sock because it piles up under the
sock when the hopper is unloaded. The planes loading bin is slick metal
because of all the dry material that's been in it, and it has a natural slickness
like it has been well sanded. This bin is also wedged shaped to keep the material
feeding out of the plane as it disperses it. The loading is simple, for
there is a window in the cockpit, and the pilot can see when the bin is full,
or empty. It doesn't get any simpler than that.

Once the plane is just about full the pilot sits back down, and starts
to run up the RPM's of the motor while I finish settling the load. The pilot
has kept the motor running all this time too, for they don't shut the motor
off unless they are refueling the plane.

Once the pilot runs up the motor I back the truck out with my hand signals
and from between the wings. Once the truck clears the wings and tail section
I yell "GO!". The pilot revs the engine, and starts to roll lining up on
the runway, or dirt road they are on to take off whichever it is, and as
the plane starts to roll into the take off I jump off the planes wing, and
fall face first to the ground, so that the tail section doesn't hit me, and
off they go! It's really a rush doing that although it's hot, and muggy work,
and this dust or rice or whatever they are using itching like crazy after
you sweat some.

Once the truck has cleared the staging area they reload the hopper for
as this pilot takes off the other should be on his way back to reload thus
this is done all over again.

Refueling the plane is different. When the plane is to be refueled the
pilot will just land the plane at times, and get out leaving me to take
the plane to the fueling area, so I'd taxi the plane out of the way to fuel
it with the fuel truck because the plane has to be away from everything while
it gets fueled up.

These pilots will only let certain people play around with their plane,
and they have to know you know their plane, and since I always messed with
these guys I was one of the people that was allowed to do this. Another reason
they did this was because we always had cold drinks and water on our crew
trucks and this was a chance for the pilots to take care of business like
go to the restroom and drink something cold, and take a break, but if they
had to fuel the plane then they wouldn't have time to take a break.
I was practically raised around these types of planes. There was a crew on the fuel truck too, but only one dude, so when I taxied the plane to the fueling area I just pointed the nose towards the field for take off, and killed the engine then climbed out, and took the fuel nozzle from the truck driver, and started fueling the wing tank that was located above the pilot's head almost. There was a little float in a sight glass that lets you know how much fuel is in the tank. You only fill the tank to about 90-95% full, so it doesn't come out of the vent cap, and into the pilot's face while he flies. He usually has on goggles, but still a face full of gas just isn't a cool thing.

The owners furnished the drinks for all of the crews which was good of them, but we ran almost the whole time we were in a field, so they had plenty to drink, like cheap sodas, and Snappy Toms/V8 juice for the loading crews, and flaggers, but they had beer for the pilots that wanted it. Of course they didn't fly drunk, but they weren't above smoking a couple of cigs, and downing a beer while the plane was serviced. You just can't smoke a cig in an open cockpit while your flying all over the place like your in a dog fight, and it was even a worse idea smoking around Avgas. As I stated earlier I have lots of respect for these guys that fly by the seat of their pants, and it's fun to watch, but also dangerous. I've seen a couple of crashes where one of the guys wing tip hit a rice levy, and he somersaulted his plane, and another that had engine failure that just missed our big barn, and crashed hitting a telephone pole, and flew into a small canal killing the pilot. That was when I was younger, but none of these guys wrecked while I was there.

During this time I had somewhere talked a couple of people into working at M&M that lived in Vidor. I don't remember where I met them maybe at my cousin's house while me and my bird was getting high. Yep folks Tequila my bird always went with me to get high. He was like those pirate's parrots you always see in the movies riding on the pirate's shoulder, for he liked to do that too.

I constantly took him riding in my truck, and over to my cousin's house. His wife loved to mess with him, and he was a party animal. Anyway there was this gal, and her brother that I told about picking up an easy job although physical, and they wanted in on it.

Pam was the gal's name, but I don't remember her brother's name, but that's
how memories go.

What happened here is they went to work at M&M, and Pam was put with our crew. She was going to be a flagger, so I got to train her which as talked about before isn't that hard to learn, you just had to do a lot of running, or walking. She was short, so she got a good workout.

It started raining a lot down there, but there was still stuff we could do if they'd let us. Some times we got to work, but the weather was degrading, so we got 4 hours show up time, and then went home.

Pam, and her brother rode together because like always I wanted to sniff paint when I drove, and I didn't like people riding with me. During these bad rain storms it did a lot of flooding, but that small truck was cool when it went thru water that even 4 wheel drives had trouble with, so when it flooded, and it was time to pick up a pay check, or go get paint, or drugs I'd go get Pam, and her brother, and off we'd go.

At this time Joanne, and I were doing good, and we got along great again, and Linda, and Robert were always fun to be with, then out of the blue Pam started liking me, and even though she knew I was married wanted to have an affair and put out without a second thought to seal the deal. Now thinking with the little head with even less brain cells than the three I have left in my noggin I decided this would be my freebie affair because I owed Joanne this for messing around on me while I was in jail. Now folks this is pure unadulterated stinking thinking at its best, and this is all more in line with my being a "Man-Slut", and a poon-hound to boot, so I went, and let her talk me into shacking up with her. I went to the house one day, and took a basket of clothes, and told Linda, and Robert that I was going to wash some clothes, and off I went.

Joanne was at work, so I went to Pam's Moms house, and we loaded up her big Pontiac Catilina, and decided to go to Orange , Texas to shack up. I gave her brother my truck he just had to pick up the payments which was only about $75,00 a month, and I only owed a few hundred on it.

This would of course turn out to be another bad idea. I tend to make a lot of bad choices when I'm in dumb ass mode. We went to Orange, and found a small camp trailer parked at the back of a trailer court under some big trees for $25,00 dollars a week, and perfect for what we were about.

I got another job at a vacuum truck company, and quit M&M. All I did at this place was help vacuum stuff like styrofoam balls off water holding tanks in refineries. Wasn't much to the job, so anyway we set up our love nest. Pam wanted to get pregnant, but I didn't think that I could help her out.

-261-
that much with the amount of paint that I always sniffed, but I would try
to oblige her.

We bought some groceries with my first pay check, and paid a couple of
weeks rent then her car messed up on me when I went to get some paint one
day. I didn't have my tools, but got the car home barely, and once it died
that's where it sat.

Now we were on foot, and I should have took my truck back, but didn't.
I quit at the Vacuum Truck place, and decided to hunt up Karl a black dude
I use to sell a little weed to at the county barn. I was gonna find me some
connections, and now sell drugs. That sounded good to me at first, but in
reality all I wanted to do was sniff paint. Pam found a waitress job at a
small diner close by, and used that to meet someone else, and left me hanging
in the small trialer by myself. It took me about a week to figure that out,
and that she wasn't coming back, so basically all I did was called Joanne,
begged a little, and actually told her now that we were even we could start
fresh again. Believe it or not she didn't argue, and call her crazy, but
she came, and got me. All this did was confirm the fact that she had done
more than just talk with this dude she had hung out with while I was in jail.

If you remember I had to sit in jail 21 days, so this had to be more than
a one night thing. I feel that I got my message across though, so I didn't
lord it over her. Now you might also remember the probation officer at this
time, but I didn't count that as an affair even though it was I felt it more
was like sleeping with enemy and helped keep me out of trouble while I was
on probation, and since I was always working while this was going ...on it
was more like part of the job.

Did I tell ya I had some stinking thinking? Well there it is folks at
its best.Now we had both done wrong, but it was over as far as I was concerned
so now we moved forward.

That's exactly what we did. After getting the groceries, and clothes I
had we went back to Vidor.I found out that Linda, and Robert had decided
to get their own place, so now Joanne, and I would be there by ourselves.

This worked out for me, and I brought my paint upstairs, and now could
sniff paint in the apartment. This would start another dry period for me
on work.I talked to my neighbor, and got a hook up on some weed. I used
the car during the day, or would take out the Moped, and go about and sell
some weed, but I used it mostly to get my paint.
I went back to work for my Uncle Joe at his Gulf station. This brought in $200.00 dollars a week plus a little more when I fixed flats or a car. I could only handle my uncle Joe just so much though. My Grandfather had my dog "Corky" which was a solid white Great Spitz, and his full name was "Corsicana, or Corky" for short. Corsicana was where my Maw-In-Law had bought him for me during one of her nicer moods. He was crazy as a Betsy Bug but a good dog as long as I kept him on a chain. I couldn't keep him at the Apartment, so I'd pick him up, and take him to the station, and he liked laying on the cool concrete under the awning by the small office I had on the gas island, and he was an absolute chick magnet!

This was a time when there was full service gas stations, and I liked this aspect since I was always one that accepts a free squirrel shot (a look up a skirt) then washing windshields was fun, but Ole Corky tied up by my little booth the gals would open their doors to pet him, and of course Ole Corky loved being petted, and would go up to them gals, and they would always turn towards him sometimes putting a leg out, or just turning sideways in their seats forgetting the short skirts they wore. Maybe I do think they at times just didn't mind giving me a free shot. Hey! I'm a guy, and I ain't gay, so I looked and I admit it. Now ladies let this be a lesson to ya always keep your skirts down because there are those that will look if they get a chance.

Of course I always gave service with a smile as you may have figured out by now. I can say this for sure and that is I always had a smile when Corky got his pet on!

It was about this time that the insurance people came up with a check from the wreck. We had held out for $4,500 dollars, but they got the car.

We took the check and was now without a car, so Paw Paw gave us a small Opal Kedet to use that he had got some place, so Joanne used that, and I used the Moped, but had quit now at the station now that we were rich! My uncle Bill came over to get my bird high, and tried to sell me a pound of funky weed that I of course wouldn't buy because I got better stuff than that junk and cheaper! Instead I had him take me to a house that had a nice van out front that was for sell. We took off, and went there, and it was pretty cool. It was a Dodge Trialmaster, and it was set up with big sand tires, and they were wide, big, and being I was always looking for places
that cars had trouble going this was setup like a four wheel drive and perfect.

This van was a standard, and had a 6 banger in it, so it was good on gas, and it was fixed up on the inside with new curtains on what windows it had, and it had a wrap around seat in the back, paneling a bubble skylight, Captains Chairs etc.... and it was only $1,300 dollars cash. I bought it from this older couple that was selling it for their son, and I was mobile again.

Joanne was again working for Jones Health Center on Courtland Rd. down from my grandparents, and her Mom ran it. They had some nice apartments that was across the street that we had talked to the manager about getting on the waiting list for an apartment. We usually got a two bedroom apartment because we always seemed to have extra stuff since Joanne worked across the street and the manager knew Maybelle, and there was other nurses living there it wasn't going to be a problem. She had apartments that were going to be going to be opening up within a couple of weeks, and we would get a one bedroom apartment now since we had down sized our junk to live in the other apartment.

We put down the deposit, and off we went. One morning Joanne decided she wanted to use the Moped to go to work. Why I don't know, but it was hers anyway, and I had bought it after her brother had bought on then she had to have one too, so that they could ride together, yeah right she never rode it, but I did though. So Joanne's going to be a biker babe today, and she leaves at daylight. It was only about a mile to her place of work. She decides to go thru some of the back roads thru a neighborhood that had lots of dogs, and a messed up road.

Well needless to say she had a wreck, and came back home to get me to drive her to work after she changed her uniforms and such. She messed up the Moped too. She explained to me that she was doing ok, but all these dogs started to run by her and bark at her. She exceeded the weight limit a little for this Moped, so it wasn't real fast. I could see what she was talking about in my minds eye, for I have had them do that to me lots of times on tractors etc.... where she messed up was thinking she could peddle the Moped after it was running. The peddles were just to get it to rolling, so that you could reach back, and flip this lever on the back fender that dropped this one horse McCulla motor that ran on the wheel, and made the moped go.

Well she tried to help this thing go faster, but her foot slipped off the peddle, and she hit a pot hole in the road and crashed, and burned. She
stated that this horde of dogs that had been following her, and barking all scattered when she hit the pot hole and crashed. They weren't stupid they knew to get somewhere, but after she lay in the pot hole some came back while some was still barking at her others ran up and licked her in the face while she had to push them away, and untangle herself from the wrecked moped she stated they made it even worse when some of them hiked up their legs and peed on her and the bike too.

You have to realize that this is still daylight and we are now in the van and I am driving getting my morning fix and thinking about what she is saying and when she said that I just started to laugh at that! She then said that she kicked this one dog that she could still get to, but that ended her biker babe days and the riding of the moped for good.

Of course she had then came home and I had helped her get cleaned up and fixed her scrapes and such then had took her to work, and now she wanted to take me by the crash sight, so why not I needed to see this terrible place that had hounddogged my wife this morning.

We went to this road that was only a couple of blocks from the apartment. There wasn't much to see. It was a road with a few houses, and dogs, and a few pot holes. It was kinda funny, and I was glad it was still the low light of predawn, so she couldn't see my smile as we drove through this nasty crash site.

Of course she couldn't see my smile anyway with a paint bag stuck up to my mouth. I got her to work that day ok, and later picked her up. I spent the day sniffing paint. I'm sure I had some kind of job, but again most likely not since I was again in paint sniffing mode.

This is all I wanted to do from the time I got up till the sun went down, and even then I'd sniff it all night in most cases. I ate only when I made my self do so, for I didn't like doing without my paint even that long. Of course if Joanne cooked I would eat and she always tried to get me to eat something each day.

I guess that Joanne just had one of those days where it doesn't pay to even get out of bed, and I didn't help matters either.

After supper Joanne had decided to go to bed early... me? I decided to fix the Moped in the living room (actually trip while I was doing so), and went outside and carried it up the stairs and into the apartment. I placed
newspapers under the tires, there was no oil in it since it wasn't an enclosed type motor. There really wasn't a whole lot to it, for it had a flywheel on an open crank shaft, and a piston, and carb and head. That's it! Anyway as I sat there looking at it I did see things that could be fixed, so going into the bedroom by our bed was my tool box why it was there I'm not sure, but it was on Joanne's side of the bed because on my side was Tequila's big cage with a small towel on top of it and this was Tequila's landing strip.

I got a phillip screwdriver out, and went to work on the moped in the living room fixing something on it, and continued to sniff paint. I later saw this screwdriver, and decided to put it up, and in doing so took it to the bedroom, and tossed it in the general direction of the tool box, but thinking I'd better also see where it landed flipped the light on all in one motion. I did this just in time to see that pointed screwdriver hit Joanne above the eye in the meaty section of her eyebrow.

I saw the screwdriver flip out of her eyebrow, and I of course ran to see how she was. She had been laying on her back when this happened, and sat up holding her face. My God I felt so bad!

I hustled her to the bathroom to help her clean up the blood, and I told her to get dressed I'd take her to the hospital to have it looked at. After she cleaned it up she saw that it was only a smallish puncture wound with a tear where it flipped out. We had a small first aid kit, and we put a couple of butterfly stitches (bandaids) on it, and she was all fixed. She wasn't mad at me, and I felt really sick to my stomach for hurting her.

This was a changing point in our relationship. I had been known to smack the hell out of her if she provoked me while I was sniffing paint. I think that at times that she did it just to aggravate me by asking me what I'd do if she slapped my face, and I'd tell her to do it, and see. She'd slap me, and I'd slap her back you know things like that. One time she was mad at me for petting my puppy and asked me what I'd do if she raked her fingernails down both my arms so I said do it and find out, so she left four purple streaks down both of my arms, so I calmly took out my lock blade and cut her nails off and dared her to grow them out again.

This was a crazy marriage as you can see, but this is the way we were. We did have fun together, but we had weird times too. So this picture stuck in my mind from then on. Even now it still hurts my feelings to think of this even now.
She forgave me, and then went back to bed hoping that tomorrow would be a better day. Now when all of this happened as I ran in there I had knocked the dresser over which was on my side of the room, and as I went by shoved it back up right, and didn't think about it. After that.

We was ok after that, and I did get the Moped running again. I started using it while Joanne used the van, and at times I even loaded it in the van, and would drive her to work then putter off. After a couple of days I asked Joanne where my bird was? She said she didn't know.

I suspected that she had let him go, but she didn't mess with him that much, or he her. I got to looking around, and thought back to the night of the screwdriver. I remembered the dresser falling over, so I went and looked under it, and there was a hollow area under it, and sure enough Tequila lay there his toe had been caught by the edge of the dresser for you could see where it imprinted the carpet, and he had laid there, and died. So Joanne wasn't the only victim that night. Tequila was such a good bird, and he was funny, and had a personality. He did weird stuff that just made you laugh, but now he was gone. I showed Joanne, and then took him outside, and put him in a shoebox. I took him to the dumpster, and tossed him in. I stood there at least an hour saying goodbye to ole Tequila. We would be moving shortly and after 2½ years ole Tequila would be left behind.
CHAPTER 18

We moved to the new set of apartments across from the nursing home, and they were pretty nice. We only had a one bedroom apartment now. The move had went without a hitch, and it was a good thing too, for shortly after the move the van's transmission started messing up. I found a used transmission for the van, but couldn't get it to fit in the transmission for the spline was rusty, and I was too lazy by this time to make too much of an effort at it. I would rather sniff paint, and hang out in the woods.

The van still worked, but it liked to jump out of first gear unless you held the shifting lever down in place.

Now it was about this time that Joanne wasn't getting pregnant, or hadn't since the D&C she had after the last time. We still had some money left over from the wreck, but I wasn't working at this time. There were a lot of refinery strikes going on at this time, and jobs around the area were being given to the union strikers.

This area has all the major refineries; Mobil Oil, Texaco, Exxon, Gulf, and so on, and they were all seemingly striking. I had run into this while driving for B.F.I. when they were striking, and I couldn't go thru the picket lines thus would have to sit in parking lots until somebody cleared it with the unions to let me thru, so I was not working.

Joanne, and her Mom decided that we needed to adopt this 19 year old's baby that was about to be born sometime in the near future. This gal was only 19 yr.s old, and this was her 4th. baby, and her husband wasn't wanting it because this woman had a boyfriend, and had gotten pregnant by him. Her husband, and her had separated because of it. She wanted to be with her husband, and her kids, so her husband set conditions and one was to get rid of the baby she had carried: , and it just so happened that Maybelle's friend had heard about it because they were kin in some way. All the arraignments were made without consulting me. Now when I found out about it I myself wasn't so keen on the idea of raising some little whore's kid, and although
it wasn't the kids fault that he/she was being born. I did feel that we were being taken advantage of though. I need to make a correction at this time. I said that this was this gal's 4th. child, she actually had 4 kids already and this was now to be her 5th., and yes she was still 19 years old.

I got a hump in my back over it, and then set conditions that I thought would nip this in the bud. I told them we would allow it, but this gal had to stay with us during her last 3 months of pregnancy, and she would be taken care by the doctors, and us only. DRAT! They agreed to that! I figured they wouldn't since I wasn't working. Maybe she got a lawyer involved, and started helping with the adoption. This didn't help me, and Joanne's relationship.

I have been trying to get us away from the In-Laws, so we could have our lives, so now I was just being used as a figurehead, and this was going to happen, so I did start to look forward to it myself.

Maybe this would be the thing that broke the paint sniffing spell, but this monster wasn't going to give up so easily. I started binging even more if that was possible? Joanne was trying to tell me that once this gal came to live with us that paint sniffing in the house was coming to an end, so I sniffed even more.

When this gal did come to live with us I just moved the paint sniffing to the bedroom and I only came out to eat, or run my head about stuff I didn't like. To make a long story short we had the baby, and then Joanne, and her family decided that I wasn't needed anymore, and talked Joanne into living with them without me there, so I was put on the street, and the apartment was gave up.

My Dad, had let me keep the Van at his place, so I moved into the van. I was really pissed off about this, but still hadn't been able to get a job to work at. I was actually looking for work, but jobs just weren't available. I had to use the Moped to get around now because the Van's transmission was still messed up. I had gotten Uncle Bill to help me get the used transmission installed, but neither of us could figure out how the shifting lever linkages should be hooked up. It didn't help that I had bought a car transmission for a slant six, and not a truck, or van transmission, but bet at $35,00 dollars I couldn't pass it up!

It would be figured out later by good ole Pop that's what is good about having everybody in the family a mechanic somebody will be able to figure
out what is going on when there is a problem like that. I wasn't too concerned about that anyway.

No job meant no money for gas. I could keep gas for the Moped, and I kept an antifreeze jug tied to the handle bars, and I could always talk my Uncle Joe out of a gallon of gas when need be. I just use any oil I found out of the garbage can that was left in the cans he threw away, so I got my mixed gas that way for the Moped. You might wonder why I did this? Well it seems this little bugger got aprox 150 miles to a gallon of gas, so even I could find ways to get gas at that rate.

I had worked this little motor over, and could get almost 35 mph out of it, and that was plenty fast on what was basically a bicycle, of course that was fast enough to kill yourself with so Good Times Right?

I hulled this poor Moped out too! I did end up getting a job back at the Union 76 truck stop which was good for me because I could get a free meal out of the restaurant.

The Union 76 was always a good place to work on a temporary basis. I would drive the Moped there and since I worked all night I parked it right in front where I could keep an eye on it while I pumped fuel at the islands, and when I worked in the tire bay at times I would put it in the parts room away from everybody but me.

Since I was now living at my Pop's and Maw's I also had to do my part at helping keep food in the house, and so I would go shopping with my Step Mom and put my skills of thievery to good use. I would steal meat, cigs, cheese etc.... Chickens, and such to help cover the cost of the food I ate.

Mostly though I did this, so I could get to town faster to steal my paint. It was a 12 mile ride one way to get this stuff, and that meant that I would find the closest place to stop, and start sniffing paint again. This went on for a short while, and Joanne and I never saw each other unless she was lucky enough to catch me between paint cans, and I hadn't got another yet by the time she had came over. I would soon rectify that.

There was all kinds of woods around the area Dad lived, so I was constantly gone. I lived more in the woods, and on the fringes of life than anything. I wandered thru the woods at night like some nocturnal animal, dogs would come up, and smell me, and wander off never even barking at me. When it rained I would run them out of their dog houses if they were big enough, or find
abandoned cabins that hadn't quite fell down yet, or some other type of shelter to keep the rain off my head.

I was a lost soul and I floated between this world and the next. I didn't eat except what I could find to steal, and I couldn't sleep, because the monster inside me kept a bag to my face, as I wandered the woods like some BigFoot slipping too and fro in and out of life. My mind was tortured from the memories I kept in my mind and they played over and over in my head. I couldn't run away from myself and I couldn't see why I had it so rough at times, because all I wanted to do was sniff paint, and nobody could understand that. I was free falling and knew that as long as I stayed away from people I could use like I wanted to. Did I feel I was an addict? Noway I just wanted to have fun in life, because I had already lived a lifetime of pain and been to places and had to do things that went completely against way of thinking for had I not done some of these things I would have been buried like my friends were that hadn't been so lucky. I was a walking dead man and didn't realize this even when I was so sick I couldn't even raise a bag to my face at times.

Everybody thought that a change of scenery was called for, and my Dad got me to go to my cousins in Shreveport, La. where they all being religious fanatics got me going to church, and they prayed for me, then doused me in anointed oils till I felt like a tossed salad, but all in all the demons that were my addiction rebelled even more, and as soon as I found my pain I was again gone into the woods living with the snakes, and opossums as well as other animals.

I went back to Vidor, and I called to talk to Joanne at her mother's, and wanted to see how things were, and this is where they messed up.

Judy talked to me, and told me that they needed me to sign papers to help Joanne push this adoption thru. I told her no way in hell would I do so, for as soon as this baby was born I was put on the streets, and then she tried to rectify it by saying that if I loved Joanne that I would do this for her, and again I said that she should of thought about this before she put me on the streets with the help of her Mom, and YOU!

She then said it didn't make any difference that they would sign my name, and then be done with it.Well that really was the wrong thing to say to me.

After hanging up I cranked up the ole Moped, and drove to the lawyers
office, and told him what was up, and told him that I in no way approved of this, nor would I sign anything to finalize the adoption that was going to have to be done in front of a Judge. Now the lawyer knew what was happening and could not legally say that he didn't know me, in case someone else tried to sign my name and now would be liable if he went against my telling him about this and tried to push the adoption thru. So now the lawyer knew that there was a big kink in this adoption, and although it didn't totally stop the adoption at this time it would in the end.

There was also another problem that they would have to forego and that was the real Mom still had six months to sign her rights away. Eventually the whole deal fell thru anyway because as just noted the Mom had come by to visit the baby a couple of times, and she had now talked her husband into accepting the baby, and came out and got her before the six months was up.

Maybelle, and Joanne filed a law suit on this gal, and her husband thus they ended up paying for all the expenses that had been incurred for post natal care, and of course the pre-natal care also, as well as the lawyers fees. This process included all the diapers/food, and anything else that could be put into the suit.

Of course these are broke below the poverty level people that was on welfare too, so no money would be realized from them.

I was now moving up, for the little work that I was doing provided me enough funds now to buy me a 12ft. Viking Pop-Up Camper Trailer that I moved to my Grand Parents property, and I started staying there. I helped my Grandfather fix cars, and outboard motors. Actually I fixed those because Paw Paw didn't like messing with them, for they were coming up with newer technology, and he didn't like it because he couldn't work around it and bull dog the motor into working.

This way I made money, but the money wasn't steady, and I was still a paint sniffing freak. I couldn't get away from it, and I had fights in the middle of the street with my own 375 pound Uncle Bill, and not just a fight but knife fights to boot! He was an old biker too, so he wasn't a push over, but the only way he could best me was by throwing me down, and getting on me he had to use his weight to hold me down but if he messed up while doing that I would cut him, so good ole grumpy, or Paw Paw would get involved before we would cut, or beat each other too much.
I seemed to get the worst end of the deal most of the times, but later we would all be sitting on the porch smoking weed and having a good laugh about it. Actually they would laugh at me because they thought it was funny that I would fight with someone the size of my Uncle Bill. I was also in fights with Klansmen that would at times stop traffic with their cars by hemming me in with their cars while I was walking down the street. These guys would soon find out though that messing with me was like poking a stick at a badger, and more than one man walked around good ole Vidor Texas looking like a raccoon where I blacked both of their eyes, or they had stitches where they found I always carried a lock blade or two. People had me messed up thinking I wasn’t all there, or was a slow drugged up hippy, (well maybe they had that right), but even if that were true then so is this, for I also have a keen sense survival, and I have out jumped striking snakes, and I have fought to live while hanging out of helicopter doors while being plastered by gunfire, and I knew that I would kill if I was pushed to do so I didn’t think about it I just did what I had to do.

Joanne decided to come back to me, and we both lived in the trailer now. Joanne still worked down the street at the nursing home, and my being out of work just wasn’t cutting it, so I told Joanne that I wanted to go to Houston Texas to find a job, but she was against that, and she didn’t want to move to Houston and move away from her family. I had family that lived in the Houston area too, and I kept thinking that this was a good idea. This getting into fights, and not having any money was the pits. I wanted my own place and not some pop-up trailer/tent.

I was healing from the last fight I had for I had pulled muscles in my chest. Finally one day while Joanne was at work I just decided that this was it, and I made me a cardboard sign walked past the nursing home, and got on IH-10, and had a ride with 5 minutes heading to Houston. I told no one what I was doing, for I knew that I had to do something, and I couldn’t be talked out of it.

I had a full can of paint, and bags, and the clothes on my back. It was cold but a pretty day, and since I was in the weather all of the time just by the sun being out I was warm enough with my parka, that was my all weather gear.
I didn't say goodbye to Joanne, for I was going to come get her, but I was going to find work first. If she wanted our marriage to work she would have to move, or file for a divorce. I was leaving Vidor Texas forever!

The rides that I caught got me to Houston by early afternoon, and I was let out before Loop 610 in Houston. A trucker gave me some directions on how to get thru the mix-master to head toward Alvin, and Pearland. My Mom had her brother that lived in one of these towns, but I couldn't remember which, so this was as good a place to start looking as any, and I headed that way.

I walked most of the way thru Houston going to IH 35 or Telephone Rd. I was leary of the cops because I saw lots of signs saying "No Pedestrians".

I figured that I was more Pentacostal now since I had been annointed with olive oils at one time, so I didn't worry about it. I thought that Houston was a pretty freindly place though because lot's of people honked at me, and some even gave me the one finger waves which I gladly returned.

That kind of stuff doesn't bother me because it helps to break up the boredom of walking mile after mile. I finally got thru Houston, and headed toward Pearland still walking. It was eleven miles from where was.

The light was waning, so I knew that I needed to find me a spot before dark with a store close by. I wasn't gonna be wandering around in a strange town in the dark leaving myself open to be accosted by the cops, or gang members, or robbers. I hadn't ate all day so that was another thing that I had to do without tonight.

I was close to an airport/heliport, and saw an area of hedges out by some trees, so I checked it out. There was a small vacant area in the middle of the bushes that were taller than me. I looked around, and saw a store about a block away, and seeing that the coast was clear forced my way into the middle of these bushes, and they closed up behind me. This is where I would spend the rest of the night. I couldn't see anybody no cars ect.... so I knew that I was also unseen, and the trees kept me from being seen from above by the helicopters taking off at the airport.

I sniffed paint until I was basically too tired to keep going, so some time in the wee hours of the morning I went to sleep amongst the noise of the air port which was noisy indeed.

I didn't know where to start looking the next day, but I would let the
day sort it self out. I only slept a couple of hours though, for it was really noisy with all these airplanes taking off, so I kept sniffing paint.

I was just about out of paint, so I waited till daylight, and found my way out of these bushes. I wasn't sure if the store would have any paint, so I kept enough paint in my can to at least get a little more of a fix.

The bad thing about this addiction beside everything, was I couldn't even stand the idea of running out of paint, and this addiction was so bad that when the paint got so low in a can that it quit spraying I poked a hole in the bottom of the can, and poured the contents that were left in it into my bag. As soon as the paint started getting low I would start withdrawls even while I still had a shot or two in the can. It was all mental, but real to me just the same.

What was weird about this was that as the paint got lower in the can my body seemed to run down too, but as soon as I used a fresh can of paint my whole demeanor picked up again.

I went to the store that was close by that I had seen before going into the bushes the night before, and it did have paint in the small auto section. The bad thing about small stores was you had to make your move fast, and there was no standing around because of the time of the morning it was. I went in the store as a lot of people would go in there because they were going to work or some place else. I would catch them just as they were opening up, so the store clerk couldn't keep an eye on everybody at the same time, so I would go in there grab a paint can stash it grab a chunk of cheese, and go out the door as they were checking someone out with their purchases.

I myself an in and out though, and it was all done so fast most store people must have thought that I had either changed my mind, or forgotten something, so I got my paint, and was gone.

Now I felt better just knowing that I had another can of paint. I didn't know where my sister, or Mom lived, so I just headed to Pearland which I wasn't at yet. After catching a ride to Pearland I got out, and let my instincts kick in, and I started to let them lead me toward-areas that I felt they would be in. Of course what really happened was I looked around for a while then went into another big store after leaving my new can in a place I'd be able to find it then went in there and got me fresh bags got some Pop-Tarts, and of course more paint, and went back to where I had stashed my
other can of paint.

At about 10 Am. I found a big field with tall grass, and wandered into the middle of it, and sat down to sniff more paint for a few hours. I spent the better part of the day there.

I did make an effort, and I was able to cover some ground in Pearland, but my gut feelings were telling me that I needed to move on to Alvin Tx., so I got myself together looked around to see if anybody would be noticing someone popup out of a field, and seeing everything was clear I got out of the field, and headed to Alvin.

Now it was getting to about 4 Pm., or getting late enough to start thinking about what I would do for the night. I had looked around Alvin, Tx. with no luck, but I felt like I was in the right area. I saw that the sun was waning, but of course it was winter, and it was overcast, so the sun was still good for a few hours, but I felt it was time to find a place to be for the night. When you are on the road you have to be looking at all times for a place to stay for the day, or night because you may not get the chance later.

I came across a small bridge, and decided I could spend the night down on the bank of the small creek it went over. There wasn't any houses right next to it, or the road, and it meandered off into a curve with very tall grass, and trees around the banks. The road was busy, but that didn't bother me as long as a cop didn't see me go down below the bridge.

I noticed some huge logger head snapping turtles still out, and about. Here in Texas it sometimes gets pretty cold, but even now it was still mild enough for these big guys to be running around. I knew that they would be slowed down though for they are cold blooded. I was thinking that one I picked out would be my supper. They can bite a finger off though, but I knew how to fix that I had a razor sharp lockblade, and I'd ate a few of these critters already without loosing fingers or toes, so I was looking down into the water trying to figure out how to get down then figure out which big turtle I was going to accost.

I was totally engrossed with this dilemma when I faintly heard my name "Tim", I really didn't think of it, for everything was white noise in the background. Then I heard my name again even louder this time. I looked around then saw my sister Kathy with her two kids Mandy, and Andy. They weren't
twins even though they had names that rhymed.

Mandy, my niece was a few years older than Andy, so Kathy was happy to see me and we hugged and talked a few seconds at the back of the car. She had pulled over when she had seen me on the side of the bridge. She had been going to the bank before it closed, so off we went. While we drove I told her what I was up too, and that I had left Joanne in Vidor, so I could find a job. Kathy told me that Mom lived only a couple of blocks from the bridge that she had found me on. I told her that I had a feeling ya'll were close. She knew about my ability to track them down by my showing up on her doorstep in San Antonio about a year, or so before.

Now we went to the bank, and then she took me to a burger place, and got us all burgers, and we then went to where Mom, and Kenneth lived in some small efficiency apartments, that butted up to the creek I had been at right in the curve section I had been looking at.

Kathy had thought that I was looking at Mom's apartments on the bridge, but I told her no that I had been looking down at a big turtle that I was going to eat roasted over a small camp fire on the banks of the creek under that bridge. She didn't laugh too much because she knew that I would have been doing just that had she not come by. I told her the burgers were appreciated though and a hell of a lot easier to get and eat than that old turtle. Of course Mom also knew that I would eat these things because she had cooked enough of them for me.

When we got to Mom's and Kathy had told her about my turtle hunting just right down the block at the bridge Kenneth thought we were joking, but they assured him that I was serious. I asked Mom if I could stay with them since they had a car, and Kenneth of course needed to find a job too, so we could go job hunting together. I'm sure that even though I had just popped in on ole Mom I am sure that she was glad that I was now there because Kenneth was a lazy cuss and I am sure that he had been laying up and not looking for work and living on Mom's little checks till now, but she knew that I would find a job and he wouldn't have an excuse now because if I could find one so could he.

I only had the clothes that was on my back, so I borrowed some clothes from Kenneth, so I could wash mine. They had lots of clothes that some people had gave them, but I was too tired to look thru them. I don't take clothes with me when I go off like this because I don't want to have to carry stuff
in stores, or leave things hidden, so anyway it all worked out.

I'm not sure why Kenneth wasn't working, but knowing his work ethics he
was just being outright lazy.

The next day I didn't sniff paint, for sometimes I just had to make myself
do things that went against the grain. Kenneth, and I took off about 7:30
Am, and we drove around, and wasted gas while he showed me around. He wasn't
sick though I had already seen that he just wanted to drive around and not
go by places that might be hiring. I finally told him that he needed to stop
at some of these places so that we could put in some applications, and he
said that he didn't see any place he wanted to work.

I saw a lumber yard, and told him to pull in. He didn't want to work there,
but I told him screw you buddie I'm going to find a job, and that he could
burn off if he wanted to.

I went in, and put in for a truck driving job, and actually got the job.
My commercial license had expired, but they knew I had one, and they would
help me renew it. I was apprehensive about delivering lumber though because
I didn't know the area, so Kenneth and I decided to call it a day.

We passed a place in Pearland since this is where we were looking for
a job. Alvin, and Pearland are almost together, they have grew so much they
are almost one place now.

We passed a place called R.S.I.L. (Reactor Services International Inc.),
and I asked him what they did, and of course Kenneth said that he didn't know.

The help wanted sign stated "Help Wanted, Must be Willing To Travel. No
Exper. Necessary". I told Kenneth that sounded ok, so let's check it out.

We both went in, and got a job as laborers. This company recharged Chemical
Reactors with catalyst, and we would go into refineries, and work on what
was called turnarounds. This is when they did their Maint. on the reactors.

Laborers were at the bottom of the ladder there, and you made more money
as you learned the trade, and did different things like start working in
the reactors hydroblasting, or filling, and or working in the "S.A.M.S." program which stand for (Scuba Apparatus Mobile Systems), and these were
the guys that went into the reactors first to open them up from the top to
the bottom, and had to work in a nitrogen atmosphere.

They had helmets, and suits that were designed by the NASA Space Center
there in Houston, and this looked like this would be a good job.
I and Kenneth worked the night shift, and working with this stuff for one night gave me and Kenneth flu like symptoms that lasted for 3 days, and the reason for this was the catalyst that we were reclaiming to have recycled was so powdery that it would splash like water, so fine was this dust. We were putting it in 55 gal. drums, and this stuff was going everywhere.

I asked for dust protector masks, but was not given anything, but a piece of cloth to cover my face with, so this stuff made me, and Kenneth sick with runny noses, and fever, chills, and such. We felt better after that but Kenneth just needed any ole excuse to drag up, and he wanted to quit, and I told him he could do what he wanted to, but I was going back. I thought that working with this stuff was pretty cool, or at least working in these refineries was, so to save face he went back with me, and we walked in the shop, and I just explained what had happened, and there were understanding about it. It seems that they are use to people dragging up on them (leaving the jobs) that’s why they always have a help wanted sign out plus handling 480 pound 55 gal. drums is something that makes you wish that you had ate your Wheaties that morning, but once you figured out how to handle them they got easier, but they still ate your lunch after twelve hours of moving stuff like this by hand, and you were outta there.

Now that we had went back to the job, this time we went with different crews. I went back to the Diamond Shamrock Refinery, and Kenneth went to another. This time though I wasn’t handling these 55 gal drums, for because of our coming back to work seemed to tell the job foreman, or crew foreman that I had more tenacity than a common laborer. He was watching a reactor being loaded with hoppers about 7 stories up. The manhole, or loading opening was a side opening, and one guy was hanging on the superstructure frame guiding the hopper sock into the manhole to drop fresh support balls, or catalyst in.

The crew boss asked me if I was scared of hieghts? I told him not that I knew of, and he asked if I would go up the superstructure, and help the dude that was having to fight with 800 lbs of hopper in the wind trying to load up this reactor. I just said why not? It would beat handling the drums anyday, because they were pouring these drums into the hopper with new catalyst and I thought that looked like too much work! So I told him that I would go up, and then asked him how do I get up there?
He just said climb.

I said that you have to be kidding? He laughed, and said "nope". He showed me some steps that lead to a working platform, but after that I would have to climb like "Spiderman". I did this without much fanfare, and went up to where my now co-worker was. We were waiting for a hopper, so he showed me where to connect my safety line, and told me what I needed to do when the hopper got there.

There was a man inside the reactor that was spreading material, and telling us how much of what material was needed. My job was to hang off the superstructure and steady the hopper while the other guy worked the hopper door, and sock into the manhole. It all went like clockwork, and it was actually kinda neat hanging around up there.

The job was done, and it got passed by the inspectors, and the boilermakers closed up the reactor. This was my break-in more or less into reactor work.

When we got back to the shop we were asked if we wanted to go on the next big job out of the state which would be in about 3 weeks. I told them to sign me up, and Kenneth too wanted to go also and he too signed up.

The next big job would be in Washington State. In the mean time they wanted me, and Kenneth to work on as many different crews, and jobs that we could within the next 3 weeks which was fine with me because there was lots of interesting stuff to be done.

Kenneth wasn't too keen on the idea of learning new stuff, so he liked the laborer aspect of the job because he didn't have to think, and he was a big ole cornbread fed boy too. He was just a big country boy otherwise.

This is why I use to pick on him in school. That's right we went to school together, and he was a year younger than me, so that's my Mom for ya!

I drove trucks and fork lifts then went on different crews as we geared up to go out of state. I told Mom that I needed to call Joanne after a week of being there. I talked to her, and told her this is the deal. I wanted us to be together, but she was gonna have to be willing to come to Houston, and live there while I worked. I explained that I had put up with her Mom, and her family enough, and I had even went to jail over them. I told her that I had a good job that I had gotten only after the second day I was in the area, and I now wanted her up here with me. I didn't tell her about my fixing to go out of state because I wanted her to come now while things were
slower, and not later, so we made the arrangements to go pick her up in Vidor.

I told her to pack up our clothes that we would be there that weekend to get her, and I told her if she started to get edgy about it we would leave without her, and that would be it between us because it was time to sink, or swim on our own. We picked her up, and my Mom visited with Paw Paw, and Granny while we closed up the trailer, and we said our goodbyes, and left. This would be the last time that I ever saw my grandparents again, my Dad, or Uncle Bill, but that all comes later. I just like to let ya'll know that when I said goodbyes that is exactly what they turned out to be forever.

Joanne, and Mom got along great, and now we had Joanne there at Mom's small apartment, but it wasn't all that bad since Kenneth and I were gone most of the time. I of course made my way down to the creek on a regular basis to sniff paint a few hours a day, so I could keep the demons held at bay. Oh you thought that I had been doing without it? No Way!

Of course I had been doing it on a much more reduced level. I told Joanne after she had been there a week that I had to go on a job out of state, and she asked when I would be going? I told her, and she was a little skeptical at first like she thought I was pulling her leg, but I assured her that it was so.

I took her to the shop to meet the gal that ran the office, and this way she would know my wife would be coming there to pick up my checks while I was in Washington. I don't know what Kenneth did on his, but I wanted Joanne to not only have money but to be assured that I was taking care of her too. The secretary would hold your checks, or deposit them, or put them in her Bra for safe keeping if this is what you wanted done with your money. You have to understand the type of guys that worked there, they were like oil field workers, and a tough lot with a dangerous job, they were truckers and big barely laborers, bikers, ex-cons you name it, and most of them were single, go figure.

Now with lots of guys being there one day, and gone the next this gal had her job cut out for her trying to keep up with guys all over the place, so this helped her out at least a little.

This did make all of this more real for us all, and even though Joanne was sad at times she was ok with it, for a couple of reasons, and one was
that I was sniffing paint less which made her real happy, and another I was working, and making decent money for back then. Oh it wasn't a super lot, but remember I hadn't been workin at all before that, but now I was bringing in about $480.00 dollars a week, before taxes, and it would be better then that when I went out of state for I would work 7 days a week at 12-14 hours a day. Mostly 12 hours days was what we would be doing, and we also got per diem of $100.00 more a week to live on and this would avg. $700 a wk., or more depending on your pay level, and I was going to be what we called a "Reactor Rat", so my paycheck would avg. about $950 a week. That's one of the reasons I was learning more. I wanted to do the SAMS operation where you went into the reactor under a nitrogen atmosphere, for that's where the money was in this job, so things progressed, and I signed up for the SAMS program, and was shown how to suit up, and the helmet was placed on, and looked on, so once you get it on it took somebody else to get you out of it. This was a safety feature, for they couldn't have you freaking out in a reactor, and taking your helmet off.

You had to have someone put you in it, and have someone to get you out of it. Then you were watched on cameres, and someone that talked to you while you worked, for they had microphones, and speakers inside the helmet. Well to say the least it is dangerous work, but I liked it.

You didn't always have to use SAMS equipment to work inside the reactor, for once the Reactor stages were cleared, and opened all the way thru there was other work that was done that didn't require nitrogen atmosphere.

It came time for us to go, and my wife, and Mom brought us up to the shop, and we said our goodbyes. I would be gone for the next 2-3 months depending on how stuff went.

We had a shuttle bus take our crew to the Hobby Airport, and we got our wonderful tickets for coach of course, and off we went. We landed at Seattle Int. Airport, and then had a chartered bus take us to Bellingham Washington, just about out of the state of Washington. We were taken to the Scottish Lodge, and given rooms. We were paired up with a fellow co-worker. I worked the night shift from 7Pm-7Am. "Buzz", my roomy worked the day shift, and we both worked in the reactors.

We had a few days off while the boilermakers did their jobs, and with all of the unions you had to let them do their thing even if you could do
it yourself better and faster.

We got paid for doing nothing, and that was fine with me. They paid us our first paycheck of $50 cash, and that along with the money I had was now over $200 in my pocket. Joanne would be picking up the checks and paying bills, and putting the rest in the bank.

I had left Joanne with Mom, so she wouldn’t have to be alone, but Kathy talked her into moving in with her in Alvin. She had an apartment with an extra room, so Joanne stayed there, and became a live-in babysitter for Kathy watching Mandy, and Andy.

Mom got some kind of check each month, but Kathy needed help with the rent. Kathy was trying her hand at Exotic Dancing. My cousin Tawanda who had been doing it for years got her started with it, and she wasn’t doing too hot. Tawanda did good, but she had exotic good looks with coal black hair, and pretty blue eyes, and she could dance too so that helped for sure, and on the other hand Kathy although good looking was just another blonde haired blue eyed bimbo who couldn’t dance, she just got up there and gyrated, so it worked out for the both of them.

The first night we were in Bellingham we (about half of us) all went to the local watering holes that were close. We loaded an old checker cab with guys and off partying we went. We were on the boarder of Washington, and Vancouver B.C. so this would be fun.

I had a good time with the locals buying me beer. I had ended up with a co-worker named "Fido", a Tex-Mex dude that always smiled, but never talked.

He was funny, but the locals"ladies included", found my Texas accent funny as frog hair. My accent is bad even for a Texan, so I had guys, and gals buying me drinks, and having me sit at their tables. Everybody was in a party mood because it was the Queens Birthday, or something like that. Lots of the party goers came over to Bellingham to party from Vancouver B.C., so I ended up dancing with a lot of gals. This was my dancing phase of the disco years, and when I had a few beers my feet went to moving. I was left behind by my co-workers without anyway back to the Lodge, but I caught a ride with a couple of the local gals who wanted to smoke a "J" which I was smart enough to leave at the Scottish Lodge.

My co-worker "Buzz", a biker without a bike was already at the apartment, but passed out on his bed. Me and these two gals smoked a couple of joints of weed that I had brought from Tx., and one gal’s name was Liz, and she
gave me her phone number, and told me to give her a call, and she would show me around. No people I wasn't cheating on my wife, this gal was just being friendly, and believe it or not men and women can be friendly at times without sleeping with each other.

Buzz never woke up, nor knew we had gals there that night, and we got a big laugh after I told him that these gals saw him laying on the bed in his underwear. You had to just have been there. Buzz went his way that morning and I had a few days free time, so had to find a place to eat. The best place to eat was across the highway, and this would be my regular eating place since the Lodge had no restaurant.

I had met this pretty little waitress who's Mom worked at the Scottish Lodge at the front desk. Her name was Kim, and she took a liking to me, and always had me eat at their break table later on.

Now came the urges to use paint and I had to answer the monster inside, so I walked around to all the stores, and had no luck. Yuko! This meant that I was cut off of my paint! I could get by, but I would need to find other mind altering substances. As my luck would have it good ole Buzz had been looking for a local weed connection. He had found these brothers that sold weed, and told them to meet him at our room.

Buzz wasn't at the room, when these guys rode up, and I invited them in, and bought more weed, and I turned them on to a joint or two of good Texas weed which we smoked too. I asked them about some acid? They told me that their sister was the acid queen of the family, so I told them to send her by as well, for her to also bring speed too if she had it.

I bought enough weed for both Buzz and myself, but the acid, and speed was for me because I had to have some way for my brain to operate without a fix. It took me at least 12 hits of acid to give my mind the same effects as I kept with the paint. Since I couldn't afford that I would just do a hit, or two to keep me mellow and as I got use to the idea of no paint.

This gal came over later, and her name was Gail. We hit it off, and I bought some acid, and black mollies, and since I wasn't going to work we did acid, and watched TV all day. Later she took me to a store where I bought an ice cooler, and food stuffs along with beer, so I could have snacks, and lunch foods.

Things weren't all that expensive then, so I was able to stretch out
my money.

Now that I had a regular acid connection which she showed up every per diem
day where I bought some acid and speed I was feeling better, not only because
I had something to take the place of my paint but also because I wasn't doing
paint everyday either.

Buzz kept the weed coming, so we had our heads taken care of now.

There was another biker without a bike, and his name was John. He liked
Scotch whiskey, and was always drinking that stuff.

Finally the job took off, and we were soon doing our thing. We had 4
twelve story tall Silo Reactors, and 3,10 story Silo Reactors to re-charge.
Brown & Ferris Inc. had started hydroblasting the interior of the silos
that had been opened, but they quit when we got there, and we had to take
over the job. I spent almost all of my time in the reactors hydroblasting,
and we had ladders that we had pieced together that went from the top to
the bottom down the center of it.

There were three stages inside with floors. Each stage had to be washed
out, and using a high pressure hose, and nozzle while hanging onto a ladder
over 120 ft. long is a job for sure. As these open stages were cleaned and
dried they were inspected with ultra violet lights looking for cracks, and
having any cracks revelded etc.... there are lots of things happening.

When a reactor stage was being repaired we stayed out of it. These reactors
are huge. They are about 60 ft. across, and each stage aprox 35 ft. high
with 2, or 3 ft foors that had a Bell System in it. The bells weren't really
bells, but they looked like bells, but were upside down cups that acted like
baffles. A chemical reactor is like a big filter that filters out the impur-
ties out of fuel as well as dehydrates moisture out of the fuels too. That
is what the catalyst does. The catalyst we were using cost $30,000 dollars
for three 55 gal drums, and at over $2 million dollars per reactor to recharge
it is a costly situation. This was just the material alone, and we were one
of the few companies in America that could do this type of work. I felt like
I was doing something important, and either it was the pure oxygen I had
to breathe all the time while in my helmet, or while wearing a fresh air mask
my mind felt sharp, and I felt alive even with the drugs I was doing. I remem-
ber being on top of the reactor waiting for a 150 ton crane truck to bring
hoppers up, and looking out across into British Columbia at the sleepy little
town across the boarder. The low lying fog wafted in the streets, and the church steeple was showing thru while the sun was coming up over the hills, and mountains. It was so peaceful, and so beautiful, and I simply loved it.

I liked the work, and all, so while this job got into a rhythm we had our safety meetings, and we all knew our jobs. When our job was finished for the day we left.

I went to the Lodge and cleaned up then went across the street to eat breakfast which was really my supper, but I always had the munchies, so food was a good thing no matter what I ate. I was actually starting to gain weight, not fat though, but muscle, for this was a very physical job. Kim would see me heading across the street. It wasn't too hard to know when our shift got in for we had a chartered bus that parked right in front of the Lodge.

Needless to say that our company had almost all the rooms contracted for our crews. I use to look at Mt. Rainer every morning with its snow capped top gleaming in the sun.

This mountain must have been huge, for we were 50 miles from it, and I could see this thing without any kind of aid what so ever.

Kim, would have me a huge cinnamon roll drenched with melted butter hot and waiting for me at her table. I would start with that, and a cup of coffee, and eat a ham & cheese omelet with french fries, or eat a steak, and eggs.

Kenneth, would come over with others from the crew, and always want to sit with me, but we mixed that because first of all they didn't like him, nor did I, but this was their break table, so they too needed a place to sit. Kim took her break when I came to eat, and if I came in early enough I'd eat lunch with them too.

Things were going well, and I called Joanne every week sometimes twice a week just to say howdy. All these gals knew I was married, for I wore my wedding band, and believe it or not nothing was going on with any of these gals, for everything was strictly platonic. Oh I could have been unfaithful believe that, but even though I had roguish ways, and was a scoundral at times I stayed faithful to my wife. Yes I had slept around in the past, but as I also stated before too the score card was even now, and even though I could have, and may have had I been doing pain; I wasn't, and didn't step out of bounds.

We had gotten about halfway thru the overall job now, and one night
we were free flowing a reactor, which means emptying it out with an external drain type opening that we had fixed with a sliding door and flange with an 8 inch rubber sock tube about 6 ft in length.

This allowed us to run catalyst into a sealed bin that had to be at least 8ft. tall, and 6 ft. square. This fit under a scaffold that had a floor at 10ft. off the ground, and the middle section of the floor was missing, so you could load the bin with catalyst thru it, and then seal it when it was full.

This catalyst was especially volatile, and escaping dust would absorb moisture from the air so fast it started flash fires, and it looked like somebody that was using a cutting torch at times up there when the dust ate a hole thru the rubber sock.

This would now be my job for the night, and I would be the man that controled a nitrogen wand, and steam wand. I would sit over the hole in the floor watching the sealed bin fill thru a special lid that had three holes cut into it.

One hole was for the steam wand, one was for the nitrogen, and one for the material sock tube. The nitrogen stole the oxygen, so the steam could be used to settle the dust down. When it was full the gate man would be signaled by me, and he would shut everything down above me. He would then fix the holes in the rubber sock with fire retardant duct tape, and there was a fire extinguisher man that would be Kenneth tonight.

Kenneth, the gate man, and I all had fire retardant style overalls on, and we all three had to use fresh air mask that had full bubbles covering our faces. There was no way to talk to each other except by hand signals.

We had now been up there about 4 hours straight, and I kept getting burned by the dust that would land on my overalls. It would burn thru my overalls, and of course burn me, and this was happening more often because they didn't want to stop to change out the equipment. I decided to stop long enough between filling bins to get me, and the gate man the silver fire suits you see people wear in huge airport fires, and such. I couldn't wear my hardhat because of the hood and I couldn't go anywhere because I had about 150ft. of air lines tied to the scaffold, so we suited up, and got back to work. The hood that completely covered my head cut my vision down to about a 6 inch by 6 inch square, and I had my fresh air mask on under the hood too. Things were moving along ok, and this seal bin I was about three quarters of the way full
and I had to keep my eyes peeled on the opening with these probes in it, and all I could see was the opening where this catalyst was filling up.

I had both of my feet on either side of the lid that was about 2 ft. across. Unbeknown to me though Kenneth had moved to stand on the other side of the scaffold with his fire extinguishers, and must have fell asleep while on his feet because the next thing I knew was that there was a fire extinguisher that fell between my legs, and feet knocking this lid off of the hole that it covered, and because the air was now able to rush in, and I had 150 psi of steam pressure running wide open into the bin the whole thing blew up into a huge ball of fire in my face!

I couldn't see anything, and it looked like I was looking straight into a firing rocket. The world was gone, and I won't lie I heard myself screaming like a mad man, and I tried to scoot out of the fire, and all I knew was that I was on fire!

I couldn't get out of the fire because my air lines were tied to the scaffold all I could do was try to get as far away from the fire as I could.

It did no good though for the same way that I didn't want anything to pull me down while I worked up there it would also now hold me in the fire.

There were flames everywhere and all I could do was operate by feel. The fire raged up to the second story stage of the reactor, and the people above on top of the reactor started to evacuate (running for their lives) and they were dropping tools, and wrenches causing havoc on the ground. Nobody could get close to the fire with my nitrogen wand running full tilt. I was stuck! I couldn't help but think that I was about to die right now and die one of the most terrible ways I could think of. My mind went back to Vietnam and watching the Saber jets drop Napalm and thinking that it was one of the most horrible things that I had ever seen, and now I was sitting basically in a rocket blast with nowhere to go, and no way to get out of the flames. I remember trying to see around me thru this 6x6 scratched up visor and could see nothing but the flames. I could hear my fresh air mask running air into my face shield and that calmed me some and it was cool on my face while my body was heating up in the fire suit. I felt like a baked potato wrapped in tin foil and in an oven.

I tried to signal the gate man to shut the catalyst down, for the bin kept filling up adding to the fire even more, and it would soon overflow.
onto the ground, and then the fire would be totally out of control, or even worse the plant would blow us off the face of the earth!

I was able to look up, and saw that the gate man was nowhere to be seen. He had went over the edge of the scaffold taking his chances by jumping off the scaffold to the concrete below crushing his ankle when he hit the concrete.

I was still in the middle of the fire trying to save my life. I drew a deep breath, and tried to calm the panic of being burned alive. I only felt hot, and I wasn’t burning per se with pain the fire suit was doing its job, so I stood up, and shut the gate that just so happened to jam open with a solid piece of catalyst. I reached down and found the 4 pound maul the gate man had handy, and beat the gate closed! Then I had to steal my nerves, and sit back down in the fire. This took a lot of will power my friends for the fire was totally blazing me. It had a roar that I could even hear above my air mask running my air in my hood, but I couldn’t get down from the scaffold, and my course was now set, I would either put this raging fire out by my self or I would die, there was no other choices at all that I could make.

The suit was now really getting hot, and I sat down, and crossed my fingers and thought about my Aunt Betty and cousins throwing oil on me and praying for me to find God. I wasn’t very religious at the time, but could see how this might be something that I should have thought about a little more at the time. I looked up at the superstructure and watched the flames climbing higher and saw people still running. Time slowed down now to a crawl, and as I leaned back and looked up thru the flames into the black of the night I could see into the heavens, and although I could not see the stars or anything but the black of space I felt a peace come over me, and my nerves were steeled. I looked back down into the fire, and saw the fire extingusier and knew that if I didn’t get it out of the flames it would blow up and I would have even more problems. I was afraid that I would pick this thing up and it would blow the top off and it go right thru me. I saw the gauge on it past full and into the red so I grabbed this thing and slid it onto the scaffold pointing the nozzle away from me so if it blew off it wouldn’t hit me. Now I had to shut down the nitrogen so I turned off the wand, and put it behind me, and over the edge of the scaffold, and I fed it down leading with the wand, then I felt someone grab it, and run with it. I was
elated I wasn’t alone after all! There were people still there trying to save me! Yay!

Next came the steam wand. I grabbed this thing and I threw it off the other side of the scaffold in between the reactors where I was hoping nobody was, but I had to get that moisture out of there, for it was feeding the fire. When I threw that wand off it looked like a rocket taking off trailing 150 pounds of steam pressure into the cold night it sailed off the scaffold with no doubt that I had threw it off of there!

I had no more time, for the suit had become unbearable. I was burning up, and had to get away from the heat! I sat back down and reached behind me, and grabbed the sealed lid, and slammed it down on top of the sealed bin, and stood on it to try to get the locking ring on the lid, but the lid started to raise up it was going to blast me off of it! I got off the lid, and moved it over, and I saw the fire go in on itself, and I threw the lid back on where it caused a vacuum, and sucked the lid down where I then stood on it again and was able to lock the lid down. I rolled away on the scaffold and gave the signal to take the bin away because it was secure now, and someone was waiting with a big fork lift and they took off with this ticking bomb. I also saw following behind the fork lift running as fast as it could to get this thing off the refinery gorunds or away from everybody a herd of firetrucks close behind him. I also looked around and saw nothing but fire trucks everywhere!

It was about this time that Kenneth started hitting me with fire extinguishers, and he was spraying me with this yellow dust, and the bad thing was he was hitting me in the face mask so I couldn’t see anything at all and now there was a big gap in this scaffold that my feet was hanging down in and if I fell I could most likely hang myself. I was holding on and trying to get away from this gap and Kenneth kept spraying me so I couldn’t see anything.

I kept trying to show Kenneth where to spray this stuff but this dumb ass just kept spraying my mask.

I felt the scaffold jerking now, and I held on to keep from falling off it, somebody was climbing up the scaffold. I had a 10 ft. drop and was barely holding on now. The fire was out, and people were still dropping tools then I felt someone’s hands on me dragging me from the edge of the scaffolding. The night mgr. was screaming at Kenneth since he had seen what had happened.
as did the safety officer a cute blonde headed gal. I don't remember her name, but she's the one that pulled me away from the edge of the scaffold.

They had to help me get out of the hood, and someone disconnected my air line in mid breath, and they thought that I was panicking then tried to hold me down, but I shoved them away and found my air line and reconnected it. They understood then!

I was helped out of the hood, and fresh air mask, and the safety gal handed me my helmet (hardhat), and we got down from the scaffold. You could still hear tools dropping. This had all happened within a 5 minute period, but it seemed like forever.

I walked away holding my hands over my face to keep my co-workers from seeing the tears. I was shaken up so bad. My silver firesuit was now black with soot, and being it was still cool my suit was totally smoking as I walked away.

I looked back on my way to the break room at this big silver reactor with all its mercury lights shining on it, and you could see where the fire had sooted up the edge of the reactor. The fire had to have been 15 to 20 ft. tall!

I went to the break room which was just a big vacant building with machines for food and tables to sit at. There was now a ton of paperwork for the safety gal, and me as well as the night mgr. While I had been left in the room for a while I found a quiet place to smoke a joint and calm my nerves some.

Once everybody came back we started the debriefing of what had happened. Everybody was happy that I had got the fire out without help from the Cherry Point Fire Department, or the refinery's fire dept., for had they had to contain the fire and help put it out our company would have been kicked off the refinery. We chalked it up to the safety trainings although they knew I was going to die had I not got the fire out the way I did.

They didn't fire Kenneth, but they did keep him away from me, and begged me to finish out the shift, and he would get me relief as soon as the next shift got there. I said NO WAY BUDDY!! He said that no one would go up there now after they saw what they did. I told him guess what I don't want to go back up either, Man I almost died up there not ten minutes ago!!

He then said look Tim if you go back up there and finish this shift out with a new crew I would for the rest of the time at this job basically work where I wanted, and take off on per diem days, but still get paid a full pay for everyday whether I was there or not. He said that we would
have to do this on the cool but that he would see to it that it happened.

That worked for me! I took him up on the deal, and my co-worker that had crushed his ankle came by to tell me goodbye, for he had been given a bus ticket home, and he would be shop bound when he got back to Texas, and to Pearland. I gave him a couple of joints for his trip home. They did at least take care of his broken ankle before sending him home which was nice of them too.

After I got back up there on this scaffold I wore my SAMS helmet with my fire suit, so I could talk to the safety officer whom stayed on the scaffold now with us keeping the new fire extinguisher guy alert as well as the gate man. Everybody had on firesuits now, and the rest of the shift went without a hitch.

I got cleaned up after getting back to the lodge, and went back to the restaurant. Kim as always gave me the hook-up on my cinnamon roll, and as always she found me the biggest ones. She could tell something was up, so after we got my food I told her what had happened, and it had even made the news that morning, and those that could take a few minutes came over to hear the story.

As the rest of the crew got there the stories took on new proportions of what they saw, and was doing during the fire, so there was now more than one perspective of what had happened.

You have to understand that when we invaded this small restaurant we pretty much became its rush hour, for we pretty much filled up the place, and so we had lots of lee way there, for this place would not have been near as busy without us, so we were well welcomed thus the story that day was of the fire. I got a free breakfast out of the deal!

Kenneth on the otherhand didn't show up. As things went after that at work my manager was good at his word.

Every three days we got our perdiem, and so when it was time to check in for our shift I would get on the bus to go on our shift. There was another dude that came on board, and took our names, so that we were paid our 12 hours for our shift.

I'd ride our bus out to the refinery then come back to the lodge. I called Liz the gal that I'd met the first night there, and she would either come over to help me go shopping, or wash clothes then we would go get something to eat.
Buzz would want for her to bring her blond headed friend, and we would all go to dinner in town, which was just a few blocks away from the Lodge.

During the day I would have got my acid from the Acid Queen, and Buzz would pay me for his part of the weed I bought for the both of us, so we always had plenty of weed.

I was doing without my paint, and started gaining some weight, but that was Kim's fault because she always made sure I had lots of food, and as a matter of fact this restaurant started a buffet at lunch for all you eat, or you could order the regular stuff, so I was eating like a home grown pig.

This still doesn't mean that I wasn't wanting my paint though, and instead of using acid all the time I opted to eat some of the wanting away.

I did want paint really bad. I thought about it, I dreamed about it, and more than once wanted to quit work, and strike out across the country hitch hiking to find a place that had the kind of paint I needed, or at least thought that I needed.

One of the main reasons that I didn't really know just how far I would have to go before I found my first can, and with me I had to have paint to even start out on the road, so I felt I was kinda stuck this far north, and besides that not being in a paint cloud, or being shot at in a helicopter made this rather pleasant.

The people of Bellingham were nice as could be to this ole Texas boy. I was an addict though, and that took almost my every waking, and sleeping hours of my attention. I could and did postpone my feelings by dulling the want with acid, or LSD, and weed, but the demons that wanted the paint in my system wanted the paint back in there, and there was no escaping it, and I was hopelessly hooked on the Tolulene, and the only place I knew to get it was that certain paint that I used all the time. I figured it this way at least I had my acid to take the place of the paint.

Back at work I started running the tool trailer, as the manager had stated I could work whatever job I wanted, so I opted for this. This allowed me some relaxing time. I had a radio, and a large pot, or urn of hot tea, and one for coffee, and another for just hot water for people to make CoCo with.

This was some of the stuff that I had to make sure we kept going, for
it was still real cool at night being early spring, and I had brought my Parka with me which was a good idea for most of the guys had to go buy work coats after we got there. They had not thought ahead and was use to Texas weather and when they got to where we were they wished they too had decided to carry the extra weight of a coat too.

The trailer wasn't the break room, but this is where the good looking safety officer liked to hang out as well as the manager at night. When guys checked out tools, they usually stayed there to warm up with a cup of Joe, or hot tea and smoke a cig, once this was done then off they would go again.

We finished our job at Washington without anymore drama, and as the job wound down things were getting broken down, and loaded up and ready to ship. My boss wanted me to drive one of the 18 wheelers back to Texas, but I wasn't having that without my paint although it would have been fun spending their money all across the U.S. stopping at night with the other trucks, and truckers. I wanted to get back to Texas my addiction wanted to be satisfied, and since it was now getting close to getting cranked back up I was going to go where I could get this paint as fast as possible, so we were set to leave by a jet on May 18, 1980, and I figured that a jet was a pretty fast way of getting back to Texas, so I was set to do just that.
Now the last few days that we were in Wash. St. we mostly partied, we had the drivers pulling out, but our crews that worked with the reactors had to be the last since they wanted everything to pass on the startup of the reactors before everybody left. There wasn't any trouble, and on the last day we were there I sat with Buzz's friend John drinking his Scotch whiskey. I'm not into drinking straight whiskey like that, so I smoked a couple of joints, and laughed about the night he had ran over me with a fork lift, which wasn't funny at the time, but it was when we talked about it then.

We were leaving at 1 Pm to go to Settle on our bus. We were set to leave Settle at midnight on our flight, and we still had a few hours to drive before that, but that would be ok. Everybody was in party mode now, and we were having a good time. We were saying our goodbyes to everybody we had been seeing daily for the last two months or so. I had talked to my wife the night before, and she knew I would be travelling for the next day, or so coming home, so I hadn't talked to her that day.

This was now May 18, 1980, and I've stated this date for a reason as you will see. On our way back to Settle we continued to party basically we drank beer, and smoked the few joints we had left. We had a chartered bus, so the bus driver had been with us this whole time and was now use to us reactor rats and so was cool about all of this.

I kept taking pictures on the way back to Seattle, and they were on slides, or for a slide projector film which I didn't know at the time, but I kept taking pictures and noticed how dark it was getting. I thought it was strange that it was already getting dark but I knew that this couldn't be because we had only left about 1 Pm. and hadn't been on the road that long. Now I nor most of us there hadn't been watching TV that day, so I had no idea anything was going on. We made a beer stop somewhere between Bellingham, and Seattle, and we all got out to buy cigs. and booze. Buzz let a couple of gals break in line between me, and him because the line was long with all of us in the store. They liked the cologne I was wearing.
and they tried to talk me into staying, and partying with them a few
days. I can't say that I didn't think about it, for the seemed like fun
gals, and I reiterate here that the folks in Washington St. was pretty
friendly, but all in all I loaded up in the bus, and off we went again.

We didn't stop again. Once we got to Seattle travelling mostly in
the dark now it was really dark too, by the time that we had got to Seattle.

Once we loaded up on the Red Eye flight to Texas John and I the guy
I'd partied with all that day had seats together, and started sipping
scotch wiskey again. We weren't loud, but we talked a lot. After we took
off, and the seat belt lights went off the pilot was making an announcement
about looking out of the left hand side of the plane, and that what looked
like small towns, and villages was actually fires on the mountain.

I told John that I was gonna see what the pilot was talking about,
and found a window with only a couple of gals looking out. I squeezed
in and checked it out, and sure enough there was fires all over, and
as we watched we could see the start of a fluorescent orange crescent
shape that grew more round as we got closer until it filled the window.

I asked these gals what the hell we was looking at? They said that
Mount St. Helen had eruptted that day, and it was serious. I didn't even
know we had active volcano's in the U.S., but found out we did have.

It wasn't until after I got home that I found out how devastating
it had been, and what had gone on after the erruption. When I finally
figured out somethings one of the things that pissed me off was the fact
that we were flying at 34 thousand feet, and this volcano was blowing
soot, and ash 60 thousand feet into the air which could have caused a
fire out on the jet! Had I known what I know now I probaly needed to get
some good lawyers later that would have been deep in the airlines pockets,
but that is jumping ahead.

After we got back to Texas, and we got settled in Kenneth, and I didn't
speak a lot after that fire although we spoke a little, for we basically
went our seperate ways. I went to Kathy's, and Kenneth to Mom's.

Mom, and Joanne had came to pick us up. It's a good thing we finally
got out of the airport, because ole John and I was pretty drunk. The
stewardess quit serving us booze around an hour after we took off, so
when we had a lay over in Dallas, Tx. John told the pilot that he has
medicine in his bag that he needed, and the pilot believe it or not had the baggage handlers find his luggage, and bring it to him to keep under his seat. Sure enough he had medicine in it alright in the guise of a full bottle of scotch whiskey, and we finished it off before we hit the ground in Houston about 45 minutes later. Of course doing something like this caused this stuff to kick in pretty good and by the time we got on the ground we were snookered, or outright drunk, and to keep from getting arrested for Public Intox. we moved from gate to gate trying to find our shuttle ride back to Pearland. They were suppose to have been there waiting for us when we hit the ground but they were late getting there thus we had to stay one step ahead of the cops at the airport.

It was late, but finally we had a few vans show up, and off we went, but not before we filed a complaint on those snobby stewardess'. They had actually went by the desk as we were filing the paperwork, and we were happy to point our fingers at them in their plain sight, and they didn't like that one bit, but I didn't care, and as a matter of fact I was so sloppy drunk that I didn't care about a lot of things. You might have noticed that there is a good reason that you don't mix firewater and injun blood and that is the reason. My ole Dad always told me that I had to much Indian in me to be messing around with booz, and at this time I believed him.

After we got home, and slept a little, and ate a lot then made some time with the wifypooh I called the shop, and found out what my next shift was going to be, and I started working a regular shift again. We were going to be spending the rest of May, and June in the Houston area the be heading overseas in late July, or August, and would be there for the next 6-8 months in Germany, and then France, and back to Austria.

Joanne wasn't hearing any of that though. She didn't want me to go overseas, but I wanted to. The money was going to be great, and I would double what I was making here in the states, and I would finally get to see Germany.

I was at one time suppose to have been stationed there. Joanne thought that I would go over there, and run off with some good looking small gal and leave her because she had gotten over 200 pounds now. I told her heck if I was gonna do that I didn't need to go overseas to do that!
I told her that she was just being silly, and that I had a plan. We, or I could go over there, and get us an apartment, and have my checks diverted to there. The per diem would be aprox. $600 a week alone, and I was sure that we could afford it, but Joanne hated the idea of going to Houston much less flying across half the world to see Europe, so I told her that I would find another job, because after telling her about the fire that I had been in she really thought this job was too dangerous.

I should have went overseas though, for my life would end in 1980 as you will see.

I worked a little while longer at R.S.I.I. then went basically across the street, and got a job at a place called Colona Thread Protectors as a truck driver, and Field Foreman. I'll explain that in a few. What being a field foreman was meant that I was over the iron piles in the yard.

This company dealt with reconditioning pipe thread protectors. These are basically caps, or collars that get screwed onto the ends of oil field pipe to keep the screw ends from damage thus these collars are called thread protectors. We picked them up as salvage cleaned then up checked to see if they were still round and then wire brushed them and dipped them in diesel oil, so they wouldn't rust then resold them as reconditioned.

The iron piles were these same protectors except they weren't reconditioned, and there were about 15 illegals, or wetbecks as they were called then that was my crew. The funny thing was that I didn't speak spanish, or mexican lingo, and they couldn't speak English at all!

These guys all lived in a trailerhouse together some place, and all rode together to work in one car. Yep one car big enough was the big Chevy they had. Anyway there was just one big ole guy that could barely speak some broken English, and I latched onto him and made him a sub foreman, and now I could finally get it across to him what I needed, and he would in turn tell the guys what I needed on my truck.

This got down to the real basics when I had to load about 5,000 thread protectors that amounted to these guys holding up one finger each time they got 100 protectors counted out, and then I used the old fashion stick figures one mark was 100, and so on. This was really high math for most of these guys and I was proud of them for they always got it
right and never got me in trouble for shorting a customer, maybe they
even gave them more than they called for, but either way we made it work.

I think one of the reasons that this worked was because the guy I
had helping me told them that these counts had to be right, because I
would trust them, and when I off loaded these things they were recounted,
and I'd better not be made to look like an ass out on the job site, for
if I was that I'd call the I.N.S., which I wouldn't have done, but they
didn't know that and since it was their buddy that told them that they
worked their butts off. In return these guys were allowed to build little
shade, or cardboard lean-to's and take a siesta while I was gone. These
guys had to get my truck loaded when I got back, and that meant get right
back on it when I drove up. I wanted a fast turnaround and wasn't going
to be waiting around while daylight burned and they were rested up so
they would hop to it as fast as I came in.

I talked to the shop foreman, and we had an agreement that he wouldn't
use my guys in the shop while I was gone this way they were always rested
when I drove up. This might sound counter-productive, but it wasn't, for
if these guys were rested I could get 20,000 pounds of steel thread prot-
ectors loaded in an hour if they weren't it might take 2-3 hours. This
work is all done in the sun, and by hand I might add, and these piles
of iron radiate heat from all around you, and this makes it really danger-
ous to stand out there for so long to do this job, where 1 hour even
I could stay with them.

I was always working without a shirt, so was as dark as they were,
for I am part Indian myself and I really tan dark.

During lunch these guys liked to drink a few beers, and eat home made
burritos that actually consisted of a flour tortilla, and a piece of
meat, and a pepper along with a few beans thrown in for good measure.

They gave me a couple of these, but they were too hot to eat "pepper-
wise", which brought all of them to tears laughing at me when I would
take a bite of these things. Needless to say we all got along fine.

You know what was weird about all of this was the fact that they had
a guy there that could speak Spanish like nobodies buiness but they
wouldn't listen to this guy because nobody liked him for he was kinda
like ole Kenneth and he had a nature that just grated on your nerves,
and since I had been in the Army and a Sgt. I knew how to deal with people better than this guy did, and I treated these guys like humans and they responded to this.

Shortly after I got to working there Robert Plant the shop foreman wanted me to use his wife Margie as my backup driver which was okay with me. At the time I was 23 years old, and Margie was somewhere in her early, or mid 40's, and the mother of six kids. As you might have figured out by now this was a very physical job, and the stuff that was loaded on the truck by my crew I had to off-load, and I usually couldn't dump them because it bent them, so they were off-loaded by hand all be it I could do that faster than it could be loaded on. Anyway this would be be good work for Margie who liked the outside work plus it kept the pounds melted away.

I had finally started gaining muscle mass after I left to go to Washington. I had weighed approx. 140-155 lbs ever since I could remember, and I was now about 185 lbs, and solid as a rock. Yes I still sniffed paint everyday, but not as much as I used to, but my addiction wouldn't let go that easy after work I had a few places that I went on foot to sniff paint. It was basically an old horse barn that hadn't been used in so long it was about to fall down, but it was only a little ways away from out apartments, but at work I had Margie, and I couldn't sniff paint then.

Joanne found out that Margie was my backup driver, and she knew that Sydney, and his wife worked there, and the field manager with his wife too, so she wanted to work there too. Now these other people all worked in the office, so the only two places she could work was in the iron piles, or the shop.

Robert worked high school guys, or younger men in the shop, and some hispanic guys, so I asked Robert to put her to work, for the extra money was always welcomed, and it wouldn't hurt Joanne to drop a few pounds too, for she had now got to around 240 lbs.

There was no way that she could be my backup driver, for you at first had to have a commercial drivers license, and second you had to know how to drive a truck which Margie did, but Joanne didn't, and trying
to learn in Houston rush hour traffic is a No-No. Then there was the work of unloading the truck, so I worked with Roberts wife, and he worked with mine, while these younger guys liked working also with my wife in the shop, for they all tried to impress her by working their tails off, and flirting with her in the ways these younger guys liked to do. Joanne had a rather big bust line, and the guys being guys that's for sure. It got the work done so it was a win win situation because I knew that she wouldn't do anything about the flirting and it brought up her self esteem, and so they produced like crazy in the shop which made everybody happy.

The only gripe Margie had was that I could, and did work without my shirt on. I did this so I wouldn't have to drive in a sweaty dirty shirt on, and mess up the seats in the truck plus I liked it.

Margie didn't mind that what she minded was the fact that she couldn't do it too. I asked her why not? All she had to do was wear a wife beater tee shirt, or a bathing suit top, but she was adverse to that idea because of something to do with uneven tan lines which was worse to her than sweating. We kept salt pills, and took them each morning, and had ice water, and took lots of breaks. Me? I was use to it, and I worked until the truck was unloaded, or at times stopped to smoke a cig, so Margie too would be able to take longer break. I kept the truck running with the A/C on at all times. We don't have too bad of winters in Texas, but the trade off is heck to pay when it comes to Texas summers, and 100° plus heat.

When we were done, and then starting to head back to the shop which depending on traffic could take a while Margie as well as me would be radiating heat from being out in the sun. Margie just had to ask one day if it would bother me if she cooled the girls, off, and she said that she was burning up. I wasn't sure at first about what she meant, but when she opened up her shirt, and got right in front of her A/C vent holding open her shirt, so that all the air blowing out would blow on her chest/bust, and bra, so it helped dry things off, and out. I just told her I guess that you gotta do what you gotta do. Don't get me wrong she wasn't flashing me her boobs, for she kept them out of sight, but we both thought it was best to keep this between us, but she did cool them puppies off from then on, and I didn't object because I knew how
hot it was doing the type of work that we was doing, and I knew that the both of us had different areas that I wished I too could hang in front of the A/C vent but couldn't, so being a man and a woman has different things that need cooling down, and that was just that, and being in the same work you just had to not be so sensitive and had to be able to work together.

The guys at the shop liked my wife, and she did work hard I'll give her that for sure, and Margie didn't always go with me she also helped in the shop, and worked with Joanne, and the guys.

One day I came in while one of these school guys was coming out of the shop heading to the doctor's office. I asked him what had happened? He showed me the big staple that was stapled thru the meaty part of his hand. These are big staples that staple boxes together with a pneumatic gun. Well it seems Joanne's gun jammed, and this guy was gonna help her out, and he did she stapled his hand, and while he was trying to figure out why her gun wasn't working. He was laughing about it although you could tell it hurt. He said that Joanne was really sorry, and had started to cry, but he laughed it off, and so he headed to the doctor.

I pulled my truck in, and picked up my trip ticket logged in, and started my crew loading my truck. Everybody was making fun at what had happened, but Joanne was not taking it too good until I got there, and had told her that I had talked to the little dude that she had stapled, and as you talked about it you couldn't keep from making jokes about it, and before you knew it everybody was laughing about it. What Joanne didn't realize was that this was a man's job, and school kids at that, they laugh at each other even if they break a bone, and she had stapled his hand, and she couldn't deny that, so it was funny, and when the young Hispanic guy ame back we were all eating, and he didn't help matters because he was one of those guys that always smiled at everything, and he had to tell everyone how his doctor visit went, and how he had to get the staple out which was basically with a pair of pliers.

This of course brought on more jokes. This is a different type of work than Joanne was use to because she had always done nursing.

After about a month, or so there Robert, had Margie HotShot a load by herself, and I was asked to go up front with him. I cleaned up, and I went in with Robert where Robert, Sydney, and the Field manager, and
their wives all congratulated me on a promotion to a Field Rep. position that covered Robert's old area a 13 county spread that covered hundreds of miles. They had put me in to see if I could pass the security for the job, and out of all the field reps only two people had passed all their security, and that was Robert and myself.

The security was ran by our mother companies of "Wickoff Steel, and Ammaco Pittsburg Refinery Systems". This meant that I was going to take over my own office, and yard now.

The reason for this type of security was because I would be responsible for millions of dollars worth of company checks: blank checks at that as well as a ring of master keys that allowed me to open just about any key lock made. I would also have a yard and office along with all the equipment that I would be responsible for too as well as my own Bob Tail truck. The yard and office was in a place called Van Valack, Texas. It was about a mile out of Bay City about 40, or 50 miles from Pearland maybe more.

Robert had this area at first, but had hurt his back, and the guy that was trying to do the job wasn't doing it, so the area was overflowing with people needing protectors picked up, and delivered.

Everybody at the shop was happy about my getting this new job, but I wasn't so sure what I was in for. I was going to be covering an area about the size of Vermont close to 9,500 sq. miles by myself. That might sound like the whole state of Texas, but then again people don't realize how big Texas is, and at 261,797 sq. miles that Texas is my area was only a part of this big area, but for me to cover an area that size that stretched from Sabine Pass, to Lampasses, to La Grange it was huge.

Joanne and I would have to move to Van Valack, Texas, which meant I had to go there, and see what was what.

One day shortly after that the Field Manager Bert took me to Van Valack. the way this place is really spelt is "VanValac", but I always add a "K" for some reason.

Bert took me to this area. Bert was the other Field Rep.'s check signer but not mine, for I was allowed basically to be on my own and with that big of an area Bert would have a hard time keeping up with me anyway.

We went around the one blinking light town, and we started me some
expense accounts, for ice, my truck repair, etc.... I also took over the postal box for our company.

While we was out and about I was taken to my yard, and office, and the first thing I was going to have to do was get a couple of 18 wheelers there, and transfer material to Pearland for reconditioning. My job now would to be basically going out to the oil rigs, and make deals to pick up expelled thread protectors then ship them, and have them reconditioned where they in turn would deliver them to people that needed them, and it wasn't beyond reason that some of these same protectors ended right back at a future oil rig that I would pick up again from another oil rig.

My job was to recover as much Coloma material as possible, and scrap the foreign material if possible, and give these companies less salvage price which prompted other field reps for the oil rigs to use our stuff, otherwise we flooded the market with out material.

To get the oil companies reps. favor Robert gave me his little black book. He literally had a little black book too, but not full of gals names, but local field reps for the oil rigs that he bought gifts for to ensure we kept the exclusive rights to buy their stuff. These big oil companies could care less about these little salvage checks of $300-$500 dollars a pop when they spent millions a day to run a rig.

These companies just left these protectors to rust when they closed down a rig. They didn't care what was done with them, so the field reps found they could make extra cash selling this stuff off when they were done with them. They would use these checks to help buy stuff for rig parties like B.B.Q, and Beer, or just put it in their pockets. When the rig was pulled out, and I used my rig reports to find a vacant site I picked up the piles of protectors, and wrote a check, and mailed it to the company with a note of where they had been taken from. That's where all these keys came in. Oil Rigs could be anywhere, out in the middle of rice fields, or cow pastures the woods just where ever, and these rig reports only gave a description of where it had been. It was up to me to find where they had been stationed at after they had pulled out.

This would be right down my alley, and there would be paint sniffing
all the way every day now.

One day Margie, and I was eating at a roadside park after we had unloaded the truck. Margie asked me if she could ask me something very personal? I told her I didn't mind. She started asking if I had ever slept around on Joanne? I started to thinking maybe she and Joanne were trying to test me to see if I would lie about shacking up with Pam that time, so I just told Margie that me and Joanne had then had our problems, and ups and downs in the past. Then I asked her why she wanted to know?

I thought maybe Margie wanted to test the waters, and see if I would bite at the bait although Margie wasn't a bad looking gal, or flabby she reminded me of my Mom some in looks and some in actions, so it would be easy to not go astray, but Margie had something else in mind all together that I then knew wasn't any plan of Joanne's.

Margie said she wanted me to do her a really big favor. I said sure if I could, and she said look Tim don't think bag of me when I ask this, but I think I can trust you with this. I said what is it Margie? Now being serious. She then told me of something that I knew was a sad fact, for she told me that she had a 19 year old daughter living in Van Valac that had been led into Lesbianism by this gal twice her age, and she wanted me to meet her not to start a relationship like leave my wife for, but she wanted me to plow her daughter like a corn field a few times, or a bunch of times whatever it took to make her realize that women weren't suppose to be with women, and that men, and women were suppose to have sex together, not the Sally, and Sue's. She said please don't say no Tim, and just think about it. She said that she would rather see her come up pregnant, and move back home than her playing lickiddy split with this bull dyke. She then said she wanted me to meet her, and not to tell a living soul about this. I said how am I going to meet her, and not have Joanne know? She said I'll introduce you both to her, and you have to find a place to stay anyway right? I said yes, and she said good let's go up there this weekend with Joanne, and I'll show you around then you can talk to our old landlord about a trailer, so I agreed only to meet her not to plow her like a corn field, but I didn't tell her no, and a man being a man, and a poon hound like myself I was actually truthfully thinking about it, and I even told Margie this too!It's not everyday
that a man gets the approval of a mother to just hound dog their daughters
I knew how hard it must have been for Margie to approach me with this
problem too so I took it seriously. I even told Margie while I was thinking
about this maybe doing the 38 year old might be a good challenge too!
As a matter of fact doing all the lesbo's there might be fun! This broke
the tension, and I told her that I would seriously think about having
coitus with her renegade daughter.

We did go that weekend to VanValac, and I rented a trailer a block
from my yard within sight of it actually. There was a pawn shop, and
something like a bar/combo restaurant tied to this pawn shop too that
was owned and ran by the bull dyke that had led Margie's daughter astray.

After meeting her I wasn't so sure about trying to do this gal afterall
for she was small with short hair, and wore pants with her shirt tucked
in, and a big western belt, cowboy boots, and the real kicker was even
my wife thought she was a dude. We even hit it off though because the
gal was playing at being mannish, and it was so funny. It was like a
guy that tries to play like a gal for they exaggerate everything they
do.

This gal standing next to me looked like she was even shorter and
because I was built like the Rock at the time then she was dwarfed standing
next to my almost 6ft. frame and 185 lbs. She would hit my arm giving a mock punch when
she said something she thought only guys would understand and find out I was solid, and
see that I was really solid as I looked. Her eyes kinda widened at that.

I did enjoy talking to the gal too regardless of what she did for
she had a good personality and it was a good thing too because she was
an ugly ole thang too! Her place was right across the road from my yard.

We then went to see Margie's daughter. Margie was driving, and her
daughter came up to hug her in the car. I was riding shotgun, Joanne
was in the middle. We talked about 20 minutes, and she was a rather pretty
dishwater blond with a nice shape too, and we laughed, and joked. Margie
told her that I was taking over her Dad's old area, and that I could
use some help with the yard as well as to meet people around town. Margie
has effectively set us up for alone time right in front of Joanne, and
Joanne didn't even realize that this had happened! I saw now that Margie
was serious about me "Ronering", her daughter! The message I was recieving
was the fact that this gal was Bi-Sexual, and not fully a Lesbian, so I didn't know if this would work, but I was honestly thinking Why Not? I know it was wrong, but I never said that I made the right choices in life, and of course Margie was a good friend, so how could I let her down? I ask ya? So with that in mind I got tickled at how freindly my wife, and Margie's daughter was, and noticed that more than once that she was not checking me out that much but had also been checking out my wife's boobs. I saw her eyes travel there more than once, and Margie did too, and we started messing with Joanne talking about how freindly she and Margie's girl was, and we then told her that she was being checked out which she didn't understand till Margie told her that her daughter wanted to eat her up, and then she told her that she was a lesbian. This was the days that all this stuff was in the closet, so to speak. I know why Margie had told her this about her daughter too and that was so that Joanne wouldn't care if she worked with me at the yard if she knew that all this gal liked was other gals.

As it came to pass though I didn't ever see Margie's daughter, or anybody else for that matter. When Joanne and I moved we didn't have a car, and I used the International Bob Tail truck that belonged to the company to get around in.

Joanne could walk to my yard within a few minutes, and there was a store across the street then the post office, and as I stated before if Joanne wanted some real action then the bull dyke bar was across the street from my yard if she wanted a cold one. As I stated before this was a very small town.

I can't remember why, but Kathy my sister wanted us to take her kids with us. I didn't mind neither was in school one being about 5 years old, and the other a little less than two yrs. of age. Mandy my niece, and Andy was both a lot of fun, and they were good kids, but it was hot, and trailer we had rented had an A/C, but it needed some duct work, so we only had fans to keep us cool. The real problem with all of this is the fact that I would be gone from before daylight, and wouldn't be home again until around midnight each night. I stayed on the road, and all I could do was drop my load every morning, and then when the kids got up, and were fed she would then take them to my yard, and let them
play in my office which had A/C, and a phone and it was completely fenced in.

Joanne, would stack up the thread protectors that I got the day before so I could park the truck in the yard that night, and do the same thing again in the next day. I was able to pay Joanne as contract labor at $350 a week which helped us out too. I was now paid a salary plus bonuses for getting more than 20,000 pounds of colona material picked up a month. This wasn't hard to do, and since the area was flooded with the stuff, and the dude that worked this area before me was really lazy I would be able to do this in no time.

I had to clear my yard of material, and would call in an 18 wheeler, and load it up do a material transfer, and send it to Pearland to be reconditioned. I had lots of rigs that pulled in and out, and would, need to be filled when they got there. I would use this time to take Joanne and the kiddos to town and get food and stuff that we needed, and then stay at the office and do paperwork, as well as line up my next day travels.

I had no time to go chasing tail no matter how much it might appeal to me at times, and I would have appreciated a little down time now because I was really working my arse off by myself at this job and trying to cover this large of an area.

I would drive sometimes 4-5 hours out from the yard to find an oil rig that had pulled out and I would have to go find them, or I could pick them up when I needed to. I couldn't stay out all night for I had an expense account to stay in a motel at night if I was a long way from home but since Joanne was alone and had the kids even if I had to drive 8 hours total and work all day to fill the truck I still came home.

I loaded my truck by hand of course, and this truck could handle 45,000 thousand pounds of material and I would load this truck so full that it couldn't take another pound, and I did this and then drove back to my yard.

Some of these places I went to were so far out in the boonies that families of deer would stand at the tree lines, and watch me throw thread protectors all day in my truck.

If I was dark before I was really dark now, so dark that you couldn't
see my tattoos. I was always sunburned, criso burned, and wind burned all at the same time, and truthfully I don’t know why I didn’t have a heat stroke, or heart attack out there the way I worked. I sniffed paint all the while that I drove out to these places, and when I worked I kept the truck running to keep the A/C going, and would keep a bag of paint sitting just inside the door, and after I would finish one size of protectors I would sit on the running board, and open the door, so cool air would waft down on my back, and I would sniff paint for about 30 minutes while my body cooled down. I also used this time to figure out what the amount to weight ratio was of the protectors weighed as I knew what each protector weighed all I had to do was figure out how many of what I had and get the total weight of my haul, and it was easier doing it this way than waiting till I got back and did it all at one time.

I would drink some water, and go back to work doing this all over again until this truck was loaded down or I had finished this rig site.

If there was room and I had another rig in the area I would go to it and then load the truck some more, or load it till it couldn’t hold any more.

Then I would clean up what I could and I would drive it all back to my yard. This was grueling work, and believe it or not I was still in good shape regardless of what I was doing to my body, and kidneys with this paint.

I had gained enough weight that I held at about 195 pounds and I was a solid mass of muscle. I still had a 32 inch waist, but I was large in my top wearing no less than a 3x shirt. I only went to these distant areas maybe once a week, but no more than twice a week it was just too hard on me with all the driving, and loading of the truck I did. Had I been able to stay in a motel at night and drive back in the morning that would have been just fine but since I needed to be back home each day I headed that way no matter how long a drive it was.

Even though it would be late Joanne knew that I would be heading her way, and would I would be home sometime that night. One day that I got home about 5:30 Pm Joanne told me that Andy had got into a Fire Ant hill outside, and that he had been bitten by them.

Little Andy about the time she was telling me this came walking in
the room without his shirt on, and he looked pitiful, and I went right to him and picked him up, and loaded everybody up in my truck and took them to the Bay City Hospital, so that they could take a look at Andy.

He was in good spirits, but irritated by the bites. I was getting info on Andy from Kathy on the phone when a nurse came up, and started talking to me about contacting C.P.S. for she had thought that he looked like he had been scalded by hot water, and of course I was the culprit and needless to say I got plum stupid on this gal. Joanne took over the phone while I cranked up the dumbass, and got on these dummies until the doctor came out, and tried to find out what was going on.

The doctor told the nurse to go take care of other business. I told them that they were too eager to call the C.P.S. on people, and the nurse took off. The doctor knew that Andy had ant bites. This is Texas, and if a kid plays outside there is a chance he or she will get bug bite, or wasp stung, but you don't call the C.P.S. over that, or on a person trying to get the kid medical attention!

Andy was ok, and they gave him some allergy meds, and after a few hours we left. I didn't see that stupid nurse again, and had I done so I may have ended up in jail for smacking her, she is the exact reason people make up dumb blond jokes.

While we were all already in town we all went to the store and bought some goodies and food for the week. This gave the kiddos some more time in the A/C and then I took them to get an ice cream at the local Dairy Queen, then we went home. While Joanne took care of the kids and loaded up the pantry and such I got some gas out of the truck and killed a few ants, I actually went hunting ants I went to anything that look like an ant hill stomped it and poured gas on it when the mean little buggers came running out. The gas killed the grass too where I poured it, but that wasn't a concern of mine. The gas did a right fine job of ridding us of ants.

One day I had been loading material in the area, and had about 25,000 thousand pounds on my truck when I came upon the Field Manager on the side of the road. I pulled over, and got out, and talked to him. He was impressed because first off it was only 9 Am. He knew this wasn't a load from the day before because he had been by my yard, and talked to Joanne
because she was still there waiting on me to return. She had been stacking up thread protectors from the day before. He had talked to her thus knew approximately where I had went. I was on my way back to drop the load, and head out again. Bert wanted to talk to me about closing my yard down because it was just too big an area for one person besides this area could be split up between the Alice, Texas yard, and the Pearland Yard. The company had 5 other Field Reps there, and he wanted to have me open up a new area, and yard in East Texas, so this is why he needed to talk to me.

He said I should practice calling in more, and I just laughed, and asked him if I looked like I had time to call in to get extra work!

Joanne liked the idea of opening a yard in East Texas, because it would put her closer to home, so we closed my yard, got the material transferred to Pearland, and I moved everybody back to Pearland, and to Kathy's I bought a Grand Torino Ford car like the one "Starsky & Hutch" used to drive in their show except it was sage green, and not a two tone.

Joanne was glad to be back in the Houston area, and able to go back to work at the Pearland yard. I was still making long jaunts back and forth to my old yard transferring material to Pearland. I liked all the driving time, and was able to sniff paint each day till my brains melted. It might seem strange that I could sniff the amount of paint I did, and handle my job, and truck etc.... but I did, and I functioned well on paint, the bad thing though is I made some stupid, stupid choices in some that I would have never made while in my right mind.

I was wanting to find out what area they wanted me to open up, so after talking to the District Manager Sydney he told me the Crockett Texas area. This was great, for my grandfather had a place in Ratcliff, Tx. which was about a mile out side of Crockett. He had land there that we only used as a hunting lodge which had an old trailerhouse on it. Paw Paw had a couple of small businesses there at one time in Ratcliff, he had a small mechanic shop, and a small logging outfit which eventually both went under. He still had the land though, so I would talk to him about developing his property setting up a yard, and office, then refurbishing his old trailer which we used during deer hunting.

I had the green light for all of this, and it would give my old grand-
parents some spending money each month without making them work for it plus being their grandson they got to keep their property because I would lease it, and fix the place up, so this was a win, win situation.

Of course it is also at this time that I would make some hugely dumb choices that would change my life forever, and as fate would have it I would never get to open that yard and office, nor be able to live life ever again as I once did, and that was free.
CHAPTER 20

One of the reasons I wasn't able to do this was because of a stupid stunt that I pulled over a $75 dollar weed deal I had made. I got burnt on a ¼ pound of weed I was buying to smoke, and what happened was my sisters old boyfriend got me a hook up on weed. He got us to smoke some good weed then sold us some bunk weed that amounted to nothing.

I told Ted, Kathy's boyfriend that his friend had pulled the ole switch on me, and I wanted my money back, and this he didn't do, so a short time later giving him a little time to forget about me I went to his house (the guy that burnt me), while he had taken off to go to Saudi Arabia for twenty eight days, so he could make some more dope deals.

I was going to get my $75 dollars out of his stereo, or whatever I could find to sell in his house. The bad thing was his girlfriend happened to be there that day for it was about 9Am. in the morning. She was there hanging pictures in the back room when I went in thru the front door using my lockblade to enter the house. I ran across her in the back room which scared me as much as it did her, and she took off, and went by me leaving me only her shirt tail to catch. I stopped her at the door, and held her until she quietened down. I told her just to behave because I said I wasn't there to hurt her... and to shut up while I thought about this.

She told me to take her money, but I told her I wasn't there for her money. She didn't know me, so I was ok on that point, and being high I decided that because she had already almost got out the door on me that the best way for me to get away without this gal running out behind me was to make her get out of her clothes, so I took her back to the back of the house, and cut the phone cords, then I told her to undress, and throw her clothes across the room. I didn't want to tie her up, or tape her up, or do anything to her, so I told her that she needed to stay inside for at least ten minutes, or I would come back and get her.

Really though in ten minutes I would be nowhere in sight, and I just wanted to get out of there. After she did these things I made my exit.
as stated I would, and without accosting her in any other way. She just had to suffer a little indignity at having to undress in front of me, but I wasn't paying that much attention to her anyway, because my mind was already wondering just what I had got myself into.

I got into the truck and left. I was in a rented 1 ton my company had rented, and this gal didn't run out of the house, so I got out of there.

I went back to the yard after a bit of sniffing paint, and picked up Margie, and delivered another load before going home. After a while I just put that foiled burglary out of my mind. What got me to thinking that I could get away with that in the first place was a news cast that spoke of a statistic concerning burglaries in the Houston area going unsolved was like 180 a day, so being always on paint some stuff sticks in my brain and this was one of those things that did, so I tried to get even with that dude, but messed up this other way. Truthfully though I did feel bad because this gal was a little younger than my sister and kinda looked like her and I could see that she was just so scared and I felt bad about that. Had this dude been in there he would have had something other than what she had to deal with because he would have been hurt, but this gal wasn't hurt I did scare her but I couldn't do anything about that, I just am glad that if this was going to happen that it was me that did this because I wouldn't touch her, but had someone else been in that situation there is no telling what would have happened. She didn't know me though and so she didn't know if I would take advantage of her or not so this made it just as bad.

I wasn't caught for this right then, and another month or two had passed, and plans were being made for my new yard, and one weekend Joanne and I had went to Vidor to talk to my grand parents, and sign paperwork, and to let Joanne see her folks. My in-laws and I were actually getting along great now because they saw that I was actually doing something that looked like a decent job in their eyes and not just being a trucker.

Everybody knew that I still sniffed paint, and that was a given, but doing as good as I was they all felt that this was now a passing thing. Little did they know that I loved, and hated being addicted to this mess, and I wasn't slowing down, and one of the reasons I wanted
to revamp Paw Paw's place is because it was out in the middle of the woods, and I could sniff paint all day, and never have to see anybody plus I loved the woods.

Before we left Maybelle's, and Joe's Kathy had called us, and told me that the cops had been by the house. No it wasn't over what I had done, it ws over being stopped in my Uncle Bill's car one morning because it had looked similar to a car that had been in a robbery in Bridge City. I didn't know, nor did I know that he had a pistol under the seat. Anyway I had gotten arrested for unlawfully carrying a weapon which was a misdemeanor in Texas. I had got out of jail, but never told when my court date was, so I had failed to appear at court, and had a warrant for my arrest. The smart thing to do was while I was down there was to go to the police station in Orange Tx, and give myself up and have this taken care of. It was only down the road a ways, and would have only been a fine, or night or two in jail.

I decided to go back to Houston though, so I could get these papers filed, and get ready to move to East Texas which I would do within the next couple of weeks. After getting back to Pearland, Alvin actually Pearland is where I worked. I gave it a few days, and called the Angelton County Police Dept. and told them that I was there, and that they could come pick me up on an outstanding warrant out of Orange Texas.

They thought that I was messing with them, but I gave them enough info to convince them, but it was still 3 days later that a deputy came by.

I had the smart idea of making Orange Co. spend money to come get me which then may make them want to go ahead and drop the charges. Anyway the Angelton deputy did come get me, and he was real low keyed about everything, and he had been at our place before on a ticket I had gotten, and had sent in paid that time, and all I had needed to do was show him the M.O. receipt for that amount then he left, so we talked, and walked out to his car where he then handcuffed me, and off we went.

After getting to the jail there wasn't a whole lot happening, and while I was waiting to be processed in some dude saw me, and came over and asked me how I was doing? I told him ok, and he left. This dude was a detective out of Harris County unbeknowest to me, he had been there.
over somebody else, and also had worked the burglary I tried to do that
day, and as my luck would have it I fit the general description that
gal had given them.

He had told the cops there on the cool to hold me a few extra days
till he could get back, so they didn't notify Orange Co. that they had
me, nor did they book me in. I was made to go into an illegal line-
up after they took pictures of me. the line up was illegal because the
thing was suggestive, and nobody matched my description, and I was made
to be the last person to go in to the lineup room with my shirt sleeves
rolled up to my shoulders to show my arm tattoo's plus I was made to
stand in front of everybody else about a foot in front of the glass,
or one way mirror, that by the way I could see thru. I knew who was be-
hind the glass. I told the cops that I think I needed to talk to a lawyer,
and the cops said that I couldn't have one, and then I told them that
I didn't feel comfortable going in the lineup room without first talking
to a lawyer. This happened at the door of the lineup room after I saw
what they were doing. I didn't know anything about law, but I felt that
this was wrong.

I tried to refuse to go into the room since I was the last one to
go in, and the only one to do this, but there were five cops there, and
they were notorious in this jail for abusing inmates, and outright beating
them up. I use to watch them all the time on TV. I decided to take my
chances and go in.

Of course then I had saw the gal thru the window I now knew what
was happening. I hadn't been really booked in since I was just being
held for Orange Co., so I was there, and not there legally.

My mind was spinning, for I didn't know what was happening. I knew
that things wasn't right, and I felt heading south real fast, and I knew
that these cops wouldn't be held to answer for going outside of the law,
and doing what they did to have me charged with the Harris Co. charge.

How could I prove being wronged, for they had plausible deniability,
for I was never legally in their jail, no charges were given to me, no
phone call, no miranda warnings nothing.

My wife came that weekend along with my Mom, and while I was visiting
with then I tried to explain to Joanne, and my mother what they had done,
and how they were acting, Mom went to check on this, and as Joanne and I was talking she came back with tears in her eyes, and told me that Harris County (Houston) had put a hold on me, and had a ten thousand dollar bond had been established, all of this and I hadn't even been told.

I asked Mom what they had charged me with, and she said I had been charged with Burglary Of a Habitation with intent to commit Rape. My wife just looked me in the eyes, and said "Timothy what's going on?"

I never liked being called "Timothy", with Mom that meant an ass whipping was soon to follow, and so I felt that this was going to happen again although I was now grown, so I did my best dead-pan "what the hell are they talking about... act?", and I lied my butt off! The charge of burglary was bad enough, but where in the hell did the rape junk come from? That dizzy bitch knew that I was only trying to get out of there without messing her up, so now the ole crapola was about to be slung all over my face, so I needed some thinking time, and instead of trying to get out of jail right now like I could have done once I got to Orange Co. I told Joanne just to let me sit in Orange Co. until she built up the $1,000 dollars it would take to get me out on a ten thousand dollar bond. She said that she would, and so I was picked up by Orange Co. after 8 days of sitting in an overcrowded cell. We had 13 people in an 8 man cell, so I had to sleep, or basically lay next to the toilet on a filthy floor, and this would only be the begining of a nightmare that you can never wake up from.

After going back to Orange Co. I sat there on that minor charge until I knew that Joanne had the money together. She had moved back in with her family, and although I was now in trouble, Maybelle, and my in-laws now were trying to help us. Maybelle tried to pay for my bond, but I asked nothing of them as of yet. I had never been locked away for more than 21 days in all my life, and now I had been locked up for almost four months.

When Joanne was ready, and we contacted a bondsman locally we were told that I would have to still go to Houston because he couldn't bond me out for them. That really sucked! I didn't want to go back to Houston
Texas! I had been in this jail listening to all the T.D.C. (Texas Department of Corrections) horror stories, and although I really didn't expect to go to prison since I had never had a felony that I had to go to court for, nor Felony probation. I felt that I could get probation. I didn't understand all these words, and phrases, but it sounded like these old convicts knew what they were talking about, but of course I would find out the hard way that everybody becomes a jailhouse lawyer when they go to jail, or they have enough money to buy a real lawyer.

Well that was all fine and dandy, and so now I had my charges in Orange Co. dropped with just an affidavit from my Uncle Bill that told him that I had no knowledge of the pistol being in his car when I had borrowed it. What was messed up about this was the fact that I had seen no judge, had no lawyer, and had not even been in a court room the whole 4 months that I'd been locked up, but they dropped all of the charges, and released their hold on me, so that Houston could pick me up.

I was shockingly woke up one morning real early, and told I was on the chain to T.D.C. Chain is slang for being hauled one place, or the other usually being chained to other inmates, and all being put on a bus together. I might have been luckier had I not raised a stink, and let them go ahead and take me to T.D.C., for I had not been convicted of anything thus they would, or could have been hit with False Imprisonment charges, but finally I talked to the nurse who went, and talked to the jailer, and rank there, and they found out that they had messed up, and put me back in my cell. You can't even think how scared I was to be heading to prison without being convicted of anything so I was ready to fight them all the way about that.

A few days later though me, and one other dude was picked up by a couple of detectives out of Houston in a car. I wasn't in a talking mood because it was a depressing day. It was raining, and yucky weather that matched my mood. I was thinking about things I had done in my life, and how stupid I got on that paint, and how I wondered could I do like I had without it when I didn't have a way to get it, but when I was free I always had a bag stuck to my face, and now I had screwed the pooch, because of this mess. I didn't know what was going to happen as I watched
the rain splattered scenery passing by. I felt totally alone, and already confined.

My life was so full of such dramatic events, one day I was flying over the jungles of Vietnam, and Cambodia the next I was racing in a car to meet my fate at the hands of a judge, juries, and lawyers. How did my life get so screwed up? All I wanted to do was sniff my paint, and be left alone, but here I was messing not only my life up, but everybody else's life that mine also touched.

I swore then that if I got out of this that things were going to change. I wasn't much of a praying man because I wasn't sure about what God was all about, but I knew that I needed help, I just didn't know what to do to get help from God.

I was taken to Harris County Jail, and booked in. A female cop gave me a piece of paper that had two sentences on it that said I had entered a habitation owned by a certain person without their consent. That was about it I waded it up, and threw it in the floor. The cop gal told me that I might need that, and I told her that I didn't need it because it wasn't true. She said suit yourself and placed me in a holding cell.

It seems that I only thought I was booked in, for it would take about 10 hours, or more to do this. In the meantime I was put in a holding area with open cells, and a catwalk outside of them. I only thought that the Angleton Co. Jail was bad. This jail was horrific, and there was only a couple of lights in here. It was dark, and the urine smell and fecal matter smell assaulted your nose because of the unflushed toilets that made you hold your breath. There were people everywhere they were drunk some of them they smelled of vomit and piss. People were sitting in literally knee deep garbage of paper, and styrofoam cups, and trays, and filth. There was filth everywhere. You had to just wade your way thru this mess, and find some place to get out of the way. There was no mattresses, there were no blankets, there was no clean place to sit, and you just had to try to find room in a cell on a bunk, so you didn't have to sit in the piss, and garbage.

I was lucky to find a bunk with only a couple of dudes sitting on the steel platform, and then I was able to sit with them. I still had to move garbage out of the way, but it was better than sitting on the
Damaged World
By: Timothy D.V. Bazrowx

floor. This was in 1980, and now the middle of winter. I had been picked up in October, and charged on the 22nd., but didn't know what was going on until I saw that piece of paper that I threw down. That paper was what they called an indictment. Anyway I couldn't tell you how many hapless souls was in that set of cells, and run at at least a hundred of us, or at least it felt like that. I don't think that I'm far from the actual count though.

I got to call Joanne at about 3 Am. I talked to Maybelle, and she told me that they wouldn't start talking to a bondsman, and get me out.

I was dressed out in oversized jail clothes, and given a blanket, and then sent up stairs. This place was at least cleaner, but way worse in being overcrowded, and it didn't smell like all the other assaulting odors that the holdover smelled like, but it stunk just the same. It smelled like jail. If you have never been in jail then the best way to describe it is by saying it smells like the funkiest disinfectant you have ever smelled, so from one extreme to another. The bad thing was there was no place to even lay down, heck there was no place to even sit down.

I couldn't find a place that wasn't already taken, so I sat on the back table in the day room. All the cells were full, and they also had people sleeping under the bunks in the cells. Those that had a mattress had them laying everywhere, and this was that person's space, and he had his few belongings there, and you didn't touch it, or you might be killed.

I was called out of the tank to talk to some gal about making bond. She told me that because I didn't live in Harris Co. I couldn't get out on a personal recognizance bond, or (P.R. Bond), meaning it wouldn't cost me anything that I would have to agree to show up for court. I had gave them Kathy's address in Alvin, Tx. which I found out was Brazoria county.

That was just to look up. I couldn't even think.
I never saw this gal again. I didn't like how my luck was running, you just get this sick feeling in the middle of your stomach that just won't go away when you know that things just ain't right, and this was one of those times.

I only stayed at this tank for one night which was enough for me. I had to sleep under a table without a mattress. By the way a mattress is only a chunk of cotton in a plastic bag basically about 4 inches thick, but it is a lot softer than a hard concrete floor.

I was transferred to a place across Houston called the Humble Detention Center, and it held about 3,500 inmates, and was like a prison except that it was a jail, and this would be my new home for 6 months more.

I was put there as overflow for Harris Co. Jail, and once my wife finally caught up with me she told me that I would have a court date that Monday, and this is when I would formally be charged, and get to enter a plea. I would also get to talk to a lawyer then too.

This all happened like she said it would, and I was appointed a lawyer of which I need to decline to announce who for the things I will say as we go may not be to his liking if he's even still a lawyer, for I am talking about 33 years ago, and for him it was a time of working a career, for me a living nightmare that has never stopped even to this day.

On my court date my lawyer came to the cell that held about 15 people waiting for court, and what a mess I had no idea about what this dude was talking about, but I was too embarrassed to say anything. It's not like the TV portrays courts are. Everybody is talking deals, and other lawyers are running back and forth. It's a mass of confusion, and the question of the day is not whether you did it, or not it's how much time a person thinks they can do, and how much jail credit you can get, and do I get time served?, Or the big one help me get probation.

My lawyer never talked about that he asked what happened? I explained my lie to him, and things looked good because I had done this thing while I was working, and I had to beat rush hour traffic that morning, and since you had to drive at least 100 mph in Houston Tx. to keep from getting ran over I had got across town fast. I drove thru Houston each day in a truck, so I knew the biggest streets, and fastest ways to get from
point "A" to "B". My lie was simple I mixed it with the truth I had been to Cactus Pipe Co. then I went back to the yard, and then went to Pipe Specialities Inc., and then to Captain DEE's for lunch. The time frame was right, and my truck logs was right, my trip tickets were right everything was right, and any body that drove thru Houston at certain times knew that I had to have been all the way across Houston at some of the worst times.

I had off loaded my loads, and the gals in the offices at these companies all knew me because I was young, and a trucker. I flirted like all truckers do even with Margie there, or not. I had witnesses, so everything looked good. My lawyer had me plea not guilty, and we asked for a Bond Reduction hearing, so we wouldn't have to spend as much money for a bond. This would give my lawyer time to check out my story, and he had a fist full of evidence to look into.

I don't like to compare myself with others, but at the time I could tell my lawyer was glad to have pulled my case. Here was a hard working Field Rep./Truck Driver. I had been at work, I had a wife, a back up driver that was female, and had a husband that was the shop Foreman. I had a clean enough back ground to have access to millions of dollars of corporate checks, and was on the verge of opening up a new corporate office, and yard for my company. Don't get me wrong that doesn't mean a person couldn't or wouldn't commit a crime, for the TV always has people in that situation on the news, but I wasn't a person that went from one jail to another trying to lie my way into another probation, or light jail sentence. I wasn't selling drugs, running whores, robbing people, I wasn't hanging around the playgrounds nothing, you get the picture, so my lawyer wanted to take this-on, and it would be "Balls To The Wall!"

I went back to the jail, and my wife came, and asked was what the deal?, So I explained about the bond reduction hearing, and we were happy that we would get to save some money. A few days later we were again in court, and this day I would have a hearing not the run in and run back of the court room as I had done the last time I was in there. I actually dressed out in regular clothes which was weird since I had been wearing jumpers all this time. This hearing lasted about 45 minutes, and when it was over the judge raised my bond to $15,000 instead of dropping it.
so this should have been a clear warning of things to come.

I was dejected; the bondsman wouldn't bond me with the money my wife had put together for the ten thousand dollar bond. My mother in law didn't have enough money with her to help get me out because first she was from out of town, and secondly the bond should have been dropped. We went back to the jail cell in the court house, and my lawyer said he just didn't know what had happened. I surely didn't either! He asked if I could get out on the $15,000 thousand dollar bond? I told him I'd have to talk to my wife, and he got me a 5 minute visit with her and I was told that Maybelle would give us her Income Tax Return check to pay the difference with the bondsman, the problem was then that she was waiting on the I.R.S. to send it to her. So my lawyer postponed my trial until after I could get out. The next visit I had at the jail with Kathy my sister, and my wife was another weird one. She had been approached by another lawyer, and was told that for $2,500 this lawyer would take case, and practically guaranteed that I'd never spend a day more in jail.

That was tempting because I had a weird feeling about all this mess, and should have jumped on that offer, but then I thought about saving money by letting the state pay for my lawyer. Yep folks again this is a bad idea when you know nothing about the law everything sounds good.

You would think that I would have learned about trying to get the state, or county to do one thing by making it hard on them like come get me from Angleton Co. Jail, or even not take an offer from another lawyer wanting the state to pay for my lawyer. Yep live and learn but these are very costly mistakes my friends believe that.

Once you know about cop out lawyers, or state appointed lawyers you wouldn't want to take a chance with your life with them, and it hadn't dawned on me, but I was facing a 5-99 year sentence in prison. Now don't get me wrong there is also a lot of very good lawyers out there that will do a jam up job for you so in the light of being fair to them they aren't all bad, but it is sure hard to figure out which one is which when you are facing the rest of your life behind bars.

To make a long story short, at least my mother-in-law told Joanne she had the money, and my lawyer hadn't seen me again, but after that visit with my wife, and her telling me that they were going to contact
the bondsman they called me for the chain to go to court. I'm thinking that I will be out today finally when we get to the court house there's a flurry of activity people wheeling and dealing, and I don't see my lawyer until about 10 Am. He comes back to the holdover, and has clothes with him for me. He states that I need to dress out as I do he asks where I was about 11 Am that day all of this happened? I had already been asked a couple of times where I was at from aprox 9 Am. then they changed that to 10 Am. and now they moved it again to 11 Am. Where I told him that I was had been at Captain Dee's that day, and then he asked if I thought he could find a witness to that, and I said I'd only been there that once, and I didn't know if anybody there during rush hour that had only seen me once would remember me. I asked him why was I dressing out, and he said we were going to a jury trial! I'm thinking "Oh Snap!"

The D.A. was moving the time of the crime to when I couldn't back up what I had told him, and my lawyer. I got mad at my lawyer and asked him what the "F", was he letting that dude do? He kept moving the time of the crime till I had no witnesses what the hell was that?! He said don't worry that I had a ton of evidence to go to trial with. I asked him who told you I wanted to go to a jury trial. He said why not? You didn't do this did you? I had to say no, so we went to trial. Let me tell you folks it's a scary feeling walking in a court room, and your the subject of the trial, and your life now hangs in the balance.

I saw the gal that this had happened to with the asshole that had burnt me on the weed and I saw his eyes widen when he had realized who I was. Maybe he thought I was going to snitch on his dope dealings to get out of trouble, but I had been around the dope game a little, and had already seen stabbings, and what not that had happened to snitches, so that wasn't an option. We had Vore Dire, or jury selection. This took most of the day. I was mentally beat, and had already been up since about 2 Am. The trial was set, and I can't remember now why I didn't make bond, but bond was never made.
CHAPTER 21

I didn't know which way was up. You see all these people on TV that sit all calm, cool, and collective while all these legal wranglings are going on. Well let me tell you it's not that way with me. Your listening to every word, you see every sight, you feel every emotion, and last but not least you feel every eye on you weighing the way you look and their trying to think what kind of person you are.

The trial goes on your going to court before the sun comes up, and the last on back to the jail because with my trial if they couldn't plea out before court started they were postponed. That's the other guys that had to go with me on the days I was at trial.

As stated I would get back to jail after dark, and my only break was to eat a stale sandwich that was left in the holdover for me, as I sat by myself the bailiff came back there and he told me he felt I was innocent which made me feel good. Now let me tell ya folks that no matter what was happening we have to remember what I had did was against the law and God's rules too, and no matter what way I made things look I was wrong in doing what I did, high or not, so as I continue in this story remember this no matter how good you lie there is one that knows what happened, besides yourself and He will met out justice one way or the other believe that, so I wasn't getting away with anything in the least. I was lying and it would come into play in this trial.

We made a new set of fingerprints, and they did another line-up for fear of getting a mistrial because of the way they did it in Angleton Co. Jail, and the fingerprints in the house had been messed up so they couldn't identify them so to have a set of prints to say they knew who I was they made me make another set, but remember this: they never had prints in the house that they could identify at all, only the ones I made in court.

My lawyer wasn't up to speed concerning badly obtained evidence, and the chain of custody of the evidence and all of this would seal my fate.

-326-
Damaged World
By: Timothy D.V. Bazrowx

The trial seemed to go on forever, but it actually all together would have been a week or so. I thought we had it after I spotted something on a photo with this gal who was on the stand, and I took my lawyers legal pad away from him with his pen and wrote down quickly what I had saw, and he raised this point, and the witness was caught in a lie, and taken off of the stand. Remember this was the gal that this happened too that was taken off of the stand.

When everything was said and done, and the jury finally left to find the verdict I was approached by the District Attorney Ted Poe, and he offered me a 10 year prison sentence right then to stop the trial. I wasn't ever offered anything up until now, and my lawyer wasn't saying anything, and had I been given advice I would have known that with this 10 year sentence I could have applied for probation because probation could be had for a ten year sentence, or less.

All I could think of though was looking 5 feet away at my wife, my family, and friends, and couldn't cop out in front of them, for my charge had with intent to commit rape on it. I might have took it had I been in the holdover cell, and had been out of jail that day with probation, but I said no, and my fate was sealed. The D.A. spun around on his heel, and went back to his seat.

I went out to the hold over cell, and was kept there until the jury decided what to do with me. Friends that is not a feeling you want to feel. I was in a daze all this mess came from my being stupid, and my paint sniffing was the root of all these heartaches, and what a mess it was too!

I sat in that cell, and had 2 or 3 sandwiches that some of the guys had left for me. I was alone, and the bailiff told me things looked good, and not to worry. My lawyer came back, and told me that he was glad that I hadn't taken the 10 years that he wanted to beat Ted Poe, so bad it hurt. I said why? He said because he thought he was a big shot, and that's because he hadn't lost a case in 7½ years. I quietly said "son-of-a-bitch! Why hadn't you told me that before all of this crap?! He said don't worry we got this, and I asked how? he said because you didn't even use the witnesses I gave you! He said calm down everything would be fine.

The bailiff came back, and I said oh crap! that can't be good they
had been gone only about an hour!

We went back in, and stood as the jury came in, and read their verdict. After I heard "We the Jury find the Defendant GUILTY, I don't remember what was said, for I sat down hard, and was instantly surrounded by the bailiff's, and detectives: then handcuffed, and held there while the judge set my sentencing date for court, actually my punishment phase.

During my punishment phase I would get to show my best side, and hope for a light sentence. I could get life in prison! I was now a convicted felon that's all I knew.

I didn't know what was next, but I did know that my life had just changed at that instant when the word guilty had come out of their mouth.

My lawyer came to see me, and brought me a Bible with my name embossed in the bottom of it. I don't know who gave it to me to this date. He told me that no matter what the sentence was that he would file for an appeal, and it was possible to get an appeal bond, and all that sounded good, so I told my wife that after I got her to stop crying. She said we would fight this, and I was happy about that.

I was now hoping for no more than a ten year sentence, and I had enough jail time to maybe be paroled from jail, and never go to the Tex. Dept. of Corrections. My punishment phase came, and went, and everybody was there, and they all spoke highly of me, but in the end it wouldn't make any difference.

Ted Poe was good at sending men, and women to prison, and that's all there was to it. At my sentencing the jury went in, and came back out a little while later. We all stood, and the jury foreman read off my sentence. I was to go to prison with a 40 year sentence on my back!

I at first thought he had said 4 years, but the ole judge cleared that up when he sentenced me to no less than 5 years, and no more than 40! My lawyer filed for an automatic appeal, and to make matters worse was the fact that they also appointed this same lawyer as my appeal lawyer.

That was it! I knew my fate. All the horror stories of drugs, prison riots, prison rapes, and X's on a person's back came to have a new meaning now. I was heading down the river, to the ole big house, the ole cross bar hotel, the hoosegow, there would be razor ribbon, gun towers, and chain gangs That was my future now.
I had hope though, for I had a wonderful state appointed lawyer! I had already seen his track record, and knew how good he was! Heck folks he didn't even show up for the sentencing some lawyer sitting in for him made sure I signed the papers with a lawyer present, his job was done.

I never saw this guy again, oh yeah he had somebody else file the appeal briefs even though he was my lawyer of record, but none of that made any difference now. There was another decision to make now. I was going down to prison, and I had a wife that I had to think of. I decided that I would give her the choice of a non-contested divorce, so she could live her life.

I would rather make a clean break now as friends than wait till later, and get to depending on her to be there for me, and then divorce as enemies.

At one of our visits I broached the subject, and this brought lots of tears from her, and my sister, but I was trying to be practical no matter how much it hurt. She wouldn't hear of it so that was that, and truthfully I'm glad she decided to hang in there for me.

My lawyer kept me in Houston for a while. I didn't want to go to T.D.C. it was so overcrowded that they couldn't take anybody in, so the county jails were chaining inmates to the fences at the Diagnostic Unit in Huntsville, Tx, and leaving them there for the state to do with them what it could. They made the state take them. I had to start establishing myself to prove I wasn't a punk, so I had gotten into a few fights, so that some of the old boots that had been to prison would give me some respect.

I was heading into hell, and had to be ready to live in an even more hostile world than the one I was already living in, one of murderers, rapists, drug dealers, addicts, baby molesters and such all wound up in one place. In the county jail most people haven't been convicted yet, so still have hope of not going down, but once your convicted the mind set changes now you know your not going home, you loose hope you don't know now if you will have a home to come out to, or will everybody you know take all you had as if your dead, or had died? All these things go thru your mind all the what if's, and why's, why did I do something,
so stupid? Why was I an addict? Why couldn't I live without the paint? I had userdreams every night my addiction had me tasting the chemicals, and had me feeling the feelings it gave me. It didn't want me to give it up, so it went into a dormant state, and it wasn't going to be going away.

All of this was over wanting to get even with somebody that had messed over me with a $75 dollar deal. Was this God's way of waking me up? Heck one year in jail would have done that! Not 40! No I was down for the count. I didn't know about parole, or good time, how long I would have to do, and I didn't know anything about anything, or the life I was heading for.

The fear of the unknown was right there in front of your face. Everybody that had been convicted now hung out with those that had been down before just trying to wrap your mind around what was in store for us. Believe me there was nothing said that made a person feel better, and there was no way around it this was the slow boat to Hell, and it was going to hurt all the way, and I had my seat locked in for sure.
CHAPTER 23

One early morning about 2:30 AM they called out a list of names, and mine was on it. My belly fell to my feet. I was being called out on the chain to the Texas Department of Corrections. Now this really SUCKED! I was herded down the stairs, and to the chow hall where there was approx. 75 others, and we had to sign papers to either donate our personal property, or have someone come pick up your stuff, because you wasn't taking it with you.

I was chained to another man, and put into line, and after everybody was handcuffed together we were herded out to the Sally Port to be loaded on a Blue Bird Prison bus. Nobody talked, for everybody was heading to prison, and there was nothing to talk about, for we all had the same thing on our minds, and that was would we ever see freedom again? Would I survive this? There was no laughter, there was no wise cracking. Every sight and sound was enhanced, the crickets, the stars, we even saw as we went outside the men with drawn 357 magnum pistols waiting to shoot you at the first sign of trouble, the men with 12 gauge shot guns loaded with buck shot that was meant for you, and not a deer. These men were ready to kill you just because you were now a convicted felon.

The bus was really overcrowded, and we sat back to back. There were no seats to lean back there was three benches that ran the length of the cage inside the bus, and we packed ourselves in this bus in the dark for our trip to Huntsville, Texas.

My mind asked me just what in the hell had I got us into? I just told it to shut up! After the guards with their shot guns, and pistols had loaded us up the bus started, and pulled out. We wouldn't be chained to a fence this was T.D.C. picking us up, and we would be processed, and in prison by that afternoon. Everybody tried to look out of the barred windows hoping to catch a final glimpse of the world they were leaving behind, the lights, the cars, life as we knew it. There was plenty to see, but nobody was up at this time of the morning. The world was asleep, my wife would wake up, and know I was gone for not only was I
for not only was I convinced she could feel me leaving she would also
get a call from the jail to tell her to come get my personal effects
or it would be tossed in the garbage. She would spend the day crying,
and I would be humiliated to no end.

Upon reaching the Diagnostic Unit we were brought inside the prison
past the guard towers with their AR 15's, and more pistols. Everything
that you can think of has a wicked looking razor ribbon on it. Guards,
or "Bosses", as we call them was yelling at us, and as soon as we got
inside we were stripped naked, and made to stand next to each other.
We were made to do things like open our mouths, raise things, and spread
other things etc.... we had our hair burned off, and was sprayed with
delousing medicine that smelled like camphor oil. It Stunk !

What they did was first cut your hair off, and then let you shower
it off, and no it wasn't a shower like you take at home, it was in front
of the bosses and they yelling to hurry up, all they wanted you to do
was wash the hair off, then they sprayed you everywhere. Your privates,
your head, under your arms believe me everywhere! Then you had to keep
this stuff on you for three days without a shower. Still naked we were
put back in the room we came in, then once everybody was done they dressed
us out with white pants, white shirt, white boxers, and was given Brogans
and two pair of nylon socks, and a belt. We was then taken to the commis-
sary, and allowed to make one purchase spend with the money we had in
our account at the jail, and you had no more than $30 you could spend,
and it would be a while before we got to the store again because after
that we had to put in for script books that had script coupons with a
dollar figure on them that would be used to go to the store. The problem
is I would be transferred to other units just as it was time for my money
to catch up with me, so it would take a while to catch up with me again.

I bought me a couple of cans of tabacco, and a couple of packs of
coffee, writing material, and a lighter. I thought that should get me
through. Yeah Right! It would be a couple of months before I could get
back to a commissary.

I was taken to a cell that had two bunks, but there was five people
in a two man cell, and they had people sleeping on the run as well as
people sleeping in tents. This was around June of 1981, and overcrowed
it was!
Once I was assigned a cell, and was stinking of camphor, and being crowded you walk across mattresses that were laying cross ways the foot portion being under the bunk. The problem with this was first of all you couldn't lay flat because the cell was too small to lay down that way, so you had to sleep in a half sitting up position. The toilet was in the back of the cell along with the sink, and there was no hot water to shave with, and no mirror, but they wanted you to shave every day.

The very first day I was there, and while I was waiting to go into my overcrowded cell they were hauling a man out of the next cell block with an ink pen stuck out of his temple, and there was only a couple of inches of that! I kept thinking 40 years, this is where I will be, and then all the questions would come like, Will I live? Will I die? Will I ever be free again? Will I make parole; As a matter of fact when will I be up for parole? Where will I go?, and the favorite. Why me Lord? Why are you picking on me? There are a million questions. You wonder about your wife, your family, where you will go next? You hear stories that we have some of the meanest toughest prisons in Texas, and the U.S., and you think all I am is an ole paint sniffer what, or why am I treated this way? I am no criminal. I did things wrong sure but I worked. I paid my bills, I had a triple A credit rating. I didn't belong with drug dealers, murderers, rapist etc.... but I was in the same boat, and those that I would hear, would be repeating my own story except it was their story too, and the story is repeated by everybody. You hear this same story in the morning when you wake up, in the afternoon when you try to read a book, and in the night when the lights shine in your eyes 24 hours a day when we should be asleep.

You see prisons never sleep, the lights are never out, the noise "white noise", never stops and there are always fans running, or vents venting and people can't sleep, so they talk and when you finally fall asleep it is from exhaustion, and then your waken because you have to go someplace like chow which is what your meal is always called.

The heat in the cells is so oppresive. There's no air movement, you have no fans for personal use, and you can't buy them until your assigned to your unit where ever that may be.

You try to make the best of your situation, and if you can find a
wore out book somewhere it becomes a form of escape, and then you realize
the only escape from the madness is to retreat into your own mind, you
don't want to talk to people, so you become reclusive, a retrovert, and
you don't want people to know who you are, you guard your addresses because
these guys will write to your people trying to get them to send them
money, or get women to send naked pictures, for they don't care who your
people are, they don't care if they don't know you. I can't tell you
how many people have had their heads busted open, or have been shanked
because they got a hold of someone's addresses.

If you think officers will help you forget it because believe it,
or not they have been known to be predators too. They try to pick up,
or hit on your wives, and sisters, or girlfriends when they come to see
you because they know that you can't get to them to protect them, and
they tell your gal that you can't give them what they need for a good
life anymore, and your someone's boyfriend, or you have become a punk.

Some women fall for this, and some don't. Of course these people
have ready access to your addresses because they can go thru what little
you have anytime they want, they steal your letters, and will show up
at your home. Your family starts hating the people running this place
more than the inmates in here because they have the law to hide behind
and nobody really cares about the man, or woman in prison except those
that cared for them, and sometimes not even them.

Some families can't deal with all of this, so they say goodbye to
you, and in most cases they just turn their backs on you, and they say
a silent prayer for you if they pray, or wipe away their tears, and leave.

You are alone in a world of craziness, your world is a world of
hate because everybody hates being locked up in prison, everybody hates
the officers, bosses, mulligans, caps, screws whatever the slang at the
time prisoners call them, but no matter what they are called they all
oppress you, and the authority goes to their heads, and they abuse that
power. People only see what the system wants them to see, and when a
guard dies it's always the inmates fault, but they don't tell you what
they did to cause another man to snap, and kill them. People can only
take so much abuse, and if you don't believe that just watch the news
I'm sure you will see where someone kills another mostly wives killing
a boyfriend or a husband for abuse. It's no different when it comes to inmates, and bosses, and you keep kicking people who have lost everything that they love, and cared for, and eventually they will strike back regardless of what may happen.

People say we got what we deserve, well there's an old saying I coined. In Texas prisons they have a bed for anybody, and if you don't think you won't be brought to prison yourself just get in the wrong place at the wrong time, and if you don't think Texas Prosecutors won't fabricate the story that will put you here as well as the evidence think again. It makes no difference if you was a T.D.C. guard, a cop a preacher nothing they will slam you into the slammer here in Texas.

There is no innocence in Texas if the courts want you to be guilty you will be guilty, and then you get to see first hand what I am talking about, and will see that it is a true statement.

Listen to this folks all I'm doing is giving you the bare basics here. I just want you to get the gist of what my first days was like. That's right all I have been talking about here is my first few days not the years that has turned into decades in this place, so I'll get more into this later.

I had now been locked up for 9 mths. continuously and dreamed of my freedom. I dreamed of my wife, and my paint use. My mind screamed to lose the reality I was living, and all I wanted to do was wake up from this really bad trip. I kept wondering if I was really in this world, or was I sniffing paint somewhere in the woods? My paint addiction would come out of its dormant stage, and I swear I could smell the paint I sniffed better yet the Toulene that I was addicted to. My mouth would water, and I came really close to bashing my head against the steel bars, or concrete walls to break the wanting cycle. My addiction did not want to die, it didn't want to let go, and it was so crazy! Nothing mattered. I had to have my paint. This would be my problem thru my prison term although the want did not always go unanswered, but that would be later.

I never knew why my addiction would go dormant then hit me again ten times worse than it had before, but years later this question would be answered, but for now all I knew was it was driving me crazy. My mind betrayed me when I slept, and when I was awake. I couldn't get away from
the thoughts. There was the times that I thought of the razor blades they gave us then that we injected into our razor handles. I thought how weird is that? Why would people in prison be given razor blades?

Sure they wanted us to shave, but what was stopping us from using blades for other things? Like maybe oh I don't know... cutting our own wrists lets say? Then I thought. Them Bastards! That's what "they" want!

 Needless to say I never did that, but there was, and is many that have. I told my mind, and addiction to get a grip, and that we had to get thru this hell! The worse part of the voices that I thought spoke to me at times was when the voices in my head argue among themselves as though I wasn't even in the room. Go figure!

There was no visits there. I watched the inmates working in a line outside the windows with guards on horses that had pistols, and high riders sitting a ways away with their dark sun glasses on, and a rifle in hand, and I would think my God what is this crap? Are they realy serious? Yep folks they were serious. I'd lay down, to write letters, and think then after 21 days I went thru this chain action again I was chained again to another man, and about 60 of us loaded up, and shipped to another unit. This unit though was only about 5 minutes away, but I found out real fast that these people are not the smartest ducks in the pond, and they took us on a local tour of the area prisons instead of just taking us to the next prison, they take you all over picking up, and dropping off people. Then they take you to your next prison, and you can actually see the prison you was at when you pull in to this unit for it was right down the road on the other side of the street, and as a matter of fact I had seen this prison on my way to these other dumb prisons we went to 3 hours ago.

This prison was called Goree Unit, and it was a woman's unit. Yay! Maybe I could see a couple of gals since I hadn't seen any women at all since I'd been in prison. No such luck though the women were now all in Gatesville, Texas. They had been moved, and now this was a transit unit. It wasn't as rustic though, and we only had two men in a cell. I could see a different section of the highway, and cars, and trucks going to Houston, and it made me sadder than I had been.

My cigs were running low, but I had enough to hold me for now though.
and hopefully my script books would catch up to me now. I kept signing up for $30 dollar books because I knew when I got to where I was going I'd need them bad. I still had no visits because I was still in transit.

My first meal at Goree was fried chicken, rice, and cream gravy, biscuits etc.... The reason I remember it was the chicken was almost raw, the rice had Tadpoles in the gravy. That's right Tadpoles in the gravy! I took my food to the guard to show him this crap, and he ordered me to eat what I was given. I told him "FU" Buddy! That got me slammed into the table. I was forced to eat the food although I threw what I didn't, or wouldn't eat in the floor.

I ate around on the plate, or metal tray, then decided on the biscuits as a safe bet for food. Wrong! Somebody had cooked pieces of rags into the batter, so I just pulled them out, and threw them also on the floor. We were given about 3 minutes to eat, and it was a good thing that I had been in a later group because we had a little more time. Of course that meal wasn't worth eating, but the others was better, depending on what you would call better, for it was still prison food there is a little more of it, than the county jail so that is something anyway.

I spent about 17 days there, and we at least had dayroom time here, so we had so we got to see some TV, and get out of our cells some. Some peoples money caught up to them, and luckily I had a $20 dollar script book catch up to me that allowed me to restock my cigs, and other stuff I needed, but this would be it for another month, or so.

I was finally assigned to my next unit and it was called Central Unit. This unit was in Sugarland, and right in sight of the Imperial Sugar Plant, and across from the hospital that I had started this life in. Maybe it was a sadistic game these people were playing, but that's where I was. One good thing though it was only about 10, or so miles from where Kathy, and my wife was living, so I would be able to finally get visits. I found out that the land that Central was on use to be an old Sugar Cane Plantation, and you could still see the old plantation big house all grown over now with weeds, and such.

Upon getting there I was again confronted with overcrowding, as well as another situation.

I was put on 7 Dorm, and thought for sure that I was being messed with! It had all blacks in it! This is not a good situation for a person
that use to live in a Klan town, so I got at the front of the dorm waiting for the ole crapola to hit the fan. I was approached by the B.T. (building tender), a big black dude about the size of Godzilla. I was ready for trouble, but this dude that was about my age just wanted to talk. His name was Lloyd, and we were the same age at 24 years old going on 25 years of age now. He was in charge of assigning lockers, and bed spaces, he also ran a make shift store for credit at two for one. I could borrow one item and pay back two of them, and since he had nobody sending him money this is how he got by. This is one of the things that gets people in trouble in prison owing somebody favors for favors. People get into debt, and can't pay their way out then then favors are collected either voluntarily, or by force, and I needn't go into what these favors are this is prison figure it out it happens even to the big bruisers that think they can't be had, so 5-6 bigger bastards get on ya, or them and you are otta there, so the best thing is to not get into debt. Did I take this advice? No I was just like all the rest of the drive-ups I got into debt too. I was able to pay my way out of it though since I received about $400 a month from family and friends, mostly from my wife, and mother-in-law, but it was still tough to pay it off.

When my money started to hit though it came steady because I had put in for script books each time I was given a chance. I told Lloyd where I was from, and was assigned a locker with another white dude as Lloyd put it another klansman. I told him I wasn't a Klansman, but they kept wondering, and they didn't get too stupid although I did have to jump on a couple of dudes (blacks) for trying to insinuate that I was a gal, well that's not something you want people in here to think, so I had to take care of that couple of problems, and this is called establishing yourself which means only the strong will survive, or if they know that you will fight then people don't mess with you as bad which is good in here.

Galloway was my locker partner since this place was so overcrowded you didn't even have a bed, and you didn't have a place to store your goods unless you shared a locker. What was good about that was Galloway did not make store, so I loaded up the locker with goodies. The bed deal was another problem. What we had to do was throw a mattress on the floor
at night when we were allowed to, this dorm was really overcrowded. There were four sets of bunk beds in a row that went all the way down to the restroom area at the back of the dorm. They were tied together one row down one side the other down the other side. This gave us 80 bunks, but that wasn't enough for us, for we had bunks in the common area too, which was where the rest room was, because of the overcrowding this toilet area was also the dayroom area too, and the TV was above the toilets too. If you had to go then you had to do so in front of the entire dorm because the ones that could get a seat and could watch TV from their bunks all faced towards ya as you dropped them to take care of buisness.

The beds were wide enough apart so that we could throw our mattresses down at night and we had to leave the people in the bunks a one foot space so that they could get out of bed when they needed to. Then at the front of the dorm where there was two or three tables was where the day room should have been, so to put this all in perspective a dorm that should not have had more than 60 people had no less than 120 in it. I slept in the front of the dorm by the bars in the supposed day room for it was better than trying to sleep in the aisle, or in the restroom area.

One night we were awaken by a guy that had cut his wrists in the area that I slept in, and he really made a mess the night he died.

What was sad was the fact that if a person decided to cut their wrists then that was their buisness and as sad as it was it was his right to leave this state holding the rest of their sentence without him having to do it. There were just some people that found being in prison was too much, or their wives left them, or whatever, either way the razor blades did work overtime then.

It took me four months to finally get a bunk in that dorm, and it ended up being a top bunk, the bottom bunks were even harder to get.

There was hardly any medical department, or dental, and inmates were helpers in what was considered the medical dept., so you didn't want to get sick. I was finally able to pay my way out of debt, and get ahead, and the whites found out that I would let them borrow stuff for what was owed, and not asking the two for one price that the blacks liked to get. Yes there is a black and white thing issue in prison, and a hispanic one too, and you have to walk a fine line with dealing with differ
ant races in prison, and if you hang with the blacks thinking it's cool your a nigga lover, and a punk, and the whites and mexicans turn against you, and if you just hang with the mexicans your a spic lover, and the whites and blacks are against you, so you have to walk a fine line with who you deal with in here because as you might have realized your always being watched by everybody, so you always have to be watching your self. Oh yeah if you only hang out with the whites then your a Klansman, so even hanging out with just your race was bad too. The best way to deal with all of this was to give everybody respect, and treat every body fairly even if you had to cut other races some slack too. The point in this was the way you carried yourself.

I had already had to make my stand, and I was claiming to be a Vidorian which means you are a Klansman to blacks whether your one, or not, and again though when people know that you will fight then people will not be so apt to try you, but some will. Back then everybody had shanks, so you didn't just have to worry about getting beat down you'd get stabbed too. But folks let me bring you up to speed here. No matter how much these officials say they have safe prisons, or try to enforce that it doesn't happen, that's an oxymoron there is no such thing as a safe prison it's establish yourself as a man period there's no other choice unless you want to be a punk, or pay protection, or pay protection and be a punk too, I think that you get the picture. One of the things that has helped me was the fact that I have been a knife fighter from way back so it didn't take long before people left me alone.

What's bad too is when the ole crapola hits the fan your expected to side with your race also in riots, and if you don't then your own race will put a hit out on you. The only way out of it is to establish yourself to be solo running by yourself which is what I did I came down here by myself I'd do my own time. This is an option that lots of people do that can handle it because they quickly find out that running with a collective is not a good idea in here, it's better to stay below the radar.

Don't get me wrong there's always people that test your mettle, so when they do you have to nip it in the bud. You have to always be the way that you establish yourself, so you want to pick, or portray your self in the closest light of who you really are. Oh yeah no crying! That's a no-no. Killing yes crying no, no showing any feelings, none, nada. That's
a weakness that all these guys look for white, black, and mexicans. There's just too many no's to talk about here, but you get the picture.

Now don't lose sight of what this story is about, it's about my addiction, and as you will be seeing the trouble it causes, so you may think that the addiction is done for now, and that this story ends here, but you would be sadly mistaken, for this is but part of the hardships that this ole addiction brought to my life, and others that have to live thru their addiction is leading them, so this is a glimpse of where your life is heading, if no changes aren't made.

My story is only allowing you to see, and hopefully feel the hopelessness that can happen this short side of death. You say that it can't happen to you, that I was just dumb ass criminal that got caught that may be so now, but before I was a convicted felon I was just like you think of that.

I went out to dinner with my wife. I picniced with my nieces, and nephews, I danced etc.... then I got stupid as addictions has you do, and now I came to prison.

On this isn't the tough part, this last part just speaks of where I would lay my head at night, so keep reading these stories because I'm going to continue to take you thru this journey into hell, and the life that is addiction.
EPILOGUE

I hope that you will now continue to finish reading these sets of books that has taken me these last three years to write for all of you. The next and very last book in this set is called "The Strangeness Of It All" Inhalant Addiction The Aftermath.

I am in the process right now writing this book so it should be out as soon as God allows me to get it out. This story is not about all the wonderful things that I have done in this life this story is about how I tried to make everybody except my wanting to live as an addict. It was to try and make people think that what I did with my life was my business. It makes no difference what your addiction is it is wrong, and it keeps you away from finding God and peace in your life.

Your addiction you bunch of addicts is killing you! Those family members that aren't saying anything to your addict family member, or friend you are wrong say something try to get this person some help because they will die with out help, they will lose everything if they continue on this path to hell, and they will be seperated from you either by they burning up their brains, or they go to prison, or they die, there is no other way the addicted person will end up. As long as a person lives there is some hope that they can turn their lives around.

NA, and AA may be good groups but they don't give the right message as far as I am concerned. It is not alright to mess up, and start over again, and they claim that you need to look to a higher power which they have right in a way, but if that higher power is a glass of water think again, there is but one that can save you from your self and that is the one that created you and all of mankind and that is God, so look to God and our saviour because my friends there is no higher power than that believe that, and He is the only one that can run the demons out of your life that is the addiction.

I love each and every one of you and this is why I am writing this story for all of you. I want a person to see that they do have a chance to turn their lives around they can believe that, but this will be a life long battle.