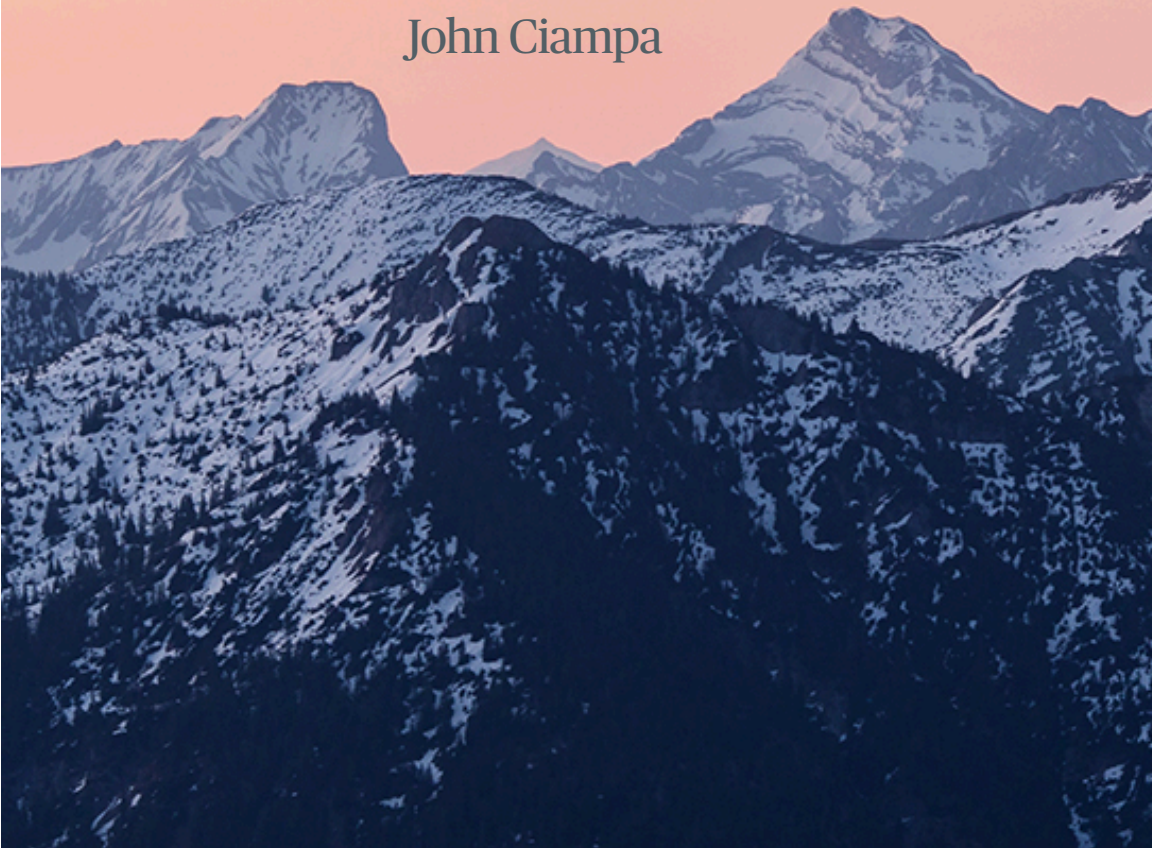




The Blink of an I

By

John Ciampa



The Blink
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I
Ad aspera ad astra

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PROLOGUE

The older you get, the more stories you have to tell. Even though telling stories is part of being human, I don't want you to think I'm "all stories and no plans".

Having stories connects me to the past. Having plans connects me to the future. Connecting my story with you is one of my plans.

As I began to organize my warehouse of memories, I was amazed at how easy it has become to verify my 2.6 billion seconds of otherwise totally subjective private history. Yes, I have come to believe that it's all in there, every sight, smell, sound you ever experienced. Organizing the billions of impressions, however, is as much a challenge as figuring out which ones to share. The new history with its hoards of social media authors replaces the singleminded historian, for better or worse. These days, all you need to make history is memories and a smart phone, and I happen to have both.

There is a lot less room in the bound history book, and so there has to be a selection process. Selected individuals, selected certain events. More often than not the so called "mightier pen", nevertheless, was guided by the sword. Imprimatur, we know, does not guarantee truth or relevance. Mind you, I'm not knocking all the selectors. My life would be very different if the words of Shakespeare hadn't been selected for me. Likewise I am eternally grateful to whoever picked out the thoughts of Plato (and his Socrates) for me.

The history book is unlimited now and there are more words clamoring for your attention than you could ever read in a thousand life times. How and why you are reading these words, I truly have no idea, but I am glad and I hope you will be too.

A part of me, which you will learn about presently, thought my story was not worthy of even an historical footnote, but another part, which you will also learn about presently, believes it is worthwhile, if for no other reason than the length and breadth of the time line.

The time line is **long** enough to include three wars, two pandemics, television, internet, feminism, ethnic integration, racial integration, political

disintegration, DNA, neuroscience, psychotherapy, antibiotics, atomic energy, quantum mechanics and the rise and fall of the American empire. It is **broad** enough to include Boston's Little Italy, DC, Manhattan, RedWood Forest Communes, Venice California, Hollywood, Amalfi, Athens, Moscow, Miami, the Atlantic, the Caribbean and the Baltic seas; St Anthony's grammar school, Synanon, Actors Studio, Universal Studios, Harvard, Cornell, MIT, RiT, Boston University, the University of Michigan, and the Kremlin. The story moves around a lot. In that sense it's kind of like a James Bond movie, without the shooting. There is some punching.

I realize that simply being there would not have authorized my reports and certainly not my analysis in any publicly sanctioned history. But this is a private history, just between you and me, and so, instead of being authorized it must be resonant.

This private history just happens to include up close and personal experience with well known objects and subjects. Objects such as technology devices that changed the way we live, and subjects who changed the way we think, such as the Kennedy's, Eisenhower, Gorbachev, the Clintons, Columbian drug cartels; and well known scientists such as Richard Feynman, Buckminster Fuller....not to mention media personalities such as Strasberg, William Inge, Ellen Burstyn and Sinatra.

If you are still reading because of the names I just dropped, let me sound a spoiler alert right here. This is not a story about the important people I met. They are props for the real story, which is about the internal selves I met. The plural form of that word trips up the tongue, as though it has never been spoken. I believe it's time to learn to pronounce "selves".

Except for the occasional side trip, my story does follow a curvy, but singular time line through eight decades and dozens of different roles I played in thousands of different scenes. Surely, you find yourself playing multiple roles in your life drama - child, spouse, parent, teacher, student, etc.. Without pride or shame, I must tell you that my play had many more roles than most, and a few more selves as actors.

As Shakespeare said, one man plays many roles. He also said "All the world's a stage." The stage for my life's drama has a trap door through which one or more of a set of multiple selves pops up into the many roles

with unpredictable irregularity, sometimes for the entire scene, sometimes for a split second.

Socrates told me that the unexamined life was not worth living, and that I was put here to “know my selves”; he didn’t say just how to do that. He also didn’t say “selves”; he said “self.” I don’t know, but I’m sure Democritus and Heraclitus would have been ok with dividing the whole into components.

Think of this proliferation of *self* elements as quantum psychology, like the quantum mechanics breakthrough in physics, where the basic atom was discovered to have more basic components - protons, neutrons, electrons. The quantum psyche has sub-selves for the purpose of this metaphor, all with different frequencies.

I promise you I am not suffering from multiple personality disorder (in fact, if it turns out that I have discovered a cure for that disease, I suggest we call it: “multiple personality order”).

In all honesty, I believe the internal dialogues among my selves delivered me from the original sin of self hate, put me closer to finding the higher self, and facilitated the most important discovery of my life: “Love for my neighbor as my self,” without which, inevitably, “You hate your neighbor as yourself”.

If the pluralization of self still sounds strange to you, think about your own “internal **dialogue**” (note the pluralizing syllable “di...” in “dialogue”); how many times have you chastised yourself “how could you...” , questioned yourself, “what were you thinking...” “Better judgment?” Better than what? Who is talking to whom? How can one mind be aroused by something which the same mind finds disgusting a few minutes later? Why do we spend so much time in the mirror and feel differently about what we see every-time?

You could look at these as random changes, or moods in the same single self, but that would be to ignore the persistent recurrence of these feelings and the consistent behaviors they trigger. Often, if not always, these internal voices are in conflict. The fact that there is a consistency in each point of view from conflict to conflict merits a name tag for each contestant.

One voice which may get softer but never goes away is self doubt. I know you must have experienced self doubt. Well then, ask yourself: who is doubting whom? It takes at least one doubter and one “doubt-ee”; it takes two to ‘tangle’, at least two. Self doubt grows from baby fears, and if you give it an identity, you will be able to reason with it, placate it, to different degrees, depending on the frequency of dialogue and the skill of the mitigator, all living in the same small skull. In fact, I know your baby self has been placated from time to time or you wouldn’t be here reading these words, and there is more mitigation in store for you, if you haven’t figured that out for yourself already.

The expression “getting old ain’t for sissies” means to warn you that the mitigation skill requirement increases with age. Which self will rise up to stand between the warring factions? You need to find that self or join the living dead. If you do find it, you can get the selves working together, and that makes you balanced and graceful, and we need more of that.

I am not graceful, but I strive always in that direction, and I can tell you it gets easier, with each stride. As I write this line, I am moving toward my 84th year; my selves are simultaneously writing this book, running a tech start up, learning to “sight read” Bach on the piano, improvising jazz licks, providing healthcare to my wife, who is recovering from cancer, going to the gym three days a week, and swimming a mile, four days a week. We started the physical routine in earnest about a year ago because swollen ankles could not carry a 270 pound fat ass more than ten yards, without a breathless pit stop. We decided to loose 50 pounds and see whether or not “geriatric rejuvenation” was an oxymoron. Today I am 230 pounds; my ankles are almost normal; my muscle growth continues; swimming becomes more graceful, and my piano playing moves toward grace every time I sit down. So much for “old dogs not learning new tricks”.

If you do chose to move through this voyage of self discovery with me, the usefulness of convening the pluralized selves will become apparent. For now I ask you to suspend disbelief, and get ready to meet the cast of four who play all the roles in my life’s drama: street gang leader, boxer, student politician, rat brain surgeon, lawyer, entrepreneur, professor, inventor, ladies man; family man, amateur musician, amateur scientist, amateur philosopher, unauthorized writer, all played by:

Thinker, Tinker, Warrior and Worrier (stage names)

Th- is the name tag for the thinker self.

He mitigates ongoing disputes and holds the key to a secret exit from the tomb, which no one has ever seen. He became fascinated with Shakespeare and Plato at an early age, with no particular objective in mind; he is also fascinated by everything ephemeral, poetry, science, music, philosophy, and of course spiritualism, at least to the extent of wondering about that light at the end of the tunnel. He devours ideas with passion despite frequent choking on conflicts. He questions everything and as soon as he gets an answer, it evaporates into another question, but he keeps on wondering. He brings depth and wonder to every part.

Ti- is the name tag for the tinker self.

He cannot stop “tinkering”, rearranging reality to make it more convenient; he is fascinated with objects, from simple mechanics to abstract science. He is capable of everything from new recipes for eggplant to major inventions. He will learn just enough of what he doesn't know to be dangerous and fortuitously, sometimes almost magically, stumbles into others who provide the missing knowledge to make workable inventions. He brings magic to every part he plays.

Wa- is the name tag for the warrior self.

He believes courage is everything and he can fight his way out of oppression, and sell and lead and sometimes bully others. He is a performer and a reformer, a politician, teacher, and entrepreneur. He is fascinated by risk and reward. His aggression extends to social, sexual and financial conquests. Wa wants to win at all costs, and has to be guided as to what and how to win. He brings elan to every part he plays.

Wo- is the name tag for the worrier self.

He was the first to enter the self shell, with primordial suffering, and so bears the greatest suffering and lives closest to the panic button. While his fear subsides from time to time, it never goes away and can turn to hopelessness, if it is not dealt with. He is also the hapless projectionist in the theater of dreams, where his misfiled, mangled reels are slapped together for his nightly show. He had the most to learn and so has the greatest curiosity. Curiosity, terror and lust are the only emotions he can manage, and so he is seldom allowed on stage by himself; in fact he is almost never on stage, but is always back stage where he controls the

stage lighting for every scene, some of which are too dark and some too lurid, and there again he also needs guidance. You may wonder why lust was included as a color on Wo's pallet. Wo has a primordial need to return to the womb. This need for warmth and affection became a powerful sex drive early on.

The philosophical insights spawned by the stories are condensed into four essays in the EPILOGUE.

PELLIGIRINI- THE NEW PILGRIMS

Chocolate Tunnels

The back story, that which happened prior to my arrival, around 2:00 am, on June 9, 1936, is put together from what I heard around the kitchen table from my parents, aunts, uncles and two grandmothers - no grandfathers, unfortunately. My paternal grandfather died mysteriously before I was born, and my maternal grandfather died before I was old enough to understand him.

My four grand parents came from Italy as single young adults; one as an unaccompanied minor. The minor was my maternal grandmother who crossed the Atlantic in the 1880's from Montauro ,Calabria, Italy to Boston, Massachusetts, USA, when she was 12 years of age, with her 10-year-old brother in tow.

Her father, Salvatore Mercurio, was a fisherman struck dead by lightning. Her widowed mother, Matilda Mercurio, was forced by circumstance to care for an infant whose mother died in child birth. The widower offered marriage but wanted no step-children. Since America was thought of as a paradise, it would be better for the Mercurio children to be shipped off to paradise. I'm guessing from other stories I've read that the church helped her arrange for a "padrone". These "padrones" usually had a "sponsor" in America who paid for the passage and would take a percentage of the "sponsee's" wages once they got to work in America. (I was going to add a wisecrack here "Slave Trade *Light*", but decided not to because it really was nothing like the African slave trade).

I am imagining my grandmother, in the late 1880's, at age 12, Mariangela Mercurio, short, light skinned, one blue eye and one green eye, toting a cloth sack and a kid brother, disembarking after what must have been weeks in steerage, craning her neck to see over the crowd of adults huddled on the island pier off the sandy beach of Boston's North End waterfront. I don't think she was crying, because I never saw her cry. My grandmother was fearless and tearless. Calabrese pride themselves on emotional and physical stoicism. She would have known nothing about the new world where she found herself, as though she was dropped onto another planet. She probably had a tag around her neck which said the

name of the Padrone and Boston. (Ellis Island, NY wasn't opened until the next decade.) The thousands that came from Naples and Calabria landed in Boston, which, at the time, according to my instant Wikipedia check, was the most congested city on the planet and the North End, the most congested square mile.

The new arrivals who cleared the inspection, took another boat ride - this one a short ferry ride to the North End where they would be virtually quarantined for a few decades by invisible ghetto walls.

This enclosure became an unwitting incubator for the extraordinary ambition of those fittest who would survive. Onto the geographic journey, was added the longer societal journey from rural European feudalism to urbane American capitalism. The survival of the Mercurio kids from Calabria is a testament to the flexibility of the young human psyche. Jettisoned from a small sea side village where the sparsely settled families could almost see their connections to each other and to the church, these children now found themselves 'cheek- by- jowl' with strange adults, all lost, all speaking different languages, with strange new beds, and stranger bedfellows.

"Birds of Flight", as they were called, were usually men who came to dig a subway or a canal or do some other job no one wanted. They would then send the money home and eventually go home themselves.

This newer wave of Italians had a deeper adventure than the first Italians who came and named this Continent. The 15th century explorers staked out the surface of this great land; these latter day Italian saints dug out the underworld, where only mythic evil creatures had ever been. The underworld I'm talking about was the subway, not the mafia. Before this first Boston "big dig", (I believe it was the first US subway), most Americans had never spent ten minutes underground, let alone a twelve-hour day.

Mariangela and Pantaleone Mercurio were not sent to the underground. Unattached children/immigrants presented a unique problem for the padrone/sponsors, but Boston had enough work for all sizes. Too small for the tunnel, but just right for the chocolate vat.

Boston, before the turn of the century, was not only a leader in underground tunneling, it was also the chocolate capitol of America, and

there was a place in that industry for children, not only as customers. The chocolate vats, which arrived on the old slave ships, required chipping before the chocolate chunks could be cooked. Kids were the right size to fit into the vats. My image of these minor miners presents a mind boggling irony; chipping and chopping for hours, they must have been coated with chocolate sprinkles (unlike the coal dust sprinkled on the minor miners in Pennsylvania), it must have been a sight for the sore eye of their keepers. I don't remember my grandmother ever eating any chocolate.

Eventually she graduated from chipping vats to the assembly line. The biggest factory, Schrafft's Candy, was nothing like the Willy Wonka plant. It resembled more the neighboring Charlestown State Penitentiary, where Sacco and Vanzetti were executed one dark day, when all the Italian women wiped their chocolate hands on their aprons and walked out in protest. Schrafft's is still there, in Sullivan Square, as I write this, with its fancy new apartments and offices, including architectural allusions to the chocolate past; the penitentiary and its electric chair is gone.

The gravity of the chocolate factory, in the next generation, pulled my mother out of 6th grade and her home economics class with Rose Fitzgerald, (daughter of Honey Fitz), who would later become Mrs Joseph Kennedy. Most Italo-American females of her generation did not finish grammar school. Her childhood chocolate job set the course for her later career as a hand chocolate dipper. Even in the second generation, the pull was still strong. I, myself, was in "the chocolate" pits, until I was big enough to work on construction. Construction was what Italian men did. Most were pick and shovel ditch diggers, which the Ciampas looked down on. I carried a hod for my plasterer uncle and oiled the backhoe for another relative (more on my jobs when we get to those decades).

The underlying point here is that children working had a long tradition even to my time. No one I knew was appalled by child labor exploitation. The prevalent feeling was that once you were old enough to tie your own shoes, you were old enough to walk to work. School was a superimposed foreign idea, not taken seriously by most immigrant families until much later. There was an active role for kids, connected to the survival of the family. I saw that change in my lifetime.

Both my grandmother and her brother escaped the Chocolate mines sooner than most. Unlike the "birds of flight," there was no one they

needed to send money to and absolutely no reason for them ever to return to Italy. Despite their commitment to American capitalism, both were unable to learn English, which was not a problem with their clientele.

Both married young and like the Irish before them, had lots of kids. Mariangela, who came to be known as “Fat Nanna” married Giuseppe Schiavone, a tall man, also from Calabria, who came to dig the Cape Cod canal. It was strange to see them together, like Mutt and Jeff. Not so strange that he was also Calabrese, they would not have been able to communicate otherwise. Italian dialects are very different from each other, and in those days, just a few years after the unification of Italy, peasant women did not learn the Tuscan dialect which became the national language.

These marriages were arranged by social clubs, the same one’s that sponsored the street feasts to celebrate the patron saint of each particular province in Southern Italy. The dialects tightened the bonds between the paisanos to the same degree that it separated them from the other Italo Americans. There was a surprising lack of a bonding between different sub-Italian groups, even mistrust and sometimes violence, back then.

Fat Nana provisioned the offshore Calabrese fishing fleet from a convenience store in the basement of a tenement at 21 Henschman Street, where we all lived and where she made enough to bankroll her brother in the bootlegging business during prohibition. I cannot imagine where they got the start up capital.

Both she and her brother Pantaleone, “Zi Panto” (uncle Pants) as we called him, were shaped like Weebles, short and round, rare for Calabrese who are usually taller than most Italians. Fat Nanna’s husband, Nanu, as I mentioned, was over six feet tall. Zi Panto married a second generation Italian woman, and prospered not only from bootlegging in the 20’s, but also from being a tenement landlord on Endicott and Henschman streets, and also acquiring bankrupt farms in nearby Wilmington. He actually owned a bank at one point, and had to leave the country, once, after FDR’s “bank holiday.” Fat Nana had to pay off some of his more dangerous Sicilian depositors so he could come back which left her nearly broke. By then prohibition was over and he moved into the legal wine and spirits business, Calabria Wine on Endicott street.

All three generations of Mercurio/ Schiavone were achievers. My Mom was an exception. In fact her siblings had a Calabrese nick name for her "tohmpe" which meant something like shy, almost backward. That never seemed to bother her; she just went on doing what she was told women ought to do, with one crucial exception which you will hear about later in the story.

My father's mother, "Skinny Nana." we called her, was tall and thin, She was also named Mariangela; her last name was De Pasquale, which my Dad always pointed out meant that she was of noble stock. Apparently the "De" indicated a family estate. It was hard to detect any aristocracy from her demeanor while she lived with us on Snow Hill. She had suffered several strokes and when I knew her, she was confined to a rocking chair and could hardly speak. However, she did struggle to move her lips and jaw to form broken English and Italian words to make sure I knew about the duel in which her princely father was shot in the head by a man who later married her mother, Angela Capriglione, my great grandmother. Skinny Nanna migrated to America, as a young adult from an Apennine mountain village, Sorbo Serpico, after the tragic death of her father. Her inheritance in the estate which had vineyards and olive groves was hidden from her and was not discovered until Mussolini commandeered some of the forests to make rifle stocks.

"Do it Yourself Historicity"

Colacurcio, Capriglione, De Pasquale were all just characters in a story told by an impaired old lady trying to reach across a cultural divide to her grandson. I did know the son of my step-great grandfather, her half brother. We called him Uncle Steve (Colacurcio), who lived in New Jersey and visited us many times. He was a buxom, jovial, delightful man who was full of fun. Despite the tragedy which brought them together, the two families remain close even to this day.

I will step out of the story here for a closer look at that new historicity I mentioned earlier.

We are always verifying. “Did you see that?” It’s as though we have an indigenous mistrust of our perceived reality, or at least a need to validate with an outside source. This triggers a pleasant surprise when a perception is verified by another’s perception or some other outside evidence. When the perception is from a distant memory, of someone else’s distant memory, the validation is more unlikely and so, more astounding.

In the old days validation by public record was not an option for amateur historians because of the time and space barriers. Even in a Flash Gordon movie (science fiction of the early talkies) a device that would bring you data from anywhere or anytime would have been too much to believe. Even though I use her every day, I still marvel at the world wide reference librarian in my shirt pocket. Etiquette now allows for fact checking even in the middle of an ongoing conversation.

The fact checking in question was aided by a distant Colacurcio cousin, who heard about my story of the fateful duel between our mutual ancestors. She was unknown to me before her email from Virginia flashed across my screen in Florida. Bypassing time and space, she then led me, via email, to a pdf of a large hand written book, which brought me to another century on another continent.

Seventy or so years ago, my grandmother told me a story about an event which occurred seventy or so years before that in the mountain village of Sorbo Serpico, Italy. Now, the elegant penmanship of the pdf page on my lap top screen brought me face to face with my ancestor’s plight. My knowledge of Italian, and a little help from Goggle Translator, established these facts.

Domenico DePasquale and Angela Capriglione were married on January 10 1868, he being 34 and she 20, and we learned that he died 15 years later on May 18, 1883 at 6:15 pm, (the duel was at sundown). From this record I could infer that at the time of his death, De Pasquale was almost 50 years old, his wife Angela and Signor Colacurcio were in their 30’s.

The flowery signatures of two witnesses leapt off the page to introduce Carmine Briccio age 31 and Carmine De Percole age 50. The signatures affirmed that the death was witnessed and, in effect, was a fair fight and not a murder requiring further investigation. Matching the ages and the “De” surnames, indicating social status, I was able to assign the two

Carmines as seconds in the duel - Briccio to Colacurcio and De Percole to De Pasquale. It was obvious from the collateral facts that Mico Lo Re (his sobriquet meaning Dom the King) De Pasquale was an aristocrat ready to kill this younger man or die by his hand rather than be a “cornuto” (cuckold).

The same record book shows that the widow of the the duel was less than mournful. Months after the death of her husband Angela Capriglione (my great grand mother) married the winner of the dual, Colacurcio, April 3, 1884.

Putting it all together in less than an hour, I had the solid confirmation of an unlikely story I heard as a child, and a new respect for oral history, and private history.

This also triggered a wonderment at the butterfly effect - I.e. tiny causes that result in world changing effects. Had a lightening bolt landed a foot to the left of Mercurio; had a bullet landed a foot to right of DePasquale, I wouldn't be here sharing this private history, and hundreds, no thousands of other private histories would be changed, maybe the public history of America as well, of Italy, maybe the world.

I learned from other “on line” historical records, the ancient history of my paternal ancestors, the De Pasquale's and the Ciampa's, who were isolated by the steep Apennine mountains east of Naples. The steep mountain passes, delayed the Roman conquest of these Samnites and Irpini tribes for almost a century after the rest of Italy was Roman. The descendants of these tribes spoke a sub-dialect of Neopolitan called A-Velinese after the province name, Avelino. They looked down on the Calabrese, just as the Calabrese looked down on the Sicilians, and the Romanos looked down on the Velinese, and the Toscanas looked down on the Romanos.

The pecking order in little Italy was an exact replica of the one in big Italy. The further north you were, the lighter your skin, the better off you were. So my Dad, a Velanese, was marrying beneath him, a Calabrese, and took some heat for that, but that didn't keep him from giving the same heat to my brother who married a Sicilian. This may have something to do with why my predilection is for non-Italian girls. Talk about north - my daughter is half Swedish; my son is half Austrian Jewish.

In the early 1960's, I visited Skinny Nana's hometown, Sorbo Serpico, in the above mentioned Apennine Mountains, and there in the village was a statue of my great grandfather with a plaque which told the story of the duel. When I retold the story, I described a hole in the head of the statue of "Mico" Lo Re, my great grandfather. The hole in the head of the statue was always good for a laugh, but now I can't be sure I really saw a hole. If I could have taken a cell phone "selfie", back in the sixties, there would be no question. I also discovered a white wine used all over Europe called Fianno D'Avelino- and a Vineyard named De Pasquale. Over the years, I have tried to make contact with them, but to no avail.

I have also made several trips to the neighboring mountain village, Montefalcione, which spawned all the Ciampa's. The Ciampa mountain boys in those steep hills, knew who I was. My father, John, (named after his paternal grandfather since he was the first born), sent his cousins clothes and food during the hard times after the World War II; blood is thicker than war alliances.

Second generation Italians were given American first names, and still Velanese traditions were followed where the first born son was named after the Father's father; second son named after the Father; with a nick name of junior, Sonny, or the suffix "boy". Eddie's second son was EddyBoy. My brother and all my uncle's first sons were all named Joseph, after my grand father. I, second son of John, was called Johnny Boy by North End family and friends, even to this day.

Both my maternal and paternal grandparents were named Mariangela and Giuseppe. Joseph and Mary were the names of choice; even my brother Joseph married a Mary.

Grandfather Giuseppe Ciampa was a "Bersaglieri," Italy's quick stepping, crack troops who never moved slower than a trot. After his military service, he acquired a craft. He sculpted plaster cornices on the ceilings and atop the columns of institutional buildings all around Boston, including Weidner Library at Harvard, and was successful enough to buy two colonial houses across from the Copps Hill Burial Ground (near the Old North Church). We still own and maintain those houses, as of this writing and my Sister, yet another Maria, still lives there.

He also owned a small victory garden in Revere. No one of my generation ever met Giuseppe. Even his children could not remember much about

him. Only when my father was drunk would he even brooch the subject and then, of course, he painted his dad as superman and it would always end with him vowing to find out how he died. His early demise was another family mystery with enormous consequences, but this one would not be solved by information age technology.

Giuseppe died in 1925 at age 45 - with his youngest daughter still in the womb. This was around the time of the Italian uprising, a reaction to the war on Italian immigrants raging across the country, perpetrated by Federal and State authorities, and sanctioned vigilantes who were allowed to lynch Italians in New Orleans and fry them in the electric chair in Boston. The Donald Trumps of the day exploited the xenophobia of Americans including more recent Irish immigrants. Thousands of Italians were rounded up and deported without trials. Those resisting this government sanctioned persecution were called anarchists. This could explain the Italo rejection of American law and order and the formation of the underground resistance. Knowing only the stories about his pride and military background, I'm guessing my grandfather would have been one to fight back.

The Massachusetts law at the time was that any death unattended by a physician required a coroner's autopsy. For Giuseppe Ciampa there is no autopsy, no coroner's report. There was a newspaper clipping which said he fell and hit his head. He left a wife, five sons and four daughters. My dad, John, was the eldest, and had to become father and bread winner for his siblings (there was no welfare), Domenic, Theresa, Raphael (Phil), Angela (Lena), Michael, Angelo, Evelyn and Josie. I believe they were all scarred by whatever took Giuseppe.

When I was remodeling the old house, I found a large, solid, sterling silver plaque from his funeral and the leather bound guest book, listing the flower donors. I was surprised by the opulence of the funereal artifacts; after all, this was a peasant burial. There were hundreds of signatures in the guest book. It looked like every Italian in the Boston area attended or sent flowers. It seems unlikely the slip and fall accident, reported in the newspaper, would trigger such a response. Neither I nor my brother or anyone else in the family could ever find any objective evidence relating to his death.

Song for My Father

I don't know how my Dad learned to sing. I guess I never asked him. He was singing long before I met him, and before the microphone found its way into live performances. He sang in vaudeville shows with a partner who was a comic. Their act was called Zuhn and Champer (before Sinatra and Como, Italian names had to be anglicized to hide the Italian background). He was also in the Federal Theater Project during the depression as singer, straight man, actor and even acrobat in one stage show which later became Disney's *Pinocchio* movie. This was an amazing time in American history just before I was born. There were CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) camps all over the country rebuilding national parks and other "make work" projects mostly for unemployed men. The Federal Theater Project (FTP) brought together unemployed artists to put on traveling shows for the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) work camps.

I found the *Pinocchio* script in my Dad's drawer one rainy afternoon in the fifties, along with some photos, which put me in touch with this bit of history that I am now sharing with you. Apparently *Pinocchio* was an old Italian fable, and some writer put together a stage show based on this legend, which involved music, acrobatics, and drama. I could see from his expressions and poignant pauses while he was telling me the stories of the FTP in the CCC camps that this might have been the richest part of his life emotionally, even though it was the poorest, economically.

After the FTP days, he had a chance at the big time. He was test marketing songs before they hit the big time, like, "Wagon Wheels"; radio producers would drop their jaws at his range and volume. He had a way of mesmerizing audiences, which had a lot to do with his projection and volume control. He would be called an operatic tenor today, which meant that he knew how to control his breath and make this big sound which could reach out to the back row of a theater, or for three blocks from the band stand at an Italian street feast. His high notes were clear and effortless and felt like they could be sustained forever. Because he could not read music, he had memorized all of the popular operatic areas, Neapolitan folk songs, and American show tunes, which he sang at the street feast with the Roma Band, a uniformed band/orchestra which would march in the streets with the Saint, and then sit in the makeshift bandstand and play a score from an opera, with a few mistakes.

For a time right up until when I was seven or eight, he sang in night clubs. One I remember was called “The Bucket of Blood” and a couple of times he sang in the “Coconut Grove”, famous for its fatal fire which spawned “fire codes” across the country. Fortunately my Dad wasn’t there that night, but my school chum, Salvy Sabbio, lost both his parents in the pile up of panicked patrons jammed against the only inward opening doors.

My Dad was asked to go to New York for a Wrigley’s Chewing Gum radio show. I can’t imagine that the radio bandwidth could accommodate what he had to offer` but that is not why he did not go. He chickened out and blamed it on his family responsibilities. It became his mantra. He chose family over career, always spoken with regret, rather than pride.

Eventually Bing Crosby trumped Rudy Valley’s megaphone with his microphone, and crooning began. The loud speaker diaphragm could provide more volume than my Dad’s. Suddenly singing was less about “loud and clear” and more about phrasing and emotional subtext, not his focus. And then TV came and ended ballrooms and night clubs.

There were still street feasts, and the Roma Band conductor might invite Dad onto the stage to sing the death scene from Tosca. He would do it with relish, even though he was the only one not being paid.

Before that, in the late twenties, he sang in many charity benefit vaudeville shows all around town, where there was very little money and lots of talent.

In fact, that is how my mother and father met. You will recall my mentioning that my Mother always did what she was supposed to do as an Italian girl, and that there was this one crucial digression. Here it is. Like the lightening and the dual, but for this forbidden dance, where Tilly, the toiler, decided to high-step over the boundary, there would be no “I” to “Blink”.

My mother had a non-Italian factory chum, which was highly unusual in the day. Tessy was a red head from Canada. She smoked and drank, also rare for women, and loved showing off her legs as a chorus girl in these local musicals. The fact that I cannot imagine how she somehow dragged my mother onto the stage demonstrates how little we know about our parents as individuals. I do know that had Fat Nana known that

her daughter was going to be on the stage in skimpy silk shorts, she would definitely have been in the audience with a shot gun.

Great care was taken by this entire first generation to keep a curtain between the different dances they did in the different worlds on each side of this transcontinental, generational divide.

While I never saw Tillie (Matilda, my mother) on the stage, I did hear her sing at some of our kitchen concerts, where she was cajoled to perform. She actually had a lovely voice and the shyness actually became a kind of charisma.

Anyway, back to the “crucial digression” - her last and only dance on stage was described to me as follows by her younger sister, Auntie Minnie, who was in the audience. In the middle of a full chorus number, it starts to rain (not sure how they managed that, probably rice or paper particles); all the girls run for cover, all except Tess and Tillie, who happened to have umbrellas. They produce the umbrellas and twirl them so as to cover everything but their bare legs, which strut in a pin spot, across the stage, as they sing: “Let a smile be your umbrella, on a rainy, rainy day...” Dad was in the wings waiting to go on and something from his POV peeked his interest. Their courtship began that night and also brought Tess to the attention of my Dad’s friend Guy Peznola. After a courtship, the two couples were married at a joint wedding in 1931; all in their mid twenties, which was considered very late for marriage in those days.

Mom and Dad lived as newlyweds on Snow Hill, with Dad’s mother and three younger sisters - Aunts Lena, Evelyn and Josie, who were still in school.

Eventually Snow Hill became a central meeting place for both large families. He chose family over career and he got family “in spades.” There were dozens and dozens of people on both sides who provided him with enough adulation to make up for the stage he gave up, and when that wasn’t enough, there was always a little more free booze from Uncle Pants to fill the hole in his soul. I remember these as happy tribal fiestas which revolved around my Dad.

Even though he remained in the ghetto, he was more traveled than most; he spoke all of the Italian dialects, could tell jokes, could sing, could fix

anything. He could draw, sculpt in wood, act, play semi professional football, (Hull Knights), and provide guidance to the entire clan. He was without a doubt the prince of paupers which included aunts, uncles and cousins from both sides and many of their friends. He was the judge of all their disputes, the bridge to the larger culture and the life of all the parties, and there were several a week. There was no TV and no couch potatoes.

Prohibition glorified alcohol and even after it was repealed, everybody drank and smoked with impunity right up until the sixties. There were no health cautions. In fact, so called doctors recommended “Camel” cigarettes as health aids. Drunks were considered cute and almost expected at every party. All was ok as long as you sobered up in time for work, which they all did.

I have glimpsed only what it was like in that canyon between generations. As close as I was, it is still hard for me to imagine how my Dad’s generation kept their balance bouncing back and forth between the two worlds: where you spoke one language to your parents and another to your peers, sat for supper at a medieval table and “Charlestonned” til dawn at a modern speakeasy.

Eventually, that same trans-cultural challenge had a unifying effect on the sub-Italian factions. By the time I hit the streets, “paisan” had expanded to include all Italians. We were all “paisani.” We still made jokes about Sicilians being Turks with smaller knives and Calabrese having hard heads (capo tosta=testa dura) though.

You would expect the Calabrese block heads on my maternal side to be much later in adapting to the complex new world than the musical, semi-aristocratic, Velanese on my paternal side. It was not until I started writing this, that I realized that it was the exact opposite. All of the maternal Calabrese cousins went to college - the uncles and aunts were well-spoken and very Americanized; one aunt even changed names to be more anglo, and all were quick to assimilate and escape the ghetto. While on the paternal side, except for the youngest aunt, none of my uncles, aunts, or cousins made it through high school, and none escaped the ghetto. If the assimilation curve for the maternal side was much higher, I would have to say lovingly, Ma was at the bottom of that curve. And, if the paternal curve was much lower, it is also true that Daddy was at the top of that curve. Surely those relative positions had a lot to do

with the initial functioning of the relationship and the eventual dysfunction, which now I must finally admit was pretty bad. Did I say, he was abusive when drunk and when I was in high school, they separated?

Later my Dad became what came to be know as an “alcoholic,” a word which had no place in the vocabulary of roaring 20’s and 30’s, and no cure in the 40’s and 50’s and no solace up until his death in 60’s.

The fact that I have begun my story with their story needs some explaining. I am not a a first generation italo child of the roaring twenties, but I did have to start with the cards they dealt me. My first look at the world was through the eyes of my parents. Whether you believe it’s the luck of the draw or destiny, there is an opening hand you are dealt; many ways to play it, but definitely a distinct number on the cards for each opening hand. Fewer of the cards from my parents were dealt by my grandparents more than from the deck during their adult life in the “jazz age.” Many more of the cards in my hand was dealt by my parents and they weren’t cards I could win with, but I learned quickly that I could throw back the bad cards. The hand changes depending on how many new cards you draw from the deck. There are those who draw few cards and they look and sound just like the previous generation, which may be as far as they wished to go. For whatever reason, I wanted to draw as many new cards as the game would allow. And I have not found that limit yet.

“The sins of the father are to be laid upon the children”, says Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice*. “Laid upon...” means you have to deal with it, and I did, it took a long time but I did deal with it. In the end, Dad’s suffering actually helped me learn that no chemical can fill the soul hole.

1936-1946 MELTING IN THE POT

I have no direct recollection of being born at Snow Hill in 1936, nor our move in 1938 to 21 Henchman St., a few blocks away - still within the North End, Boston's Little Italy. We had to move from Snow Hill for some reason, either renovation, or we needed the rent from the tenant. We lived for free on Henchman St. during this time, which was owned by my maternal grandmother and her brother, uncle Pants.

Henchman St. is the backdrop for my earliest memories. I remember my complex relationships with what should have been a dizzying family array - 14 aunts and uncles on both sides, and 29 cousins spanning two generations. What is amazing is that, at the age of three or four, I had no trouble fitting them all into the matrix which was my support system, "my family tree", my "tribe," really. Not just me, but every kid had the elaborate family tree to sit under even before they learned to climb.

No recollection of mother at that point, just Fat Nanna, Dad and Aunts. I learned later that my mother was extracted from the scene by tuberculosis. There were no miracle drugs yet. Instead everyone was sent away to Sanatoria to breathe country fresh air. Whether or not it cured them, it kept them away from the uninfected. During her absence my brother and I were split up. He went to my Dad's Sisters and I went to Fat Nanna and Ma's sisters, Tony and Minnie and then, Ella, who had five sons, already grown ups. I often thought my attachment to multiple women might have to do with these early maternal surrogates. I had lots of mothers which might have something to do with having lots of wives.

In this part of the decade I, Johnny Boy, was the baby of the family, the youngest child in my immediate family and the youngest cousin in both tribes. I [Wa]was finding ways to connect to the others, which had to be done to survive. Somehow I knew I had to reach out to grab the attention of this network of displaced adults. It was natural to interpret their distraction and teasing as rejection, which spawned the development of social shields, and swords and fencing skills.

I can still see the upright piano in Fat Nanna's flat. I wish there was someone left to ask about why or how it got there. This was the tail end of the great depression; there was no money and she, of all people,

would not squander a penny on a hair pin. What possessed her to buy a piano? She never touched it. She never sang, never made nor responded to a musical utterance. And her husband “Nanu” would not have had either the money or the inclination to order a piano for the parlor. It was almost comical how this big tall man danced in attendance to the tune of this little round lady. How the piano got there will have to remain a mystery, one that shaped my life. The piano had a magnetic force for some of us as it stood in the hall between Nana’s two rooms on the first floor of the tenement. Two of my aunts dabbled, and my older cousin Loraine, who was also half Velinese, could play boogie woogie on the black keys.

Fat Nanna was in charge of me for part of the time my mother was in the sanitarium (I actually don’t know how long that was). Fat Nanna would leave me at the piano and go down to tend to the customers in her basement grocery store. It wasn’t long before I [Ti] figured out how to make sounds with this device, and not long after that I [Th] marveled at the relationship of the ivory intervals to those in frequencies that made harmony and dissonance. I might bang on one key for a time and then one key with each hand. I remember the fascination with the black keys. As long as she could hear notes being banged out upstairs, she knew I was ok. Apparently, the fascination with the ivories could keep me still for hours at a time, as it still does.

I have faint recollections of Nanu (a Calabrese word for grandfather like the Italian Nonno) showing up, from time to time, and bringing shot glasses for me to share his home made wine. Yup, they gave kids wine. My expression on tasting the wine made him laugh out loud. Nanu, as I said, was a tall well-built man with a sculpted chin and high cheek bones. He would also supervise my outdoor street time, sitting in the stoop with “Ou Canularu” - a Calabrese shillelagh, used for rolling dough as well as cracking skulls. His nick name was “Africanu.” He might have served in Africa with the Italian army, I’m not sure. He did dig the Cape Cod canal and later worked on construction where he was injured, so that he could no longer work. It might have had something to do with his eyes. He was taken from us suddenly when I was three or four years old.

The paternal and maternal tribes would normally be separated by the Paisano pecking order based on the Italian sub-regions; instead it was well mixed because of my Dad, who dominated both tribes of uncles, aunts and cousins with his talent and charisma.

Uncles and Aunts

My grandmother, Maria Angela, named all her girls Maria *all* except my mother, who was called Matilda (Mattida) after her grandmother. The four Maria's were distinguished by a middle name, which became their primary name. I knew them as Auntie's Ella (Maria Rafaella pronounced in Calabrese Rahella), Minnie (Maria Domenica), Toni (Maria Antonetta), Annie (Maria Anna), and my maternal Uncles were Tabby (Tabberano-Salvatore) and Sammy (I never learned his real name since he was in Matapan State Hospital - a victim of the polio epidemic which left him physically and mentally disabled).

Maternal Cousins

Ella's: Joe, Hector (a Calabrese name that harkens back to the Trojans), Alec, Ray, Richie;

Tabby's: Eleanor;

Minnie's: Laurie;

Annie's: Bertha, Jackie, Marie;

Tonie's: Phillip, Dianne, Carl

On the father's side Skinny Nana (Maria Angela De Pasquale/ Ciampa) spawned uncles Domenic, Phil, Mike, Angelo; and aunts Teresa, Lena, Evelyn and Josie.

Paternal cousins:

Phil's: Joey 2 (Joey 1, first Ciampa grandchild was my brother), Bobby, Teresa Ann;

Domenic's : Joey3;

Teresa's: Joey 4 , Eddie, Ann Marie, Rita;

Angelo's: Joey 5, Peter, Fran;

Mike's: (no Joey - he was first to rebel), Patty, Marie, Paula, Mike, Chris.

Uncles and Aunts, first generation Italo-Americans, were more American and less Italian than their parents, which created a unique generation gap, an "invisible wall." Cousins, the second generation were even more American and hardly Italian and much less of a generation gap with parents, but much wider gap with grandparents.

I didn't realize I was missing anything by not having access to grandparents until later in life, when I was astounded at my girlfriend's grandparents who not only spoke English, but could discuss Shakespeare with her.

Most of my cousins could not speak Italian, any dialect. We knew mainly curse words, and food names. I think it safe to say that our parents had trouble understanding some of our ideas, and our grandparents did not understand us at all in more ways than one. The irony was that we were none the less branded and marginalized from the larger culture outside the ghetto, and unlike our predecessors, we had to figure out how to escape the ghetto which was their safety net.

When I had to read "Street Corner Society" in college by William H White, the famous book that invented a major Sociological method, I was thrilled and disappointed. I was thrilled to find out that he had actually come to live in the North End and hung out with Dad and my uncles and their friends in the 20's, and mentions them in his book. I was disappointed at how he failed to see the connection between the sociology and the psychology of each generation of immigrants.

My Dad was one of the first few who could pass through the barriers gracefully; "pass through" but return tail between his legs. His show business career took him outside the ghetto, but brought him back to the comfort and safety of the ghetto, where isolation turned into celebration every Saturday night.

It will no doubt be hard for you to imagine these Saturday nights. This was a different pre-telephone, pre-TV, world where people visited each other spontaneously almost daily and had a standing invitation to party every Saturday night. TV completely revised and refocused billions of hours of leisure time for everyone. Before TV people would just drop in. Believe it or not, not everyone had a phone. And even though we did (we still have the same phone number at Snow Hill, going on 90 years), we used it sparingly because each call was an expense.

Social interaction took up all our free time. There were card games, baseball arguments, and the thing I miss the most, singing. Everyone sang, sometimes in harmony. There was almost always an accompanist; if there was no piano, there might be a ukulele, guitar or an accordion, sometimes mine.

In my Dad's purple velvet lined case was a \$50 (900 today dollars) Martin, Mahogany, F hole guitar (which I still have), paid for weekly with one seventh of his salary \$1 (which left \$6 for food and shelter) and if there was no money, the payment was covered by Auntie Minnie. That guitar and the big Gibson D of his friend Joe Foritano, combined with the mandolin, and sometimes a violin to make our small kitchen a sound box broadcasting into the narrow back alley, where all the open tenement windows would let in the winter cold with the music. If there was any room left in the kitchen or parlor, neighbors would be invited, but, usually, there was no room on Saturday night. Some times you would hear this lovely contralto coming from the Bellofatto window, joining the chorus from across the alley. There was always live music, not just in my house, but everywhere, on street corners, not only Saturday nights, but any night, or any day at summer outings. Everybody sang choruses of Italian songs and the American ballads of the 30's, many of which were based on Neapolitan folk songs.

When Dad stood up and cleared his throat, there would be a sudden pause as silent expectant smiles awaited his solo, which made the hair on the back of your neck stand up. He sounded better than Caruso, because we only heard Caruso through the tiny speakers that were available on radios and victrolas. Italians respond to tenors like Spaniards to bull fighters. It wasn't just music; it was a feat, and a treat to hear sounds you could never make, coming with ease from plumbing just like yours.

Return of the Prodigal Mother

After my mother was cured of her TB, she returned to work as a hand dipper of chocolates. I remember the strange feeling, a jolt really, of being left by my newly re-united mother to the care of total strangers. They weren't even family. This was a pre-school program at the North End Union settlement houses on Parmentia Street. [These minor inconveniences registered as major suffering with Wo.]

I remember being told to lay down on the floor mats by adults I didn't know, surrounded by strange kids who were not cousins. It was suspended animation; I was frozen. I remember being given cod liver oil. I don't remember whether it was for punishment or nourishment, but I do remember it was torture.

I have sense memories from this decade, all the way back to age three. How do I know? Well I remember my favorite aunt Minnie bringing me, [early Ti] a bronze model of the World's Fair of 1939. It was a bronze globe and a pyramid. I remember my ambivalence of loving the fact of the gift but not knowing how to play with it.

Auntie Minnie was her own woman, movie star attractive, wore make up, first to smoke, first to get divorced, several times, all unheard of for Italian women. She lived with us on several occasions at Snow Hill and at Henschman St, and her daughter, my older cousin Lorraine, was my guide to life outside the ghetto and to music.

I [Wa] remember performing extraordinary descents down the narrow stair well from the the Henschman St. third floor tenement - falling almost free-fall with the tips of my heels barely touching the stair edge while my upper body slid on the banister. These experiences with weightlessness also became flying dreams which I recall while we lived at 21 Henschman St.

The two billion seconds of waking impressions at the basis of this story are accompanied by another billion or so impressions which occurred while I was asleep. While they are not the main focus, if Freud got anything right, they might have some bearing on the waking moments. I will not bore you with amateur psychoanalysis, except to point out that from that day to the present, every dream is about anxiety; anxiety about being lost or losing something. Even the flying dreams were tarnished with the fear of falling if I ever looked down.

I had no sense of being poor. I learned much later that my family was dead broke and the 21 Henschman flat was rent free because the building belonged to Fat Nana and/or her brother Zi Panto (uncle Pants). Oh, did I mention that in his bootlegging days, Zi Panto had to fight off Joe Kennedy who tried to run him out of business several times.

Meanwhile, his wife to be, Rose. lived down the street and, I already mentioned that she taught my mother and other Italian girls how to become homemakers.

Fat Nana was also unofficially in the liquor business. The store in the basement of 21 Henchman also sold her brother's wine and bathtub gin "under the table".

Hobo-Kinder[^]

Whether I am remembering the story or the actual event or both, one day stays with me from what must have been that third year of life. I believe I can directly recall some of my perceptions and inner feelings from this, my first "test" of parental love. [Wo was in the role, but in the middle of the scene Wa appears for the first time, asserting independence and trying to deal with what he saw as parental rejection.]

I do not remember the prologue to the incident, except that there was a gathering of aunts and uncles from both sides of the family, Apparently, my early grasp of language was a source of great amusement across the family. In this staged dispute, I was parroting "adult" complaints about the accommodations, and the trigger line was something like "If you don't like it; move out". There was a tense, silent pre-laugh moment, waiting for my response which was a bigger surprise than expected. [Wa emerged to take over.] I accepted the challenge to everyone's surprise. They were hysterical with laughter.

I [Wo] was delighted by the attention I was receiving by accepting the challenge and then terrified at the disconnection; I [Wa] was fascinated by the prospect of an independent adventure and realized that I [Ti] had no plan, no map, and maybe no way to travel; I had too little experience to realize that this teasing might be an opportunity for a performance and a few laughs. I [Wa] took it seriously and hoped that courage would get me through.

They tied my possessions in a rag bag and put a stick through it, so I could carry it over my shoulder like a hobo.

"Where will you go and live?" they asked as I headed for the door.

"Uncle Mikey's" I replied. (my godfather).

I remember my Auntie Minnie saying words to the effect that this has gone far enough as I approached the three story stair well, and I remember my Dad insisting that the scene be left to play out. There were images of hobos traveling like this that I was unaware of. I didn't realize they were following as I descended three flights of stairs. I was not aware of the large audience on the fire escape, as I walked down the side walk, stick on my shoulder, to Commercial Street. I actually remember thinking I am not allowed to cross the street, and wondering whether I was still bound by those standing orders of my former parents.

Before I could step foot into the street my Dad swept me up into his arms, laughing "You little shit". I had to figure out for the first time why teasing and joking existed. You have to learn to take a joke.

Other Henchman memories involve all the cousins on my Mother's side, who lived nearby. Some lived in the same building and two lived next door, Bertha and Jackie, Auntie Annie's girls. Jackie will appear again later as part of a horror story.

As I mentioned, Dad was in the WPA Federal Theater Project, where he earned \$7 a week. We took groceries from Fat Nana's store and marked what we took in a composition book. I don't know whether we ever paid. The booze was free because Uncle Pants loved the music my Dad provided.

Sunday's large gatherings of aunts, uncles and cousins ate spaghetti and meatballs outdoors, there being no air conditioning; It hadn't been invented yet. Gardens and patios had been invented but were beyond the ghetto. Outdoor dining venues were usually on a flat roof and/or fire escape. Our roof had a wooden stave fence around the tarred surface where the grandchildren sat, which afforded a view of Boston Harbor through the slats. Fat Nana was always angry about something, which did not dissuade the roof dining cousins from throwing her tasteless meat balls down at the kids in the street. (Fat Nanna may have been a sandwich entrepreneur, but she was not a cook).

One outdoor dining experience forms my most pleasant memory of those days. On Sundays, as if we were royalty, uncle Pant's horse-drawn buggy would take my family from the North End to an estate in

Wilmington where the extended Calabrese family and clan were gathered for feasting.

I realize that this sounds historically implausible, but you have to trust me. Until World War II there were horse-drawn wagons delivering milk and watermelons in the North End. My friend, Mimi the pioneer, got to ride the dray horses bareback back to the barn; and believe it or not, Uncle Pants had a livery of horses to draw his beer wagons and also had the buggy I just mentioned. One day, he bought his grandson a polo pony.

The outdoor venue for our clan was a bankrupt farm in Wilmington foreclosed on by Uncle Pant's bank. There are great photos of these gatherings of the clan at Wilmington, demoralizing those days. I discovered these photos as an adult and made into large framed wall hangings which I gave out to relatives.

Restrictive Covenants

Uncle Pant's occupancy of the Wilmington property contravened the restrictive covenants, forbidding sales to Italians. This will also be hard for you to believe, but yes, such laws were on the books in Massachusetts and other states.

Once an official showed up with an order having to do with the restrictive covenant. The story goes like this. Uncle Pants told the Sheriff "Ama no Taliano." As small and cute and round as an elf, his smile revealed a solid gold incisor tooth. The pearl handle derringer in his vest pocket was a toy cap gun, which he would look down at in the middle of a conversation to throw you off guard. He was trying to tell the Sheriff that he was not Italian, but all those young guys with the muscle, they were Italian, if he was looking for Italians to throw out. "Keesto (these are) "Taliani", "butta li" (Go ahead and throw them out). His sense of humor underscored his fearlessness. No danger or emergency could keep him from his playful demeanor. Huck was Uncle Pant's driver, (Pantaleone never bothered to learn English or to drive a car; he had others who could do that for him). Responding only to a head gesture, Huck escorted the officials off the property and whatever he whispered to them was more effective than any legal response to the court order, keeping them off the property for years to come.

We loved to hear Uncle Pants call for his driver and he never figured out why. The reason has to do with an amazing linguistic phenomenon which, I think, I alone discovered, but then, of course, I have never studied linguistics formally.

The phenomena has to do with transliteration. I noticed that when a speaker transposes a particular letter, the reciprocal transposition follows inevitably. Example: Asians transpose “L” for “R”, and so, “R” becomes “L”, as well. One of our babysitters, when I was living with Jean Shore in Beverly Hills, told us she was a student at “UCRA” (UCLA) and she adored my “Itarian laviori ” (Italian ravioli).

Even If it turns out that this transliteration phenomenon was already known, I’m sure that what follows **is** an original discovery. I told you that Fat Nanna and Uncle Pants spoke Calabrese. It turns out Calabrese transpose “F” and “H” and, surprisingly, this is applied to both languages. Italian “figlio” (child) became “Higio”. Fat Nanna, with the few English words she knew, would always transpose unconsciously. “Washa the “hace” and “fands” (face and hands), she would tell me. It was something they could not correct, because they could not hear the switch. Whenever there was an “H”, it became and “F”. Now you can see why Uncle pants calling for his driver, “Huck” never failed to amuse.

Back to the picnics - every Sunday, weather permitting, the clan left the ghetto, gathered around a long wooden table in Wilmington, ate and drank to excess and Dad’s combo made glorious music. Traditional Neapolitan songs (there aren’t any Calabrese songs that I know of) and American songs of 20’s and 30’s were played and sung. His guitar player, Joe Foritano, always found time to teach me lyrics; and everyone would crack up when Joe’s little puppet -me [Wa], barely old enough to talk, would unabashedly belt out a lyric with no idea what it meant. As I mentioned earlier, I had the ability to parrot things I heard, which provided great amusement to the adults in my life. With Joe’s rich guitar accompaniment, I would imitate my Dad’s stage presence and squeak out one of the two songs Joe taught me. I [Th] was already intrigued by the phenomenon of not knowing something one day and then suddenly you had expanded your mental inventory. I [Th] suspected that tools for acquiring these new skills might have been there already and maybe they were just being uncovered, which might explain why my brother could not learn any songs, or not without a thousand repetitions. Yes, Philosophy

was already in there, without ever having heard the word, and it was being realized underneath every scene. I [Wa] was addicted to applause at a young age, which quelled my [Wo] fears of bombing. I still remember the lyrics....

“Why don’t you hop on a ship to Havana and

I’ll see you in

C- U -B- A”

Cuba.... where hearts are gay

Where all the dark eyed Stellas

light their fellas

panatelas”

(All without knowing quite what any of that meant.)

“There’ll be a change in the weather ...And a change in the sea,

There’ll be some changes made today. Oh yeah”.

A Stitch in Time

My older brother, Joey “1”, born in in 1932 (the “1” indicated that he was the oldest of family Joey’s) was my guide through the first decade.

Entrusting him with my care starting at age eight or nine, would probably have gotten my parents in trouble with Social Services today, but back then it was a common practice. “Little rascals” took care of each other on the streets of every major city in America. Parents were otherwise occupied with adapting and surviving and so child supervision became the responsibility of children. Size and age usually determined who supervised who.

I was the mascot of my older brother’s gang, all of whom were four or five years my senior; Mikey Nocera, was the eldest, (remembering names from 76 years ago, continues to amaze me); he might have been almost 12.

There were always loose rocks in front of the garage around the corner of 21 Henchman St where we lived. One of the passtimes was hurling the rocks at a metal garage door. When the bigger rocks managed to hit the

door there was a “boom” like an explosion, which seemed to provide a continuing fascination for the gang, especially since it alarmed the bar flies next door, who would occasionally run out blinking to see what just blew up. There was a war about to begin. I don’t think it was annoying just the bar customers that brought us back again and again. It was something deeper; we were recapitulating the learning experience of the species. Like primitive tribesmen, we were discovering primitive missile technology. So we threw the rocks tirelessly, until we were run off and then we would return with sling shots, I suppose if we were left there long enough, we eventually would have discovered bows and arrows and rifles and cannons.

My job was to retrieve the rocks and bring them back to the pitchers. I [Wa] did this tirelessly and amazed the other kids with my bold runs under fire. It never occurred to anyone to cease fire during retrieval. There was no learning experience which would have created any safety concerns; that is until I got “beaned.” It was the first time any of them had seen that much blood . My fascination with their reactions kept me from feeling any pain for a few minutes. Eventually, I felt all tingly and the pleasant stupor of a knock out and the warmth of blood running down my face. The scalp bleeds a lot, so by the time my Dad arrived, it looked a lot worse than it was. I was conscious enough to see that I had become the center of everyone’s attention. I [Ti] remember being amazed at my Dad’s agility. He came down in stocking feet, scooped me up and flew like Superman, without shoes, 10 or 12 blocks to the Medical Mission Hull Street Dispensary, where I got my first stitches in the head. I [Ti] was fascinated by the sticking process and at the same time [Wo] frightened; I [Wo] no longer felt safe with my brother’s guidance. If it weren’t for my superman Dad...

A side note on that remarkable facility I just mentioned. I learned in college that this same dispensary was the very first attempt at socialized medicine in the US. Doctors from Harvard and Mass General donated time in the North End Ghetto for anyone who came, no fees, no questions asked. Later in life when I dated a Radcliffe girl, who you will hear more about, she told me that she had interned there while getting a degree in social work from Harvard. I had stitches there, tonsils removed, teeth pulled, no pay, no co-pay.

It Takes a Village

In the next weeks, my head was bandaged like the wounded soldier in the recruitment poster that hung over my brother's bed. There was a drive to get volunteers before the draft began.

My brother did not improve as custodian even after this dramatic failure of judgment. I see now how a ten-year-old might find this responsibility onerous, especially after my own much greater failure as a guardian when I was ten (which you will hear about soon); I finally forgave my brother.

So, one Spring day about the time the war had just begun, he passed me off to Mikey Nocera so he could go with the rest of the gang, skinny dipping off the Boston Sand and Gravel barge docks, where Navy ships were beginning to dock. That day Mikey had to go uptown to get a license to circumvent the new child labor laws. I think he was going to become a newsboy. So with this "head bandaged" ward in tow, he walked all the way up to Tremont St. to a tall building, much taller than the tenements, with a black marble entry way a step up from the broad sidewalk. People were all dressed up, like in the movies.

I [Ti] was amazed at how close these two worlds were geographically; our little legs could carry us a quarter of a mile and we were in another world. I [Th] was amazed at how close these "others" were and yet how unreachable. I was already learning that "Little Italy" and "Big America" (the North End and Uptown), were separated, but not by distance.

"Johnny Boy, you stay here and don't move, no matter what and don't talk to anyone. You got that?" I trusted Mikey; he was the one who called my dad when my head was bleeding, and he was the one who declared cease fire on the garage door after my stitches. So, I was doubly disappointed when he never came back for me. Apparently the joy of obtaining the work permit, and all that that meant for his new status as a working man must have been such a distraction, he forgot who he came with.

The building had a rear exit onto Essex St. which Mikey must have used to run home, and show everyone his new permit. He would not

remember that he left me in the front atrium of the building until the next day.

After what seemed like an eternity, my [Wo] fear of perdition, overwhelmed my [Wa] dim sense of adventure. I was crying out loud. I sat there weeping for what seemed like days on another planet. Actually only hours had passed. When quitting time for the offices in the building rolled around, people rushed past this bandaged balling baby boy without so much as a look. Everything changed once one person stepped out of the rush hour flow to inquire. After that a crowd gathered to gawk at this out-of-place street urchin, crying softly now, head bandaged, still not talking to anyone, seated on the front step of the tall building. One lady put a few pennies down on the step where I was sitting, another offered Chicklets. Finally a radio show host named “Buddy” something or other came out of the building and pushed through the small crowd and asked me my name. I [Wa] somehow was able to roll out of the inner panic enough to speak. I knew my name and that I was from Henchman Street. When he heard my name, (the same as my Dad’s) he asked if my dad was a singer. “Yes”, I knew that too.

Buddy had taken over now, the onlookers still offering advice. I remember one suggestion that my brain must have been affected by the head injury. Now a tall policeman showed up with two rows of buttons sparkling in the sunset down either side of his chest. I [Th] learned that this authority figure was clueless. “Officer, I know this kid’s father; I can take him home. He’s from the North End.” Buddy said.

“What the hell is doin up here?” The cop let Buddy have me for better or worse.

I rode home in this pale blue Nash Coup. Riding in cars was not something you got to do in those days in the North End. So I [Ti] was feeling pretty special and at the same time scared [Wo]. He wasn’t even Italian. Finally we got to Henchman Street and I pointed out my tenement. I could have found my way up to our flat as I always did but for some reason Buddy carried me up the three flights. The kitchen door was always open for ventilation. No one worried about burglars. My Dad was in the bedroom; he slept during the day when he was going to be singing at night. Dad came out in long underwear to find a stranger holding me in his kitchen. Before I knew it, he had Buddy by the shirt front ready to punch him out.

Buddy sputtered out his rescue story. Dad let go. Buddy was expecting some sort of gratitude - to be invited for a drink or at least a brief chat. My Dad led him to the stairwell continuing to eye Buddy suspiciously, as he descended, shaking his head. Because that scene made no sense to any of me, it has stayed with me all these years. I don't know what was going through my father's mind; not what I expected.

I told my side of the story. Dad scolded Mom when she got home from Miller and Hollis where she had hand dipped chocolates all day. Mom scolded brother Joey, Joey scolded Mikey Nocera, and all was back to normal. Or was it? Psychologists say that these early memories can make waves that rock the boat for life. As I write this story, I am making the connection between this early childhood experience and my incessant, life long "left behind" and "lost" dreams which are still with me.

Bennie's skin was brown like a Mexican; his father owned the bar one lot in from the corner of Henchman and Commercial Street, on the opposite corner from the rock garage. Bennie played with chalk on the sidewalk across the street, the narrower one, Henchman St., which I was allowed to cross. We were both around four or five years old and Bennie let me use his chalk on the sidewalk. Also when Bennie was called into the bar for a snack, I was sometimes included. I remember the bowls of free food on the bar - "tripa" is the lining of cows stomach in tomato sauce, and hard boiled eggs in salt water, and salted fave beans.

I had learned from my brother to use my foot and one hand to trip someone. I [Wa] was eager to see what this skill would bring in the way of power over others. Bennie was bigger than me, but he did go down when I tripped him, after which he got up and punched me in the jaw. I heard a strange bong inside my head again, not like the one when the rock landed against my skull. I had never been punched. I don't know how many little boys never ever get punched, but I know it puts you in a different world.

[Even while Wo was horrified, Wa was already mobilized; Ti was curious about the internal reaction to the punch. Th was amazed that Benny knew how to do that. Wo wanted to hide somewhere and cry, but Wa emerged and took over. I ran back at Benny and tripped him again and again he fell. This time when he got up, he ran back inside the bar, crying

and I crossed the street where Nanu was grinning from ear to ear; he had been following the scene from the stoop of our building.

I [Wa] had subtle, but meaningful and long lasting, adult approval for the violence. The inner dialogue went something like this - we are just going to have to live with this Punch and Judy show, so might as well be on the handle end of the slapstick.

And now for a little more sociology, or maybe I mean cultural anthropology. I have already likened the experiments of our street gang to those of primitive tribesmen. This next gang activity is like the “rights of passage” for young males of the tribe. Replace the jungle tree tops with tenement roofs and the same gauntlet is set to run. The rite for us was jumping from one four-story tenement roof top to another across the alley; in between must have been six or seven feet wide.

The taller kids would run as fast as they could and then leap across the alley to the edge of the other roof, still standing. My brother could do it. [Even at this young age, Ti knew enough physics to agree with Wo, that this stunt was to be avoided whatever the social consequences. We might even allow screaming for adult help at this point.]

None of that was necessary, Mikey Nocera pushed me to the back of the line after my brother made the jump. One kid, Sonny, landed on his elbows rather than on his feet, his trunk dangling over the abyss, hanging on for dear life. Fortunately my brother was strong enough to drag him up onto the other roof. Once Mikey saw that all were safe on the other side of the alley, he guided me down the fire escape on our side of the alley. Everyone knew Mikey could make the jump, so he could afford to be kind instead of brave.

These accomplished feats were invisible badges which provided status in the gang and even in the broader circuit of other gangs. There were some regional badges respected by everyone in the North End, which had to do with jumping or diving off the Charlestown bridge. Street level ‘diving’ being a higher status badge than jumping; then came the one highest badge of courage, which also came with a title, “Supie” , short for Superman, was reserved for the one or two in each generation who would dare to dive from the elevated MTA tracks. There was one Supie in a much older gang, I believe his name was Richie Pagliuca whose sister became a Hollywood starlet; they were from Richmond St and became

friends of mine. Mimi came to earn the title when we were pre-teens. (more about Mimi later).

This “Supie” feat involved climbing the ladder on the girders of the elevated train stanchions onto the tracks (which once crossed the Charlestown Bridge). The tracks were at least 30 feet higher than the bridge roadway and recessed, so that the diver had to plan a trajectory to clear a seven or eight foot sidewalk and railing and then fall the next 70 or 80 feet to the water below. Whenever this test event occurred, it had an audience the size of the Acapulco Cliff divers watch group. We’ll come back to the bridge. (Mark this location it will become significant in our family history).

Murder on Henschman St

The very first time I even sensed that my brother was looking out for me was the day the Red Como murder was discovered by Mikey Nocera in the vestibule of 4 Henschman Street, on the corner of Charter Street. I learned later that the victim’s penis had been removed and stuffed in his mouth. The victim was an adult, and apparently a stool pigeon. Our gang discovered it. All we did about it was to supervise other kids who came onto our turf to run in, take a look and run out, wincing and shaking both hands as if to get the blood off. When it was my turn, my brother finally stepped in and said I should not see this. I’m not sure what guided his decision, but he was adamant. So I never saw the corpse.

Some of the memories I have of my earliest years are based on stories told about (and to) me by my live-in, old maid aunts, and repeated so often as to almost become my own.

One was that I wore my baseball cap off to one side. This is long before the off-set brim became a political statement. And when asked why, I replied, “I can’t yook”. The hat was probably an ill-fitting hand-me-down and “yook” was an early form of “look”, used in place of see, and maybe my own personal transliteration.

The other incident had to do with my asking my mother at what age she would begin to add vowels to the end of every word and speak “lika a disa-“. I assumed that broken english had something to do with the aging process, which was understandable in light of the fact that in my world everyone with wrinkles added vowels to the end of every word.

A number of other misconceptions remained uncorrected for the longest time because I never thought to ask. I assumed in second grade that Jesus must have been put on a plus sign because he was added to our lives. I was also sure that God was not Italian, since he had a Yankee last name “Hallowby”: “Our Father who art in Heaven, Hallowby thy name.”

Saint Anthony’s School

I was four in September of that first school year and turned five the following June as the school year ended. We were back living at Snow Hill, which was about the same distance from Saint Anthony’s grammar school.

My earliest memory of Snow Hill coincides with my introduction to Newtonian physics. I [Ti] have a distinct memory of a physics miracle involving multiplication of force. I [Ti] was intrigued by the mover’s block and tackle. Fortunately for me my dad knew enough to explain how it worked. He had almost completed a technical high school before he dropped out. A single man with a rope pulley was able to raise the icebox, the stove, the couch, etc.. to the second story window. The device could multiply the energy of multiple pulls and lift the un-liftable to the second story window. The staircase was too narrow and that was the only way to get the furniture to the second floor where we lived. Seeing these un-budgeable objects dangling in the air impressed me. I also remember “Di Carlo” was the name on the big moving Van. The movers went through the attic and out on the roof where they tied a rope around the chimney to which they attached a block and tackle. (Once again I am amazed that this impression is still there and accessible with so much detail.)

Radio and comic books (called “funny books”) were the largest part of my media experience in those days. There were films shown in the basement of the school on Fridays. Buster Crab as Flash Gordon. Buster Keaton as himself (silent films were still shown), a cartoon cat, predecessor of Mikey Mouse. The Three Stooges, and Our Gang comedies were particular favorites. And there were the movie houses uptown, which I would get to patronize a little later in my life. There will be more on the role of media in my life in the EPILOGUE section. I would just add here that the comic books were also the basic macro-currency of a micro-economy.

There were a few games that came in a box like Monopoly, but we were much more involved in an on going game, which we took more seriously than any game which came in a box. It was a kind of proto-economics that involved all of the Snow Hill kids.

The strange micro-currency of this micro-economy was made out of matchbooks and could be exchanged for macro-currency, or used for gambling. The metrics of this micro-currency were derived from the wording on match book covers. The system was well established by the time of my indoctrination. The matchbook had to be devoid of matches and reasonably clean. The value was determined by a band of print across the bottom:

“Close Cover” = 1

“Close Cover Before Striking” = 5

“Close Cover Before Striking Match” = 10

We carried these things around in our little pockets like shrunken dollars. I knew how to make change for a ten with one five and five ones, before I had arithmetic in school.

Radio listening was allowed while we were waiting for supper (that is what dinner was called in Boston; and we called lunch, “dinner”). My favorite shows were *Jack Armstrong All-American Boy* and *The Shadow*. Dad loved *Fibber McGhee and Molly*. We listened to boxing matches especially when an Italian was fighting: Primo Carnera, Rockie Graziano, Carmine Basilo, our own Tony DeMarco, and of course Rockie Marciano, who was not only Italian, but Calabrese.. We all loved Joe Louis, too, and were sad to see him loose but were glad he lost to a Calabrese.

If you heard now how music sounded on those early radios, you would wince, but we had nothing to compare it with so it sounded just fine to us. We had live music, and that sounded so much better by comparison.

My brother was in fourth grade and had to accompany me for a couple more years. He wore knickers which was much more grown up than the short pants which I wore, even in the winter, with long wool stockings, which were quick to sag in spite of the garters above my knee.

The nuns were Franciscan and most of them from Ireland, except for Sister Mary Yolanda, who did the cleaning in the convent and taught Italian because she was from Italy. Despite the fact that we took Italian for eight years, no one could speak a word of it. Sister Mary Yolanda was not a communicator let alone a teacher, and the fact that she was a bit slow witted, made her the butt of pranks.

All of the nuns dressed with same identical “habits”. The “habit” hid not only gender but species. Geometry occluded biology. One dark polygon up from the floor to the white, starched, inclined planes and topped with a dark rhomboid, covering head and neck; straight lines and flat planes covering every semblance of a curve.

Even though there was an opening which showed a circle from brow to chin, one never thought of them as people. It was always a surprise to find one of them blowing her nose or chewing on some snack. Handkerchiefs were kept hidden up their wide sleeve. The only other possessions were clackers and pointer sticks. The clackers were sounding devices which got your attention and underlined certain commands. The pointer sticks not only pointed things out but also served as punishment rods. “Spare the rod; spoil the child” was a unanimously held belief. So my early role models were extra terrestrials who were steeped in myth and could wield a stick.

No one paid any attention to Sister Mary Yolanda when she was trying to teach us Italian. We misbehaved and sometimes teased her when she didn't know an English word. Especially Jimmie “Pizza” who was almost my brother's age, but somehow was in our class. His real name was Gregorio, but his family nick name was Pizza because his family ran one of the take-out pizza shops on Prince Street.

One day, she was teaching us how to say open and close the desk lid, and she couldn't think of the English word for "Chiusa" - "how you say in English please". She would smile, shaking her head apologetically. "Shit" Jimmy would offer with a straight face, and even with all the giggles, Sister was too slow to notice she was being ribbed.

" Ah 'grazie'. Giacomo. So 'abra' e chiusa la scrivania: she means 'opie' and shit the dick".

Jimmy would raise his hand; he was relentless. "Sister may I shit my dick now?" But some of her stories stuck with me and caused me to do some reading in later life. Sister Mary Yolanda would squat on the 10-inch platform that elevated the big desk. She would stare off, as though she was channeling some spirit, and recount in broken English and Italian about Francis of Assisi and his relationship to the plants and animals, and his contempt for money. Somehow that stayed with me and decades later may have predisposed me to Buddhism and hippydom.

Sister Mary Yolanda was only a once-a-week experience. Another even smaller, lightsaber wielding Yoda, brown pyramid, was our every day teacher for every subject for half of my years at Saint Anthony's. Sister Mary Carlotta spoke with a brogue you could chop with an axe.

Early influences are supposed to be very important. The long tutelage with Sister Mary Carlotta: fourth to eighth grades presented the greatest opportunity for molding. She called me, and Roland Orlandi, the class philosophers and had us sit in special seats. That may have given me [Th] a leg up in the discovery of my high mind. But I'm jumping ahead; we're not in fourth grade yet; Sister Mary Carlotta will have to wait.

Adrift on An Iceberg

It was one of the coldest winters on record. School was cancelled; too cold to walk to school but ok for us to play outdoors all day. My brother's Snow Hill gang, with me in tow, hiked on the frozen river all the way from under the Charlestown bridge to the Memorial Drive bridge, where now sits the Science Museum. At that time, there was a shipwreck there, an old steamer that was charred from what must have been her fatal fire. We

went there several times and broke into the wheel house and other parts of the ship. This time the solid ice around the steamer provided a solid mount so that we could walk all around her on the river ice and climb over her stern. We played war games for hours all over her decks, down in her hole and in the cabin.

We were bound by some undisclosed game rule not to step on the land all the way back down the Charles River to the harbor, and across the stretch to the sand barge dock at the foot of our Snowhill. We had never seen so much ice, neither had most Bostonians. When we got to brackish salt water under the Charlestown bridge, the solid ice ended, but there were ice bergs close enough to each other for us to hop scotch through the giant puzzle pieces.

At one point I found myself isolated from the group without an obvious move to go forward. The jump at 2 o'clock was too far and there was no move at 10 o'clock. I could not make forward progress. I'm not sure how long I was standing there, but it was long enough to drift past the point of no return. Eventually the others spotted my problem. By the time they got the edge of the nearest iceberg, it was clear that no one could jump across the watery chasm.

"Jump in and swim over here." "No, no, he'll never make it." "We have to go get him." "Fuck you, I'm not going in."

I began to see that this was serious. My brother knew that I had learned to swim that summer. We had a beach at the foot of Snowhill; you had to learn to swim right after you learned to walk. That summer I was thrown off the upper pier 30 or 40 yards from the North End beach. Older cousins were waiting in the water. They followed me as I swam to shore on my own. I know that sounds incredible, but it's true. I was four and swimming over my head. Maybe the lack of parental guidance had unintended beneficial side effects. So big brother decided Richie Felone should go look for a long stick, or a rope and I should jump in and swim toward them. I guess he would jump in if it looked like I couldn't make it. The gap was now fifteen feet or so, and I could see it was getting wider as I waited for Richie to come back. Eventually it was clear that there was no more time to wait for Richie. "Now, now!" "Jump!" "You can do it." my brother said calmly.

This memory was so incredible, I had to verify my recall with my instant shirt pocket librarian. It turns out there was a record cold spell December 1940 to January 1941 which would make me four and half years old; my brother would have been eight.

I jumped into the icy water. Something happened in my body which I had never experienced before. There were suddenly twin outboards, attached to my [Wa] shoulders. My arms became twin props and I flew, against the weight of all the winter outer garments, across the expanse and was pulled up on the larger iceberg by a dozen hands. Richie showed up not long after unable to find any extensions. My brother had sense enough to hustle my wet body back to a spot under the bridge out of the wind. At this point I was in shock. I have no idea how or who managed to start a fire. This part of the story would never stand up to any reasonable questioner. How could eight- and nine-year- old boys know enough to start a fire, and where and how did the ingredients emerge? I have no answers, but I am sure and I swear that there was a fire, burned into my memory as my naked body, on this coldest day in history, was rotated like a roast in front of it, while each gang member held one item of my clothes on a stick over the fire. Maybe it was Virgilio Venti, (his young “fascista” training under Mussolini), Richie Felone (who later became a cop), Sony Rizzo, Rockie Toto, brother Joey - they did all that. Eventually my soggy, smoked clothes were ready to be put back on. My outer Parka was still soggy.

When we got home late for supper, my parents smelled the smoke. All of the gang was sworn to secrecy by my brother, including me. We were never, never, never to tell anyone what had happened, or else.

“Where were you?” “Oh just out playin, right Johnny Boy?” “Just out playin” I affirmed. “Why do you smell of smoke?”

We looked at each other. We had not prepared an answer for that question. I see now the fact that I never told my parents the truth means that the relationship with my brother was more important than the relationship with my parents. Whether that is true in every family, or just dysfunctional families, I don’t know. We never told and for that, we both suffered the loss of Tabby, a new puppy given to us by our uncle of the same name. My parents went to their graves never knowing about our iceberg experience. I don’t know that any other witnesses are alive to verify.

I believe the combined losses of Tessy, our Henchman street Dalmatian and Tabby, the mongrel puppy explains the fact that neither my brother nor I ever became dog owners. Ma was not a dog lover.

Rod Rule

I was five in September of that school year and turned six the following June as the school year ended.

The Sister Mary Bosco pyramid was twice the height of Carlotta and Yolanda and had more color in the beacon opening. She had red cheeks which stood out like decorations against the white wimple (starched white material around the face attached to the bib and the head dress of Franciscan nuns). She always seemed to be blushing, but was anything but shy. For Sister the ear was a handle used to pull troubled souls out of their seats and lead them to the salvation corner where raw beans were waiting to be kneeled upon. I was having trouble with ear infections for some months that year. Blood from one of my ears interrupted our dinner one evening, which caught the attention of my mother. I explained that it happened when Sister pulled me to the corner by that ear. The next day I was shocked to see my mother waving at Sister through the glass window in the classroom door. I was stunned. The sun and moon were about to make contact. These major forces had spun out of their orbits and were about to collide - family v religion ; teacher v mother; Italian v Irish. I could not imagine how this would play out.

Sister left the door open when she went to talk to Ma in the hall. Like stalks in a windstorm, the upper bodies of the entire class bent in unison toward the door. I could hear my mother tell Sister that I had an abscess in my ear, and then asking her, ever so politely if she could please grab me by my hair instead. There was no collision. Mom went back down the hall and Sister came back into the classroom like nothing had happened.

One December Sunday I came home from Mass with my brother. As you know, they let us navigate the streets of the North End on our own from just after we learned to walk. It was our job to stop after mass to pick up the freshly baked jelly donuts from the Prince Bakery. Healthy food had

yet to be discovered, or if it was, reports had not reached the ghetto. We were given just enough money for one dozen donuts. Sometimes brother Joey's chum would throw in an extra (Baker's dozen). It is very hard even now to imagine how they could be so harmful. They were divine to eat, especially when they were still hot. We would sprawl on the rug, making sure the excess sugar fell on the funny papers - the comic section of the Boston Globe which was spread like a magic carpet on our parlor rug. The open paper was large enough for both of us to move around to our favorite cartoon strips; Joey to *Prince Valiant*; me to *Henry and Blimpie*. The radio was on, as it usually was on Sunday. I'm not sure what time it was when my Dad shushed everyone and bent closer to the wood filigree that covered the radio speaker, staring through the lit green bubble as if peeking at the action being described. When he turned, his expression stopped us both in our tracks, like he had suddenly seen a ghost. He looked around and then stared up at the ceiling, looking for God in the chandelier.

My Dad didn't go to mass, and it never occurred to any of us to question that. His authority was so supreme we just assumed that his not going to church was part of the religion, and apparently he alone had license to take the Lord's name in vain, which he did that Sunday. "Jesus Christ" slipped out softly, as the jaw dropped and his head lowered.

We learned later that his brother, uncle Angelo, was at Pearl Harbor, and there was no way to find out whether he was alive. As it turned out, he was alive and remained in the Marine Corps for that and the next two wars.

That Christmas season we spent too much of our school days making a greeting card in the shape of a Christmas Candle with samples of our Palmer Method hand writing along the base of the candle, which we were to present to our parents. The war was slow to dawn on Saint Anthony's school. Sister walked up and down the columns of chair-desks that separated boys and girls, and the rows that separated smart and dull, making sure the letters all sloped at the same angle; nothing was said about the war. Each chair-desk had a center groove for a pencil in the middle of the upper section and ink wells in the upper right corner, for dunking pen points. The ball point was yet to be invented and fountain pens were a luxury.

I remember two kids who were left handed and had their knuckles smacked with a ruler every time they picked up the pen with the “wrong” hand.

This was supposed to represent our handwriting to our parents. In the end it was easier for Sister to replace the scrawl than to get an acceptable calligraphy from most of us. I registered the deception on some deeper level (from which it would surface later) to raise a doubt about the moral sanctity of Jesus’s wife. They wore a wedding ring which symbolized their marriage to Jesus.

You may be suspicious of the detail in my recall. What is mind blowing, even for me, is that I can name most of my classmates. (Some of these male class mates continued on with me to our all male Franciscan high School across the street; so it’s less surprising that I remember their names.) Still, without referring to any outside sources, here is the unaided spontaneous recall, a 76-year reach, back to the six columns of chair-desks.

Boys:

Anthony Zizza - bullied by me constantly

John Zizza - too big to bully, no relation to Anthony

Louis Sasso - best friend

Angelo Bocchino - became a priest

Freddy Parziale - a baker, shaped like a bunny

Vincent DiGangi - handsome, well-spoken

Nicholas Grillo - short

Anthony Polcari - chubby, best student

Roland Orlandi - fellow philosopher

Angelo Lupis - played the accordion much better than I ever did.

Robert Balents - played with me after school, sometimes we had pissing contests

Emilio Puopolo, aka Mimi the Pioneer - (more later)

Joseph DeSimone - father was a milkman, worked with Auntie Josie at Whitings.

Salvatore Sabbio - became a plasterer; parents died in the Coconut Grove Fire

Jimmy “Pizza” DiGregorio - older boy who was kept back because he fell asleep in class having worked from four am making pizza .

Anthony Squilante - the smallest kid in the class
Anthony Pennachia - picked his nose and ate the pickings,
eww!
Donald Sandrelli - a natural blond, rare in those parts

Girls:

Dorothy DeSimone - asked her to be my girlfriend
Katherine Rizzo - also asked her to be my girlfriend
Anna Pelegrino - wore glasses, a teachers pet
Anna Gioia - developed enormous breasts in the sixth
grade, had been kept back, asked her to be my
girlfriend
Anna ...? - older girl fully developed, escaped from fascist
Italy; put in our class because of her poor English
Rose Savino - was my girlfriend for a week
Vilma Cataldo - built like Dolly Pardon almost allowed me a
feel, married Blacky Pete
Angelina Ragucci - pock marked
Dolores ? - in later life became a close friend of Auntie Josie with
married name Katz
Louise Galaso - fainted when we had to be injected with
polio vaccine

The Search for Life on Neighboring Planets

I was six in September of that school year and turned seven the following June as the school year ended. In the eyes of the church I had reached the age of reason and was old enough to sin mortally and go to hell. I was also ready to receive holy communion.

Some direct memories I have of the event were enhanced by the photos of me in this white silk blouse which buttoned up the side of my neck, with silk covered buttons - Asian style. It was, of course, a “hand-me-down”, so many “hands” that there is no telling for whom it was originally purchased or made. My maternal cousins were much older, some a whole generation older. Of my paternal cousins, my brother was the eldest. It might have been hand sewn by Auntie Lena, who was an accomplished

seamstress. Or it may have come from my Mom's side, one or more of Auntie Ella's much older sons. My brother's first communion pictures show him wearing the same outfit. Needless to say, everything in my limited wardrobe came down from cousins through brother to me, which may explain my penchant, to this very day for used clothes. I just realized that 90% of my clothes comes from used clothing stores; no matter how much money I have, I never buy anything new.

Photos in those days required some effort and expense and so were reserved for special occasions like first communion, confirmation, graduation etc.. and were kept for posterity. For the record, I have not used any photos to prompt the recall which is at the basis of these stories.

When Snow Hill was hosting goodbye parties for our uncles and neighbors, the war finally started to become real to us. Uncle Dom was in the Merchant Marines, Uncle Mike in the Navy; Uncle Angelo was already in the Marines. On my mother's side Uncle Frank (Auntie Tony's husband) was in the Army and at the battle of the Bulge; four of the five sons of Auntie Ella were in the service. Joe was in the Army, Hector in the Army Air Corps; Rey and Alec in the Marines (they bumped into each other with two different Marine Divisions on Iwo Jima). Dad had an engraved shot glass from which each of them drank their goodbye toast. Dad's age and his two dependents disqualified him from the draft. Dad was secretly embarrassed that he was not in uniform. But he managed to fashion his own uniform out of tan work clothes which he wore with his Air Raid Warden helmet, white metal with the Civilian Defense triangular logo on it. And he was armed with what looked like a large rolling pin, ("Ou Canularu") which you might find where pizzas are made. I'm not sure if that was official paraphernalia.

I remember head lights, with the top half painted black, and special black shades which had to be drawn in a hurry when the Air Raid wardens whistle was sounded by my dad. We were never bombed and so there was no fear associated with these drills; in fact they were kind of fun. Brother Joey would get the lights and I would get the shades down.

Unlike the European kids, we were never terrorized by the war, rather, we were fascinated by it. Our toy soldiers didn't bleed and my brother's toy planes never crashed. The other kids on our street brought whatever else we needed to play war. Relatively speaking, we had very few toys. Some

of them whittled by my father. There were no Toys “R” Us yet. As I said earlier, children were considered part of the survival team. We were recruited to help with the war effort. We collected metal and paper and piled our collection in large mounds in the “Gassy” playground a few houses away. But I did not feel inconvenienced by this or the rationing or any other war time measures.

I have already mentioned that Boston is probably the most unique city in that it offers the greatest travel experience in the fewest steps. The confluence of young men from all the different ghettos and neighborhoods to the same war definitely brought the Boston neighborhoods closer together. Even little Italy which was at war with big Italy was now more open to non-Italians.

The little rascal legs were longer now and could carry street urchins from one sub-culture to the next more readily, from one era to the next in less time, from one social class to the next, with less friction. In a couple of hours we could chat with sailors coming out of the Scully Square burlesque theaters, be scooted away from polished brass knockers on the Beacon Hill mansions, make slant eye faces at the chefs in Chinatown restaurant windows, steal Jewish cookies from the Rugelach Bakery and get back to little Italy in time for spaghetti marinara, made with local sea food, because there was no beef or chicken.

My brother’s Henchman Street gang had already discovered the route to the nearby planet known as Uptown Boston. The unfortunate earlier visit with Mikey Nocera was all but relegated to the unconscious by the time I traveled with the Snow Hill gang. I could not wait for any opportunity to go Uptown to dodge through all the push cart mongers at Haymarket Square, run on up to Scully Square, (now Government Center) where nestled in between all the Burlesque theaters was the White Tower Grille. I delighted in ordering a hot dog or hamburger from the Grille for a nickel, and take Washington Street to Doc’s pharmacy which had hot chocolate with a melted marshmallow served with a saltine cracker for a nickel. We had enough money, earned from various odd jobs, to indulge these exotic experiences.

I now recall that I discovered Scully Square, which was not quite Uptown, before the war while we were still on Henchman St. I remember being with Fat Nana, of all people, taking me to the Old Howard burlesque theater, which was not a burlesque theater on Saturday afternoon when it

showed movies from Italy for a dime; there were no subtitles in those days. Fat Nana had no English and so never would go outside the Ghetto, and usually had no time for entertainment. But I do remember the movies from Italy (Cinecitta). I sat there wondering what they were laughing about or crying about. I only understood table talk and a few commands in Calabrese, but this was another kind of Italian (Toscana). I am guessing she must have understood it as she sat there for hours.

The happiest sojourns to the nearby planets were led by Ma on the occasions during the war years when my Dad was away on a secret Island off the coast of Maine working for a Navy contractor. Ma would take my brother and me to share her secret passion.

There was an air of adventure about these trips, which I am explaining to myself for the first time, as I write this. She was happier than usual. I think it might have been the freedom from Dad's dominion. She pretty much did whatever he said and he pretty much had something to say about everything she did. But these trips were her own adventure, as thrilling as a ride in a hot air balloon. While moving horizontally across town, we could rise vertically, from one class to another thanks to American social mobility. Before you can appreciate this, you must understand that in those days there were no fast food chains, no McDonalds. Restaurants normally could be afforded only by the middle class and up. Working class people of whatever ethnicity did not go to restaurants, let alone those uptown. So, going to a restaurant all the way Uptown to Essex Street, was a geographic, gastronomic, and a sociological adventure.

Ma (shortened from the Italian word Mama) would wear her coat with the fur collar (not sure what kind of fur, or how she afforded that) and she had a large fake emerald ring she always wore on those occasions. She would dress us to look like the middle class Bostonians: my brother with knickers, a tie and fedora hat; me with pressed short pants, knee stockings.

We would stroll around and look in the shop windows, maybe tour the Boston Common and Public Gardens and then the big moment. We would prance into the Essex Grille, like regular customers, and take seats at the long counter on which gleaming steal bowls were set every few feet, filled with free pickles and pickled tomatoes. The fact that they were new to us, and free, made them more delicious. We would eat ourselves

sick on the free pickles, if Ma didn't remind us to save room for the Hot Pastrami sandwiches, which arrived on these amazing seeded "bulkie" rolls. This non-Italian food, ("mericana" we called it), was heaven. It was not until much later I learned this was Jewish food. Ma had developed a passion for Jewish deli food, and baked goods without knowing what a Jew was, and she shared it with us.

The second most memorable gastro-ethnic adventure was in China Town. Auntie Lena, my godmother, worked in a garment factory in Chinatown and shared the passion she developed for Cantonese food. I think Auntie Lena introduced Chinese food to Italo-America, at least in the North End. At the Good Earth we learned to savor Cantonese pan fried noodle dishes, the likes of which I have never found anywhere else, and Lichee nuts, which are a favorite to this day.

To these adventures in foreign gastronomy - Ma's and Auntie Lena's - we have to add Dad's (it's interesting he wasn't called Papa or Pa; no, he was Daddy and Dad from the start; it was Ma and Daddy). His contribution to exotica were various kinds of New England seafood, fried clams, lobster, etc. and when he came home, he would take us out of the city in a borrowed car to Twin Trees where they had all you can eat including apple pie with vanilla ice cream or melted cheddar cheese, which to us was exotic dessert. We usually had Italian pastry for dessert.

I just remembered to add here that Auntie Tonie (Ma's youngest Sister) introduced us to Corn Fritters (I can taste them as I write this) and Irish corned beef and cabbage.

So whether because of or in-spite of the war, Italians were finding the food delights of other subcultures in the melting pot, and the other subcultures were discovering Italian food. Believe it or not Bostonians knew nothing about Italian food before the war, nor did they care to find out. The few restaurants in the North End were frequented almost exclusively by Italians with money - usually book makers. Outsiders thought of the North End as too dangerous and so its restaurants were off limits. Finally in the forties and fifties, the rest of Boston slowly began to find an appetite for Italian food, and eventually the rest of the country followed suit. Italian food would become the most popular of all the ethnic foods and the North End would eventually become what it is today - nothing more than a complex of hundreds of Italian restaurants and upscale yuppie condo's with almost no Italians. Back to the forties!

D-Day

I was seven in September of that school year and turned eight the following June as the school year ended.

In June of that year, I was presented with a birthday present of a silver pocket knife on a key chain from which a small blade opened as you pulled on the chain. This was Auntie Minnie's gift, and my parents did not think I was old enough to have a knife. After considerable cajoling, I was allowed to have it and wore it proudly, incessantly snapping it open and looking for things to cut with the tiny dull blade. I [Ti] marveled at the tiny teeth inside which converted the pull energy and caused the little blade to flip open like magic.

Three days before my birthday the D-Day landing dazzled the world. We had no idea we were the strongest nation on earth; now we knew. The relief and the pride and the hopes for a new kind of world, now that we beat the devil with our superior science, spilled over from the adults to the kids.

Pretty soon all the uncles and older cousins in the military would be coming home in one piece. It is incredible that our family lost no one in the war. No one on either side of the family died in the war. Uncle Domenic, the Merchant Marine, survived his ship in a U-boat torpedo attack. Uncle Frank told stories about having to eat rats to survive in the trenches of the Battle of the Bulge. My Dad was scarred by not having any combat stories. That is the very last time I ever saw such solid social support for war; certainly not with Korea or Vietnam, certainly not with Iraq.

As I mentioned, all through the war Dad wore military looking work clothes and venerated all the servicemen who came home on leave. He would exaggerate and embellish the danger surrounding his critical construction job for the Navy, and tried to glamorize being the air raid warden for our neighborhood, which was hard to do in light of the fact that we never had anything like an air raid. The shelf of engraved shot glasses was now added to by the "welcome back" toast glasses of returning servicemen. Included were Marine buddies of Uncle Angelo, uncle Steve Colacurcio's two sons in the Navy, each on different ships at

different times stationed in Charlestown right across the bridge. The kitchen parties now had many more guests of non-Italians from all over; we got to hear southern accents. Any friend of whatever relative who was home on leave would get drunk, sing with Dad and sleep on the couch. Or Joey and I would sleep on the floor and they would have our beds. Every serviceman, related or not, would see the shot glass, from which he toasted, engraved by Dad and placed on that shelf in the kitchen. Dad had a small electric engraving tool which he used to make artistic, flowery engravings on the whiskey glasses next to their initials.

One war-time practice that I was definitely going to miss, occurred on the ferry from Portland, Maine to that island I mentioned, where my Dad was working at a secret Naval base. The ferry would stop and everyone was admonished to step away from the rail and remain in the center of the boat. “Do not look out over the bow rail.... I repeat do not...” which is just what I would do to watch the net of submarine mines being opened so we could get through. An iron curtain inserted vertically all the way down to the ocean floor, made of large chain links attached to which were black mines the size of beach balls. If a sub hit the curtain the mines would close in and detonate on contact with the hull of the sub. I did not learn that we actually did have German subs off our coast until long after the war. I never heard of any sub getting caught in the mine net.

Theatrical Debut

Every Christmas each class presented a pageant or play on the stage in the auditorium in the basement of the Saint Anthony’s elementary school. For most of the nuns it was enough work to get all the kids wearing the same bows and getting through a couple of Christmas Carols. Not Sister Mary Carlotta. Our class was going to do a real play. I remember the little script booklets rented from a company named French. It was my first experience at learning lines, and I managed quite well, but I had never been on the stage.

A visitor from another planet would assume that Hollywood ran school assemblies all over the country in order to leave no stone unturned in the search for performers. How else can you explain the fact that every single school feels compelled to provide a performance experience for

every single child, knowing full well that 99.9999 percent of them will never perform again on any stage.

Our play was called the Trial of Santa Clause. Robert Balents (odd name for an Italo kid) played the prosecutor, Anna Pelegrino played Santa (with a beard), and I played the defense Counsel. Donald Sandrelli played the judge.

This was my first stage fright experience. We had rehearsed a thousand times and I was up on the lines, but when I made my entrance, the suction of all those fawning faces in the audience was palpable; the expectation created a magnetic force which froze my brain. None of my family was in the audience, so I wasn't worried about that kind of embarrassment. I [Wo] was instantly frozen at the sight of the audience; the mass of potential disapproval and rejection was horrifying to the point of becoming comatose. Somehow I [Wa] pushed aside my [Wo] fears and stepped in front of them only to discover those same fears were now pushing me forward. Once I got my lips moving and I said something like "So...." Or Well..... suddenly it was as though another being inhabited my body, I snapped my suspenders, which was not in the script, and the lines came out of me with a brand new energy, one that I had never seen before. After the final curtain, we took separate bows and for the first time I felt adulation. My God, these strangers were applauding and whistling for me. The snippets of approval I [Wa] got singing with Jo Foritano was nothing like this. This multiplied that feeling of acceptance by a thousand times. I [Wa] now had established a public persona.

Baby Sister

I was fascinated with performers. My Dad still had connections with show biz people in the forties. I remember the day when Ma was in the hospital giving birth to my sister, November 16, 1944. In those days women were hospitalized before, during, after child birth (Nov 16-20 for Ma). Auntie Minnie was living with us and somehow, despite the fact that his wife was in the hospital giving birth, my Dad was having a party for friends from out of town who were in Boston testing a show for Broadway. The show was a live show with Olson and Johnson of Hollywood fame,(movie *Hellzapoppin*). There was, of course, drinking and music and late night spaghetti alla d'olio- (anchiove sauce). Either

Olson or Johnson was in our kitchen briefly, and a comedian who worked with them called Harry Burns- (not sure about the name) stayed much longer, an all nighter. Other cast members, who spent the night included a body builder named “Armand the Magnificent” who posed in gold paint as a statue on stage for the entire show, and then came to life to deliver a line at the end of the show. My brother and I kept the autographed glossies of Armand for years.

I remember it was about time for my sister to make her entrance, and this Harry comedian guy would call the hospital to ask about his wife (Ma) in a Chinese accent, and then a Russian accent, and then a French accent, etc.. I’m not sure Ma was having as much fun as we were waiting at home for the new baby sister. The new baby might not have been her plan, having two kids 8 and 12, and a hard drinking husband. I should add that she lost a child, a boy, two years earlier. She tripped on broken step at Tufts Dental School where she was having some free work done, and miscarried.

Eventually, she made it home with an adorable baby girl, cute as hell with dimples, and the clan rejoiced. Kids were always a blessing. Joey had another responsibility; I no longer required supervision and was old enough to assist as babysitter. Maria Matilda was her formal name, but she soon became known as Pidgie short for Pigeon because she ate so little (we didn’t know pigeons ate a lot relatively speaking). She was now part of the Snow Hill gang in her stroller with us wherever we went.

Another Stitch in Time:

I already mentioned the stitches I received after the injury sustained in the Henchman Street tribal experiments with missiles. (Fat Nanna said it was a good thing I was Calabrese “Capo Tuosto”). This time the “capo tuosto” (head) met a bat.

We all went to a ball game at the Gassy. My brother left me to watch over my sister in the stroller. We were on the first base line when Camillo - a famous slugger was at bat. I looked away for a minute to put the bottle back in my sister’s mouth. When I turned again to see what Camillo had

done, his bat arrived at my forehead inches from the baby in stroller. The bat created a smile on my forehead which I carry around to this day, but no fractured skull - capo tosto. When my brother returned, I could barely see him through my fog, but I heard him say “Holy shit I can see your skull”.

This time the stitches were not put in at the Hull Street Dispensary. These required extensive multiple hospital stays, the first at Boston City Hospital.

It took all day and part of the next day for my parents to find me in this ward surrounded by sick kids, the one next to me was black. We seldom saw any African Americans in the flesh. We knew Joe Lous, of course. I remember when this kid was being taunted by the other kids. He enlisted my support because he thought I was black. This was the very first time I had ever been exposed to racism. It was early summer but I was already tanned. I don't know whether there was a black section in the ward, but the black kid and I were in the same corner.

When he learned my name, he sang this mindless song incessantly. I can hear it now just as though he was next to me: “Johnny over the ocean, Johnny over the sea. Johnny broke a tea pot and blamed it on me. I told ma. I told Pa. Johnny got a beatin’. Ha Ha Ha!”

My parents were not pleased with the hospital and eventually I was moved to Mass General. I was constantly vomiting and had terrible headaches. There was fear of brain damage and apparently a long observation in hospital was required.

I came home after a week or so. At this point, we occupied the second floor of Snow Hill and continued renting the first floor to Louis Spagnola who owned the Burden's pharmacy on Hanover St. His sons were very young and occasionally my brother and I were asked to watch them. Later Louis hired my brother as a soda jerk. I was old enough to roam the streets on my own now, and had my own gang. I was well rid of my brother and except for our strange fights where I would punch and then run like hell, we had little to do with each other until the pineapple fizz discovery.

My brother invented a drink where crushed pineapple, which was used to make Sundaes and Banana Splits at Burdens Drug Store, was put into a

glass and flushed with the fizz water from the fountain. My brother was the first to do this and he could not help sharing the resulting taste miracle with me. We had never seen or tasted anything like this. It was our secret shared with very few close friends in his gang and mine. Anyway I would walk up to Hanover St on my own, with or without Pidgie in the stroller, peek through the black and gold painted window to see if my brother's immediate supervisor was within earshot. If not, I would enter and order a Tamarindo - a featured drink of Burdens for five cents. My brother would pretend not to know me and would appear to collect the nickel I put on the marble counter, which I would surreptitiously retrieve after his fake grab. That would end if someone walked in; then I got a free Tamarindo. But if the coast was clear, he would fill one of the big ice cream soda mugs with crushed pineapple and seltzer. It became one of my treasured experiences. With the money from Burdens my brother bought a two wheeler Schwinn bike and got a second late night job delivering "La Notizia", an Italian newspaper published in the North End.

War Toys

I was nine in September at the start of that sixth grade school year. Earlier that spring, around the time of my ninth birthday, we had won the war in Europe. I wasn't sure what that meant except that I could see some of the soldiers were coming home. Our next door neighbor's son came home with a voluptuous Italian wife. I was surprised to learn that the war was not over with the Japs (that's what we called them). Eventually that too ended. I do not remember being aware of the Atomic bomb being dropped. My family never spoke of it.

The trips to Portland, except for the long boring train ride, were the highlight of my life during World War II. Now that was ending. I will always remember the new sights and sounds and tastes. Besides butter I had never tasted maple syrup, which I relished. I would empty half the pitcher on the waffles at the Greymore Hotel in Portland, Maine. I also delighted in the new experience of having waiters and other humans who were at my service. I liked the feeling of having servants, and would make frequent trips to the front desk to see if there were any urgent

messages for me and ask for this and that. I was small enough to be cute, so everyone played along, calling me “sir”.

Had I known anything different, I might have been put out by the long lines in front of Freddy’s store all the way to Salem street. Kids waiting with their ration tokens (these were pressed paper coins given as change from ration coupons used to buy rationed items) and two pennies for a Flir Bubble Gum. All of a sudden that was about to change.

I do remember VJ Day celebrations. My folks were overjoyed and ready to celebrate in the streets with everyone else, but we had to stay home with my sister indoors. They went down to Endicott Street to Calabria Wine where Uncle Pants had barrels of free wine put on boxes in front of his store. Of course, we did sneak out and got a peak at the celebration from the roof of the Gassy Garage. The barrels had taps so folks could help themselves. The smaller kegs had free beer. I thought that was very civic minded of Uncle Pants. Even he was becoming Americanized.

Soon all our family servicemen were home intact, as I mentioned. Uncle Frank gave us, my brother and I, a leather German pilot suit, pants and jacket, which my brother quickly outgrew and eventually I grew into. Uncle Angelo who had been on the other front brought us a Japanese officer sword.

Long after the war when I was living in New York. I visited Boston and stayed with aunts at Snow Hill. I was reminiscing about my World War II childhood with the three old maid aunts who lived with us all through my childhood and were like other mothers. At this point in my life, I had traveled extensively, whereas the only travel in their lives was from home to the factory and back, and of course wherever the TV trance took them.

It was after a take out supper provided be me, Regina Pizza and Chinese, that I was recalling the billeting of Italian POW’s in our elementary school right in the heart of little Italy. We Italians were at war with those Italians; and here we were face to face with “paisan enemy prisoners”.

Three against one they insisted it never happened. The older Aunt, Lena, tended to over power her younger sisters Evelyn and Josie. So they were solid; it never happened. I was shocked by the “no match” buzzer. It means someone is crazy or lying. It was too early for the internet and so there was no way to settle the dispute in real time. Years later I found

out I was right and mentioned it to Auntie Josie who was the only surviving Aunt and she suddenly remembered the Italian POW's, but did not remember siding with her sisters against me the first time I brought it up.

Back then, Dad was still the center of attention and our house on Snow Hill was still the place to be on Saturday night. I had already demonstrated an interest in music - possibly because it pleased my Dad. There was very little father son bonding for whatever reason in working class families, which had nothing to do with ethnicity.

Parenting of that era is best described in the Jerry Seinfeld monologue, which makes me laugh til I cry, even til this day. The point of the Seinfeld monologue was that parents had very little to do with their kids. There were no dedicated toy stores or special kid's media. Country kids worked; city kids were left to their own devices on the street. We've made that point a few times, but this time I would like to focus on a strange exception to the rule - wild mushrooms.

Wild Mushrooms

One of the rare bonding experiences, almost primordial, happened on any given Saturday after a fall rain. Dad had his own Nash now, and would take me out to the woods to hunt for wild mushrooms. I have no idea where he learned which ones to pick and which to avoid, but he knew all about mushrooms, and he taught me. Since the names he taught me were all in Italian I have to guess this hunt must have come over from the old country with his father, and who knows how many fathers before that. More often than not my brother would find reasons not to come along; so most often, it was just Dad and me. We would trudge through damp forests outside of Boston and usually fill up several baskets before we stopped at his favorite all American country diner where I experienced non-Italian white bread, especially tasty when grilled with butter with ham and cheese inside; it was sweeter and softer. The apple pie and vanilla ice cream were unforgettable.

When we got home, my mother would wash all the mushrooms and cook them in a pot with a coin- usually a quarter. Apparently the quarter turned

black if there was a poisonous mushroom in the batch. It never turned black that I saw, and fortunately no one ever died from a mushroom poisoning after years of eating Ma's preserved wild mushrooms. The wild mushrooms wound up in bell jars with a kind of brine. She used them in all her cooking along with the vinegar peppers she pickled herself in a large hogs head barrel up in the attic.

Actually, come to think of it wild mushrooms was not the only father-son link. There was music. He decided that I was the one with the musical talent and he would pay for lessons.

Building Blocks of Music / *building music blocks*

For a time I took lessons on a simple 12 bass, small accordion. Eventually a diamond studded 120 bass piano accordion was bequeathed to me, which was almost as tall as I was. It originally belonged to Uncle Angelo, who never played it. Of course, I could not carry this to the lessons on Fleet Street (1/4 of mile), so my brother had to lug it, as heavy and embarrassing as that was for him.

Mr Gulizzio taught me solfeggio with a stick: I had to sing 'Do' for the first note of the scale of the key the music was written in; Re for the second, etc. So you had to know the scale of the key signature, and while you were doing that, you conducted with your right hand: down for beat one, left for beat two, horizontally across for beat three, up for beat four.

Gulizzio sat behind me with a small baton. If I got the note or the timing wrong, he would snap it on my head. Nothing painful, like someone flicking their finger into your head. He developed this technique himself in Italy, which lent it credibility as far as my Dad was concerned. My Dad wanted to make sure that I learned to sight read, because he could not read a note of music, and he must have realized what that cost him in his career.

With me, the stick was counterproductive. Remember, my street training taught me to hit back without hesitation. With the nuns I would not dare think about striking God's representatives, but with Gulizzio, it took all of my will power to suppress the urge to grab the stick and use it on him. Half my mind was on the stick waiting for it to snap on my head. Equally

distracting was the smell of his breath. He was constantly eating Lupini beans and Fava beans.

Little did I know, Gulizzio and I were building a mental block that would last nearly a lifetime and later come to be known as dyslexia. Without knowing much about the formal diagnosis of dyslexia, my problem was that moving my eyes from symbol to symbol occasionally found me in the wrong place, which made Wo over-react. Wo was panicked about the stumbling. I [Ti] had not figured out that panic and symbol processing cannot work together in the forebrain. The same with navigational directions - the mind compass was crippled by the same fear of not being able to figure out the next turn. I [Th] had to make up for the crippling slow reading, and as you will see later on, I [Ti] made up for the navigation deficit.

My Friday class was much more tolerable, no baton on the head. In fact, no Gulizzio, until it was time to collect the dollar bill. Most of the time of the Friday lesson Gulizzio would be in the back room with what I was told was a woman student, and I was to practice on my own. "Ama lissena" he would shout from the back room. I was too young to figure out what was going on back there. I only knew it was a relief from his bad breath and that stick. My sing song Do- Sol- Re had nothing to do with the music in front of me. This could be where I learned to improvise.

When I told my Dad about what went on at our lessons with Mr Gulizio, he decided I was ready to study with an actual vaudeville performer, Pietro Mordiglia, who taught at Tosi Music just up the block on Hanover Street. The lessons were 25 cents more for this upscale operation. I even had a little sound booth for my lesson, and Maestro Mordiglia, spoke without an accent, and with the enunciation and enthusiasm of a circus ringmaster.

Like a busy dentist, he would disappear into several other rooms where simultaneous lessons were going on. He had developed this simultaneous private lesson technique himself right here in the North End. You never knew when he would pop into your sound booth and when he did, he usually just complimented you no matter what you were doing. I don't recall him ever teaching me anything. The walls between the booths were not sound proof and so there was an audible cacophony of skill levels on any number of different instruments playing songs and scales. He taught all the instruments himself. The same booths were

also used by record buyers, who were allowed to listen to the record before they bought it. So occasionally the student cacophony was underscored by the Harry James orchestra or Bing Crosby. Tosi was the very first store to sell TV's right after they became available, but they were only turned on after eight pm in the show window.

From time to time I was surprised when he would take me out of my stall to the main store and ask me to perform for prospective students and their parents. I always played the same thing "Jealousy" and he would chime in near the end - "Big finish now" and I would hold down the bass buttons and a C minor chord on the piano keys, as I extended the bellows to beyond what appeared to be their limit, creating a vibrato by moving my knee up and down.

"This after just a few lessons", he would say, circling his hands around and down like a conductor ending a symphony, keeping his eye on the parents of the prospective student.

By now I had a mental block about reading music and being taught by music teachers, but learned my way around the accordion. What I played had nothing to do with the music on the stand. Did my teacher know that? Maybe he did and felt it didn't matter since the audience didn't know any better. Or maybe he couldn't read either.

Around the corner was the "bath house" where most of the North End residents came to bathe, as there were no showers or tubs in the tenements. It was also where MiGuy taught kids to box. Everybody had to box. It was our only sport. It may be hard to imagine a world where there were no "Little League Fields", in fact no Little League, and no such thing as toy stores, which I seem to harp on.

We all had the unannounced, underlying knowledge that the only two sure ways out of the ghetto for Italian kids were boxing and music. Marciano or Sinatra; Graziano or Como; Basilio or Bennet. Most of my boxer friends had nothing to do with music and my music friends thought boxing was for "cavones" (uncivilized slobs). I flipped back and forth between the two camps. I could see my self as Rockie - I could see myself as Frank - or maybe Guy Lombardo.

Veneration

From time to time, maybe thanks to Sister Mary Carlotta, I [Th] need to step out of the story line for some philosophizing. This time I am thinking about veneration, more specifically wondering about the history of veneration.

Was it always in our nature to venerate? Did the first humans venerate?

Depends on what we mean by venerate. By venerate I mean not just the subjugation to the powerful chief of the tribe. I mean placing the “veneree” above the human condition; another word which comes to mind is ‘apotheosis’. There is an ancient history of godlike humans. Although they walked on earth there was something divine or ultra-human about Achilles, and we know that Christ, although born of a human was the son of God, Buddha, Prometheus. So there are deep historical roots for the ascension and condescension of ultra-humans. All the great teachers are venerated in their respective cultures because their teachings caused paradigm shifts. All of that is obvious. What is not so obvious is how it came to pass that actors and movie stars reached this veneration plane.

In my day, spells were cast over bobby soxers, who would actually faint as they swooned over Sinatra. This was more dramatic than worshiper trances at Our Lady of Fatima. My brother and I hung our autographed pictures of Gary Cooper and Rita Hayworth on the wall next to the crucifix. So these figures were not like us. It never occurred to us that they were humans, which is why it was shocking to see them in person, which most people never did. Like the ancient mythic heroes, stars were creatures of the modern myths on the silver screen. But they did not have to actually do any of the brave things that the ancient heroes did, and they did not have to invent any immortal words. The acts of bravery were performed by stunt men and special effects; the immortal words were written for them; but, nevertheless, they were mythic beings and we worshipped them all the same - no, actually not the same. Modern celebrities were paid much more attention and money than any of the mythic heroes.

As children we are predisposed to the elevation of those bigger, stronger, wiser adults which creates a downward slope for the flow of information required for our development; maybe we just never grow out of that. A little voice in my head [Th] just added “Some of us do”.

More Stitches in Time:

My brother’s two wheeler bike was still new and he was understandably reluctant about letting me ride it on my own. He said I had to wait ’til I had more experience. So, how would I get that if I wasn’t allowed to ride the bike on my own. On Easter Sunday I had received a quarter from Uncle Domenic. Cousin Bobby, three months older, and Cousin Joey, eight months older (Uncle Domenic’s son- remember, every uncle had a Joey) were my constant companions in those days. They also had quarters they had received for Easter, and they knew a shop on Sheafe St. where we could rent bikes for a quarter an hour. We did just that with our three quarters.

I was in front as we went cruising on the downhill slope of Sheafe Street toward Salem Street. At that moment, one of the ‘nut twins’ was speeding away from another car in hot pursuit. Nut Twins was a popular candy treat in those days and these two 20-year-old identical twins were given the nick name because one was nuttier than the other, as in, violent, crazy. The nut twin car came up Salem Street at a great speed as we reached the intersection; my cousins braked and stopped; I had not yet discovered the brakes, which were applied by reversing the pedals, so I rolled right in front to the nut twin’s car. On impact, I flew up and over the car and landed under the chase car, more specifically, my left ankle was somehow blocked under their right rear wheel as it skidded to a stop. All of the flesh was torn off my left ankle. One of the drivers knew that I was Musty’s nephew. Bobby, Musty’s son, was right behind me. My Uncle Musty (real name Rapheal)was feared; I’m not sure why. (Did I mention he was in prison during the war?) Anyway, for whatever reason, the driver abandoned the nut twin chase and took me to the hospital. My cousins went back to Snow Hill to report the accident. I remember now, a hand-me-down Easter outfit was totaled by the accident.

It took months of stitching and restitching to get the flesh to cover the bone; eventually new flesh formed in a few months and I was moving around again like new.

Louie Spag moved to the country and my paternal grand- mother and three unmarried aunts who had been living nearby, at 59 Snow Hill, moved into the vacant first floor flat. Now, I don't know about other waves of immigrants, but it was standard operating procedure for families to care for elders. I called it a tribe, earlier and maybe the practice goes back as far as when humans lived in tribes or maybe back even further for all gregarious mammals.

Caring for seniors was as indigenous as caring for juniors. Juniors were cared for by the adults until they became adults and then they cared for the adults who had become seniors. My generation may be the first in the history of mammals to break the chain. We accepted the junior care and when old enough to pay it back, as senior care, we left town. This happened all over America, not just with Italians, and it persists to this day. It is by now, perfectly, OK with every American to do more than has ever been done before for the young, and expect less than ever before in return - maybe a greeting card, and a trip to the old age home at or near death. This is not only accepted; it is expected. In fact current mores disparage seniors needing care who burden their children.

When we lived in the Snow Hill community, scorn would have been aimed at the opposite, such as not taking care of my grandmother and three aunts, which resulted in a broader support system for me.

Another support system was the street gangs of mine and my brother. While Joey was not a bully, he was bigger than all the kids his age and stronger, so he was the de-facto leader of his Snow Hill gang. Mikey Nocera was the leader of the Henchman St gang because of his age, more than anything else, my brother was a close second. However, without planning it, the Snow Hill gangs were led by my brother and me. My gang had cousins and neighbors and my leadership might have had something to do with my brother at first, but then I found my own ways to command loyalty.

Brother Joey's Snow Hill gang included a boy from Italy, mentioned in the iceberg incident, who had been part of Mussolini's youth movement. His family escaped or maybe were allowed to come to Boston to proselytize.

I learned later that our Italian books in school were free because the Italian government had a Vatican approved plan to curry the Italo-American diaspora, so the language should be kept alive. We all had to take Italian all through the first eight grades of Saint Anthony's elementary school. So Mussolini was getting to us through the Pope.

Virgilio Venti was the fastest runner in the gang, and his English was almost perfect; he had a hardly noticeable accent. The other kids included Richie Felone from next door, who could draw remarkable life-like cartoon characters on the sidewalk with chalk, including all the characters from the *Sunday Globe*. He taught me to draw a horse head, which I can do with one continuous line to this day. Sonny Rizzo was another gang member. I think because brother Joey had a predilection for sports and because we had a makeshift playground next door, this gang was much more into organized sports. They played stick ball, hand ball against the Gas House wall, football, and even learned to ski and sled down the Cops Hill Cemetery slope and, of course, Snow Hill when it was covered with snow drifts.

In addition to my cousins Bobby and Joey³, my gang included John Marino and Bubby Sordillo from next door.

Both gangs were not beyond thrill seeking, which might have been imported from Henschman St by my brother. Not dissuaded by the iceberg incident, our new thrills involved exploring tunnels under the Cops Hill graveyard which had been used by pirates and run-away slaves in the Civil War era. The tunnels extended from where the port once was through a tomb which we could see from our attic bedroom and then across to another tomb tunnel which led underground to the Old North Church (where the lanterns were hung which triggered the Paul Revere ride). Legend has it that run-a-way slaves used these tunnels to get to the Old North Church, where they could claim sanctuary, so as not to be returned to the South. The tunnel walls would collapse on us as from time to time, forcing us to remember the route to the nearest graveyard monument, from which we would emerge like breathless, giggling vampires. Once a kid from another gang on Hull Street was stuck in there. They got him out with great difficulty and then proceeded to cement all the openings to the tomb tunnel, which meant we had to find other thrills beyond the grave.

A Nail in Time

That same year, my brother had a history making injury. I mean literally - his case is in the annals of orthopedic surgery. The story begins earlier, with butter.

The first time I saw butter was on that secret island off the coast of Maine where my Dad worked at the naval base. The Navy had real butter. I had no recollection of ever being exposed to butter. As far back as I could remember, everyone used margarine; it came in a clear envelope of white lard with a red dot in the middle, which when pressed could be massaged into the white lard to make this yellow margarine. The taste of real butter was foreign and therefore repulsive to my childish palette. This fact changed the science of orthopedic surgery.

My brother, then twelve, knew that butter on anything would prevent me from eating it. I was finishing my second pork chop just before the momentous event. We were each allowed three chops. My brother had finished his three and the remaining chop on the serving dish was my third. My brother, who was convalescing from a “charlie horse” (pulled muscle) from playing football, suggested that if I couldn’t finish my third chop, he would eat it. I gave him a “don’t you dare” look and as I reached for the last chop, he flipped a swatch of butter on it.

I flew at him in his weakened condition. He fell off the chair and landed on his sore hip. I had never heard a shriek like that, like a scalded cat. I ran and hid under the bed. I thought I killed him. As it turns out, I saved him from becoming a gimp. His thigh bone was already disengaged from his hip. This meant that it would not have grown with the other bones and he would have had one twelve-year-old size leg when he was a full grown man. At the time, there was no cure for this. No way to reattach the femur to the hip socket (they called it a slipped epiphysis).

The intensity and duration of pain after the fall from the chair worried my Dad. He whistled for his younger brother, Uncle Mike, who lived a block away.

A note about the whistle: this was something developed by my distinguished Skinny Nanna, by folding the lips over the teeth and folding

the tongue into a tube between them, one could make a high pitched sound that carried for miles. All her children and grandchildren learned how to make this sound and how to listen for it.

Uncle Mike and Dad carried Joey, still writhing in pain, down the narrow stair case in a kitchen chair trying to keep from jostling him and then getting him into a cab, for a painful but short ride to what just happened to be the best hospital in the world - Mass General. There, famous doctors had been working on a new material that worked holding together the bones of animals. They, Dr Smith Peterson and Dr. Klein, talked my Dad into offering his first-born as the first human to try this new nail. The first nail ever implanted in a human would go into my brother's hip, to be removed when the bone was full grown some four to six years later.

Jumping ahead to that time, I happened to be with him in the pre-surgery interview when the nail was to be removed from his 17-year-old hip. He lied about following the instructions, which were to keep the weight off the repaired leg. He was provided with a lift for the good leg, so the other one would dangle. Instead of following the doctor's orders every day since the original surgery, he would have me throw his sneakers out of the attic window. Whereupon, he would secretly remove his embarrassing medical shoes and put on his sneakers and continue playing ball. This was another of those solemn secrets he trusted me with. At the second pre-surgery interview, even as a pre-teen, somehow I [Ti] knew that science trumped 'omerta' (my brotherly oath of secrecy). I disclosed the fact that he had been running on the leg for years, the leg that was supposed to be left dangling. My brother, at first, flashed death menacing looks, but could see from the unexpected "Eureka" expression on the doctor's face that what I had done was justified. He confessed and went into detail for what soon became a room full of doctors. The impact he was supposed to be avoiding turned out to be a good thing for the regenerating bone. They didn't know this at the time. This discovery became very important to the orthopedic community. When they opened him to find the nail, yet another discovery was made - the artificial substance had disappeared into the biological substances.

Once I told this story as an adult to a "lunch bunch" friend (you will hear more about this group later on), who happened to be an orthopedic surgeon from Chicago, Jack Arnold. It was he who told me my brother's case was in the text books.

1946-1956 Giant step

This second decade is the most dramatic decade in any private history, and mine happens to have occurred in one of the most dramatic epochs in public history.

At the first 'tic' of the 315,360,000 second decade, I was a 10 year-old-child; at the last 'toc' I was a 20 year-old-man. Tic - 3' 8", 88 pound boy; Toc - 5'11", 178 pound man with pubic hair, full size penis, and a beard if I wanted one. Tic - adjusting to the fact that there is no Santa Clause; Toc - wondering if the God story, brought to you by the same adults, was another hoax. Early in this decade I would experience my first jobs - shoe shine boy and news boy, my first sex, my first accidental death, my second murder, my first moral crisis.

At the beginning of the decade, the hottest war ever seen; at the end, the coldest - both global powers frozen by the realization that Armageddon is now on a live switch.

Eating in becomes easier with prepared and frozen foods.

Eating out becomes affordable for the masses.

Cars are available for pedestrians.

Telephones move from phone booth to kitchen wall.

Peg pants replace knickers.

Oil replaces coal for heat.

Electricity replaces ice for cold.

TV moves next to the radio.

DA (Duck's Ass haircuts) replaces wiffles (crew cuts).

Blue collars turn white for some.

Italians are elected to public office.

Peace replaces war (just kidding).

Age of Reason

In September of 1946, at the start of that school year, I was 10 years old and would be 11 the following June.

At Saint Anthony's grammar school Sister Mary Carlotta moved with our class to the next grade in a different class= room on the second floor.

Roland Orlandi and I maintained our privileged seating in the single row which bordered the two double rows of chair-desks. I'm not sure just why this was a privilege. I suppose these were the luxury accommodations because you did not have a partner at your elbow. Or maybe it continued the tradition of separating the philosophers from the rank and file, so they could be run out of town whenever they were misunderstood. Roland and I could speak in complete sentences and always had answers to Sister's proposed moral conundra, whether it was correct or not. Roland and I both went to Boston University, both became lawyers. He went into politics and I almost did.

I knew in '45 that New York had an Italian mayor, LaGuardia. I think I heard him read the funny papers on the radio once, and so it was clear that an Italo-American could do something other than dig ditches or work in factories. It was clear to me, that is, but not to most of my contemporaries who would wind up in the same ditches and assembly lines as their parents.

As I said earlier one nun taught all of the courses; there were no specialists. Sister Mary Carlotta had a passion for the humanities, but could not do long division or any other math, which made her furious, and she became dangerous when frustrated by her own math block. She was so short we had to kneel so that our outstretched palms were at the right altitude for the downstroke of her bamboo rod lashes. That's how it was done in those days; the rod was not spared, the child was not spoiled.

Emilio Puopolo was kept back a second time to repeat the sixth grade and so joined our class. "Mimi the pioneer" he was called. This, because he had made his own tomahawk out of roof slate from the bath house, and carried a large hunting dagger, which he could throw and stick in targets at least half of the time. He was older than the rest of the class and almost man-sized. For some reason he chose me as his best friend.

Do you remember my telling you about the status titles, and particularly "Supie"? Mimi was the youngest "Supie" in North End history. He was as advanced in feats of courage as he was behind in academics. He was the youngest person to ever dive from the elevated train super structure on the Charlestown bridge. That first time he did it, the whole North End was on the bridge watching. I was assigned to hang over the railing at the street level and make sure that there was no boat traffic headed under the bridge.

I gave him the all clear sign as he stood, poised on the edge of the elevated tracks high above me. He flew down from the elevated structure to the street level where I was standing in a perfect swan dive, arms out, back arched, legs perfectly straight. His toe nails almost tapped the bridge railing as they passed and he glided the next 50 or 60 feet down to the water where he entered without a splash. There was no sight of him for what seemed like minutes, and then he emerged downstream from the bridge and began the quarter mile swim to the North End beach. He seemed impervious to the fact that he had become a celebrity that day.

The North End beach was a sliver of sand in Boston Harbor, between the Fire Boat Dock and a bath house for women. In the summer we lived at that beach. "Goin' down to the paahk" was so easy from Snow Hill, you didn't need shoes. You could walk down barefoot in your swim trunks, which I did everyday in the summer carrying only a peanut butter and jelly sandwich which was usually salted with a bit of beach sand before it was consumed. I would get so tanned from the sun, I looked like an Indian.

My Dad's sister, Auntie Teresa, was the only one of four Ciampa sisters who married. And she was the only one to move out of the ghetto. She lived in Hyde Park. She and her family visited often, especially in the summer. At the time, she had two boys, a baby named Eddie and an older son, of course named for her father, another Joey.

One Saturday I was assigned to take Joey swimming. I had just turned ten; he was seven years old. Not being from around here, he had not learned how to swim, and so he was to play in the shallow water near the beach.

Some background story is required here: I was notorious for falling asleep at the oddest times in the oddest places. It never occurred to anyone that this might be a problem. But I could fall asleep in the stairwell waiting for the locked kitchen door to be opened after I knocked.

After I got my seven-year-old cousin Joey settled in the shallow water, playing in the mud, Mimi showed up and I had to swim with Mimi to the "Pier." This was one of the rights of passage which I had already accomplished, but performing it occasionally reinforced my status. We would swim to the pier, and then climb up past the lower pier and on up to the second pier, wait to make sure everyone was watching and then

two swan dives would float down 25 or 30 feet, try not to splash and then swim back 30 yards to the beach. As I said, I had already done this a couple of times and this day had no worries about completing the task. Right after we got to the second pier, a shockingly beautiful woman in a bathing suit addressed me. I was stunned by her beauty. This arousal was a new feeling for me. I [Wo] was drooling and at the same time I [Wa] was trying to impress her but not sure what I had that she might be impressed with. The attraction was overwhelming, as though she had cast a spell. She was in a two-piece bathing suit made of a pseudo metallic material. I was hypnotized by her cleavage. This was way before bikini's but still the top showed the most perfect breasts I had ever seen. Her legs were perfect, and she wore high heel shoes, like she had just stepped off the pin-up calendar in the garage. She could have asked me to kiss her feet and I would have. Instead she asked me to watch her shoes. I nodded, speechless, staring at her perfect ass while she dove off the second pier with the grace of Esther Williams. Whatever was triggered that day and however it occurred, it was enthralling and then became unforgettable because of what it led to.

Of course, I could not do the double dive with Mimi; I had to stay and watch the shoes of my lady. I waved him off and, then sat next to the shoes, and then reclined next to them on the hot wooden planks, and, as was my won't, fell asleep.

When I awoke the shoes were gone, the lady was gone and Mimi was gone. I dove off the pier alone, unnoticed, and swam back to the beach. Still wet, I began the uphill trek back to Snow Hill barefoot. I never gave a thought to Joey, my charge, until I was within sight of the front steps of 48 Snow Hill, where an instant dress rehearsal flashed into my forebrain. I [Wa] had already begun the practice of an internal dress rehearsal just before any scene where there might be some company to impress. In the dress rehearsal scene I saw, Auntie Teresa looking glad to see me, at first, and then the looking a bit more perplexed: "Where's Joey?". The dress rehearsal was cut short and I went running back to the beach, barefoot. I searched everywhere. By now the small beach had just a few people left, none of whom had seen Joey.

I walked home; the next internal dress rehearsal scene was cancelled by my justified all out panic.

I told everyone Joey was missing at which point all the family and friends scoured the beach and all the nearby Streets. Eventually the Police were notified. The next day police boats were dragging the waters between the pier and the beach. My brother's gang, who were all in their early teens now, were part of the search party. I was with them on the first pier when the harbor police gaffing hook pulled up a body partially eaten by the crabs. It turned out to be a missing sailor. They called out to me to identify the body. Richy Felone grabbed my head and turned it away to spare me the trauma, and shouted to the boat police that Joey was a seven-year-old; this was obviously a grown up. Richy must have spoken to my parents because the next day it was decided that I should not attend the "dragging" for the body.

That day they found Joey's body. I watched the adults deal with the interplay of shock and grief. I cannot remember the wake or anything else in the days that followed, which could be because I was kept from it, or because I have repressed it, but I do remember just one scene. I remember Auntie Teresa taking my hand and leading me to Joey's embalmed body in the open coffin. Never letting go of my hand, through her tears, she said: "I want you to remember him like this... and never ever think that it was your fault".

Her magnanimity brings tears to my eyes and joy to my heart, even now; to think that at a time like this she could think about how this might affect me. She was the most high-minded of all of Dad's siblings. She had a fairly happy life with a great husband and three other children after this black day.

Looking back now, I think it is safe to say Mimi had the agility, mentality and loyalty of a mythical forest creature. He took it upon himself to protect me from any teasing or discomfort about what happened to my cousin. But I must tell you I cannot honestly remember feeling any grief or guilt. I knew I should have remorse and maybe even did a little roll playing, but no real feelings at all. It could be Auntie Theresa, it could be repression, it could be nature's way of protecting young minds. Whatever it was, in few days, I went on with my life.

The previous Christmas my brother received a shoe shine kit from Santa, which Dad built into a wooden box with a shoe rest on the top. It was portable in that it had a shoulder strap made out of an old belt, nailed fore and aft. This present was supposed to become a business venture, but

brother Joey could not bring himself to kneel and hustle shines on the street.

Cousin Bobby and I decided we needed to buy the mountain tent we saw in the camping store window on the way to the movies, and so we took over the shoe shine box and went into business for the first time. The revenue from the shoe shine business could not be applied to anything but the purchase of the mountain tent, which we would use for camping. Just how we would get to the camping area, we had not worked out. But we did work diligently and eventually bought a six man mountain tent, which we set up in the rat infested cellar of Bobby's tenement on 23 Sheafe Street. We slept in our mountain tent in the tenement cellar and burned hot dogs (pilfered from the icebox in the kitchen) on an open fire in the cellar. We learned about smoke gathering in a closed space and eventually I [Ti] found that the hot smokey air would rush out of the small street level window. The encampment was abandoned after a very few outings, or I guess you would have to call them innings.

The shoe shine customers were mostly sailors and soldiers coming and going to and from the trains at North Station which was a hub for both the train and sub-way (we called it the elevated car or the "el"). The price of the shine, which was a nickel in the ghetto, was raised by us to a dime here in this prime location. What made it our location involves another punch story.

(The ontogeny of this story recapitulates the phylogeny of story telling: moving from slap stick Punch and Judy to more subtle conflict resolution.)

North Station was on the border of the the North End, West End and Charlestown. Charlestown had a navy yard with war ships, and also Irish gangs which stayed on their side of the bridge. The West End gangs were not Irish; there were a few blacks in a few places, and some Jews and a few Italian. So, the West End was not anyone's turf as such. North Enders, all Italian, could not venture into Charlestown without expecting combat and vice versa, but we could come and go in the West End and vice versa.

Leonard Nimoy, (Star-trek's Dr Spock), was a West Ender and a friend of my older cousin Richie Alexander (Auntie Ella changed their name to Alexander when they moved to the West End).

So Bobby and I, toting our shoe shine box, were taken aback when one of the two West End kids pointed toward the North End and said menacingly “Go back to where youse came from. ” To which I replied something like you don’t own the ...

Before I could finish the sentence cousin, Bobby threw the first punch. He was not a good puncher or wrestler and I always got him to say “uncle” with my arm lock. How “uncle” came to mean I surrender, I will never understand; I thought for a time it had something to do with the fact that Uncle Angelo taught us Judo, but then, that would not explain how everyone else came to use the expression. This Bobby punch surprised the enemy and me.

While I stood agog at Bobby’s courage, the other kid landed one on my jaw, which dampened my aggression immediately [Wo trumped Wa]. All I could do was hug the other kid as tight as I could so he couldn’t punch anymore. The last time I had ever been hit bare fist right in the jaw was by Benny on Henschman Street. I did everything I could to hold back tears, but the fight was knocked out of me. That first punch is often the key to the battle.

The kid with the mouth ran away, and Bobby punched away at the kid I was holding, “round houses” which lack the power, but made the point anyway. Bobby had to win that fight, which he did and the spoils were the choice location just outside the train terminal, where we could make sometimes more than a dollar in few hours. The West End kids never came back.

Eventually I got bored with the shoe shine business; it was probably days later but it seemed like years. Bobby and I then turned to selling the *Boston Globe*. We had to go uptown to that same building on Tremont to get the work permit where I had been abandoned by Mikey Nocera.

I don’t think it was very long before we got bored with the newsboy business, as well. Fortunately that did not matter to the Edwards Foundation which provided scholarships for former newsboys. I received a couple hundred dollars a year from them all through college, grad school and law school. I have no idea who Edwards was or what his thing was about newsboys, but the money made the difference between eating and not eating. Thanks Mr Edwards!

They let Mimi advance with us to seventh grade, but he did not graduate with us from eighth grade. Agility and fidelity filled all the brain space and left no room for IQ. The agility included what can only be called a “judo instinct” which was a force multiplier for his above average muscle. I don’t know how else he could have learned those moves. This is long before the interest in martial arts blossomed. I saw him fight grown men who teased him and win. Eventually everyone knew how far you could go with Mimi, even the “wise guys” knew when it was time to stop teasing. Mimi attached himself to me, which was at times a great feeling of security, but more often an embarrassment.

Wop Warp

Anti-Italian hostility was still in place in Boston when I took to the streets, not quite as bad as the previous generation. My Dad was both delighted and cautious about my non- Italian friends; so much so that he found it necessary to warn me about my inevitable rejection from their lovely polite society.

Italians had become voters and politicians, but were still looked down on. My street mentors never heard of conflict resolution and so there was only one way to deal with conflict; throw the first punch. A quarter of my waking consciousness was taken up with punches, real or imagined. Like it or not, you had everyone in your microcosm classified in terms of whether they feared your punches, or you their’s. Backing away from anyone put you beneath him. I [Wa] could not tolerate any reduction in status, even though I [Th] had already begun to question punching as the sole criterion for social status.

Because of my early experience I wasn’t afraid to take a punch, [Wa worked this out with Wo], and I did somehow, because of all the fighting with my giant brother, have some moves and knew how to throw a punch; and then of course there was Mimi if it was something I couldn’t handle.

I said earlier there was no little league; but there was what you might call “little ring”. Pre-teen kids were herded into the bath house where Miguy trained us for the pre-golden glove events like the one in Charlestown on Saint Patrick’s day, where each Italian kid boxed an Irish kid at the YMCA,

there, in the Irish ghetto. The winners received a Bulova watch. Such a wrist watch cost the equivalent of a week's pay, and sporting same on your left wrist, elevated you considerably in the community, and more importantly, was a badge of courage in the ghetto. The event itself was what it must have been like to be a Christian in the Colosseum; just like the Roman audience, the Irish audience were mostly male and usually drunk.

On one such occasion, I was inspired to a peak performance by the shouts from the audience. Once that adrenaline flowed, I knew I could leap tall buildings. I [Wa] actually came to relish the feeling of fear crystalizing into courage. After I landed a jab which dazed my opponent, I heard "Kill the Guinea bastard." I cornered the Irish kid and was about to throw my secret weapon - a super hard right cross when they called the fight. I threw it anyway and lo and behold the Irish kid went down. I had already figured out that, ironically, the power had to with grace. If you gracefully stepped back and planted your rear foot, and then gracefully stepped toward the target, gracefully involving hips, then torso, then shoulder, then arm, gracefully keeping your eye on where the punch would land, you could manage a surprising force. I was so amazed at my own powers I didn't hear that the audience was ready to lynch me. "Didn't you hear the bell, you fuckin wop".

Needless to say I did not get the Bulova watch for winning the fight. I was disqualified, but MiGuy for the next few days was trying to interest me in a boxing career.

In the bout after mine the Italian contender was my friend Gerry Maffeo, which sounded like McVey, and Gerry was very light, so the audience did not know which fighter to cheer and which to jeer.

As I mentioned, we all knew that singers and boxers sky rocketed out of the ghetto. One of the kids on our boxing team was Gary Leotta. He was the younger brother of Tony DeMarco (Tony used the name DeMarco which belonged to a friend, so he could turn pro before he was 18). That name, which wasn't his, followed him all the way to the middle weight championship.

Gary, Tony's kid brother, and I were boxing one day, and he died in the shower at the Bath House. MiGuy assured me it had nothing to do with me. This was the second death I didn't have to blame myself for, and I

see now that this one bothered me more for some reason. Later, it was discovered that there was a congenital heart condition that struck young males suddenly after exercise. I was still very young so, whatever it was, the repression mechanism did its job erasing, but this time not as well.

Notwithstanding Gary's misfortune, I [Th and Ti] knew boxing was not for me, but I [Wa] knew now that punching, the very opposite of kindness, was something I could do better than most. It would take a few more decades before I would resolve this conflict.

White Mountain Gulag

Encouraged by my travel to Portland, Maine during the war, I [Wa] pressed for more travel adventure. An opportunity to travel on my own came out of our settlement house, the north Bennet Street Industrial School. There, a social worker, John T. Dexter, who single handedly rescued many of the North End boys, was now the director of a work camp operated by the settlement house. Maplewood Caddy Camp was in the White Mountains near Bethlehem, NH. The program began decades earlier, to get the Italian kids off the streets of the North End, and in keeping with the prevailing spirit of the times, put them to work.

The program was primarily for teenagers who would learn to become golf caddies and earn enough to pay for their accommodations, a bunk bed in the abandoned pig barn and all the gruel you could eat.

They did have a program for "blimps." These were kids too small to caddy, but big enough to earn their keep, cleaning the pool and setting pins in the bowling alley at the Maplewood Hotel, oh yes, and shagging balls at the driving range.

That first year my brother Joey 1, Uncle Phil's (Musty) Joey 2, who was my brother's age, and my two sidekick cousins Bobby and Uncle Domenic's Joey 3 took the train at North Station to Littleton, New Hampshire where we were met by a school bus which delivered us to Maplewood Caddy Camp.

City kids did not automatically appreciate the sights, sounds and smells of the country. In fact, the first reaction was negative. Some kids never

came to appreciate the scenery. It did not take me long at all to appreciate the natural beauty of this place where there were no houses for miles.

The older Joes never got beyond the strangeness, and they couldn't stand how cold it was in the morning when we all mustered for reveille. They didn't like sleeping in a big old barn with no windows, and they hated the food which was like prison slop, maybe because the cook was from Sing Sing Prison. My brother told my parents that I wasn't feeling well and we had to come home early before the end of summer. That wasn't true, but of course I went along with the ruse.

However, I did return for the next five summers without my brother. The caddy shack has my initials carved in one of its shingles - JC 46-51. The last summer I was there, '51, we were still sleeping in the pig barn with no windows. Having no hot water also meant really cold showers outdoors in the cold White Mountain morning air, where summer ends at 6:30 pm every night. Counselors were still using paddles on the caddies' butts to enforce the rules; butts that were worked off carrying tooled leather golf bags which weighed as much as the caddies. Caddies were paid 50 cents for nine holes and 75 cents for 18. Golf carts were yet to be invented.

That year, I [Wa] organized a gang called the Black Cats. I already had the fealty of my cousins and some members of the street gang from North End, which encouraged other Italo kids from East Boston to join. One of the East Boston kids was Tony La Bella, a boxer with amazing foot work and defensive moves, from whom I learned to faint with one hand before delivering the punch with the other hand. The purpose of the gang was not clear at first, but when any member of the gang was beaten by a counselor, the gang went to work and beat the crap out of the counselor. We had regular boxing matches in a dirt circle next to the weenie roast pit. Tony was thin and fragile and would crumble if my right hand could ever find him, but it never could. When Tony and I boxed, I could never land a punch. So all that graceful power was trumped by his fancy foot work.

What was amazing to me is how the new camp director handled the revolution begun by the Black Cat gang. He made the rebels part of the governing process. I [Th] never forgot this guy; neither did hundred of other kids. John T. Dexter became a legend. The place was a reform

school under his predecessor, Mr Franzein; he acted like a warden and food was prison slop. Dexter showed us what it was like to be civilized and it also became clear that civilization was contagious. We had regular meetings with the Counselors and ironed out grievances. Eventually we got Marian Whizbang (the paddle) banned. We even got him to fire the Sing Sing cook, “Zieki Tators”, and allow us to cook ourselves. Instead of gruel, we had pancakes and hot dogs.

It seemed Dexter took a special interest in me not so much because of my leadership [Wa], but because of my altruism which he saw after I rescued a camper from our swimming hole, and then another time in the kitchen where I [Ti] stopped the bleeding on a bad accidental cut. At the general meeting he lauded my rescue efforts and nick- named me “Johnny on the Spot”. I [Wa] learned from Dexter’s meetings how much more a relaxed speaker could accomplish by interacting with the audience.

That swimming hole was in a damned pool of the Ammonoosuc River, a tributary of the Connecticut River. A swim there was a memorable sensual experience. I had never been in fresh water this clean and this cold; it was thrilling. The hike down to the dam was through primordial mountain forests. We city kids had to learn what to do when we saw a wild bear.

Dexter made Maplewood much more livable but it was still a work camp; and kids paid a weekly room board fee out of their caddy wages, but we had more time off under Dexter and he would take us for long hikes in the mountains where he shared with us his love of the outdoors. We were also now allowed into the town of Bethlehem where we could buy a banana split for a quarter. I had a girl friend in town toward the end of my last summer. She had red hair and freckles.

Age of Introspection

We graduated from Saint Anthony’s Elementary School with cap and gown, diplomas. the works and photos to prove it happened.

I had to choose between a high school and the seminary (Sister Mary Carlotta’s idea) which was free, affordable and would get me out of the

North End with room and board. I [Wa] wasn't sure whether this was a new set of wings or a straight jacket, and the celibacy might be a problem for me [Wo], having already tasted sexual pleasure. Yes, I started very early.

My brother left the parochial schools after eighth grade and graduated from a public high school, Boston Tech, where my father had gone, and was now about to enroll in Northeastern University.

The Franciscan order had begun a high school for boys on North Bennet Street directly across from Saint Anthony's grammar school. Columbus was once a public school and was the very same place where the Italian POW's were billeted during World War II. Now it had a face lift and was about to graduate its first senior class. This was not a seminary, but a regular Catholic high school.

When I told my father I had chosen to go to the seminary, he laughed uncontrollably. Finally he took me seriously and simply forbade it. As a compromise he would allow me to go to the the new Franciscan Christopher Columbus Catholic High School, instead of Boston Tech. This compromise satisfied Sister Mary Carlotta because there was a program for entering the seminary after Catholic High School where you got credit for the high school classes. My Dad knew me well enough to know that would never happen, which is why he agreed to Columbus.

I began to realize that there was a world beyond the North End where everyone wasn't waiting to punch or be punched. The fact that every movie had fist fight scenes made punching outside the silver screen unreal, which is the opposite of what you would expect. I had some serious adapting to do if I was to venture outside the North End.

Earlier that spring we went on religious retreats and Sister Mary Carlotta singled out a few of us who she felt had a "calling." We were sent to special meetings in the church next door, led by charismatic recruiter priests. It was strange to sit in this place where normally one had to be silent while latin words tickled our ears, and now we were encouraged to speak and to hear English from the altar, and even jokes. I was intrigued by this new view of the clergy.

Every Sunday Ma gave us some coins to spend and after digesting her lasagna, we would walk to Washington St or Tremont St. At first I was

tagging along with my brother's group, but now I was leading my own uptown excursions. When I say leading, I mean I decided on the movie palace destination for my two male cousins (and occasionally one female cousin). The Metropolitan was the furthest away at the other end of Washington St. We went there rarely, not only was it the furthest, it was also the most expensive, a dime more than the others. The Met showed a brand new war movie followed by a stage show, which might be a magician, or a juggler from Vaudeville. If we wanted to have money left over for popcorn, we could go to the Lancaster in the West End which was only a dime. Here we saw much older movies, and B movies, like Flash Gordon. The Lancaster ("Lanky") gave away free dinner plates on Tuesday nights, but our excursions were on Sunday afternoons after mass and after the main mid-day meal. There was also the affordable Laugh Movie with carnival mirrors in the lobby which distorted your image. Inside they played a loop of *Three Stooges*, *Marks Brothers* and *Ritz Brothers* comedies, over and over non-stop, 24-7. Some of the patrons were there to sleep off a drunk.

Loew's RKO was real fancy, decorated like the Sultan's palace; the experience was always disorienting. Coming from the ghetto into a palace with 30 foot drapes and huge marble columns prepared us for being transported to another world on the big screen. We wrote to some actors, fell in love with some actresses. For me it was Virginia Mayo. Even shy Tillie, Ma, had a secret screen love, Ronald Coleman.

After the movie there was the post movie romp, a benign, residue of schizophrenia where we became screen characters. I would become Zoro, or the D'Artagnan, all the way home to the North End and my cousins were content to be minor characters. Or I might be Gene Autry and my cousins would be my side kicks. Or I might be the Lone Ranger and Joey would be Tonto and Bobby would be the bad guy.

Our Sunday posse had no use for girls, but as I said, on occasion we made an exception for my maternal cousin, Jackie, Auntie Annie's daughter. She was our age and a "tom boy". She decided she would be my paternal cousin Bobby's girlfriend, which was ok, legally, since they were not related by blood; they could marry eventually. Bobby went along reluctantly. She was bossy and we didn't like being bossed around by a girl.

One Sunday we knew that Jackie would find her way to my house just after the big Sunday meal. She lived in Malden and would come in by street car. This particular Sunday in April or March we decided to go without her, so we called her on the wall phone. We told her that Bobby was sick and we weren't going to the movies. We lied. She decided to go to the local movies in Malden, with her older Sister, Bertha. Jackie wanted to see the movie a second time. Bertha left her and went home.

I am horrified to have to tell what happened next. A young man named Coombs, a sex offender who had just been released from custody for a previous rape, found his way to Jackie in the darkened movie house and whatever he did got her to get up and leave. He chased and caught her at an abandoned lot 50 yards from her house, where he raped, murdered and buried her. The following Monday a classmate stumbled across locks of her blond hair escaping out of her hasty grave. Coomb's mother read about the murder and found blood and other evidence on her son's coat and turned him in.

Again, I must explain that death wasn't real to my childish mind. For a time I felt I had to apologize for that, but now I'm just pointing it out as a scientific/philosophical observation. I had the unusual experience of losing cousins and friends first hand, and this numb internal reaction was the result.

Bobby and I did feel guilty for a day or two (Bobby more than me because she was supposed to be his girlfriend) about our lie which caused Jackie to go to her last movie. It was Bobby who didn't want her along, come to think of it, because she had talked him into becoming his steady girlfriend. He wasn't ready for that. Of course I mentioned our lie and its consequences in my Saturday confession. I might have said something like "Bless me father for I have sinned, I think I was involved in a murder." The priest was flabbergasted and eventually pulled the details out of me, after which he remained silent. He didn't have a clue what to tell me. I suggested that God had called her to his side, and, of course, he agreed. In the end he forgave me and had me say one "Act of Contrition".

I [Th] realized that Jackie's rape and murder was an act of male sexual aggression and that I [Wo] had that "sex drive." Without any remorse, purely philosophically, I [Th] began to think that maybe celibacy was the way to save the world. This also weighed on my decision to go along with

Sister Mary Carlotta's suggestion to enter the seminary. But in the end I went to high school and kept my sex drive in tact.

A neighbor, Peter Capo Di Lupo, was at Boston Latin and suggested that I might belong there. Carlotta saw Latin as a pagan school leading to Harvard where faith was surely lost. She discouraged me (which was not very hard to do) from bothering with the entrance exams and other hurdles. She pointed out Columbus was across the street from St. Anthony's and I could walk to school and stay in touch with the Franciscan nuns and my new friends, the Franciscan priests who would be my high school teachers. It made sense at the time.

The good friends who guided me into polite society had never given or received even one real punch, which made me strange, but also intriguing to my non-North End friends in high school. Here, the important thing to understand is that American inclusiveness was growing right along side the prejudice, and by the time my college decade rolled around, I had deep connections across ethnic and class lines. Despite all my Dad's admonitions, I was accepted outside the ghetto, and that made me what I am today, as much, if not more, than my DNA or early child hood influences. That being said, the "punch-a-mania" may have been zipped into a back pocket, but it was still with me.

Discovering Columbus

Now as far as North End kids were concerned, high school was not guaranteed. In fact, more often than not it was out of the question. School was mandated until the age of 16, nevertheless, most North Enders left school before that based on a simple note that their wages were essential to family survival. Our parents were first generation Italo-Americans and the great majority of them did not finish elementary school. My Dad was the only one of his brothers to go to high school, even though he did not graduate. High school was as rare for that first generation as graduate school is now for immigrants.

I was second generation and more of us were planning to go to high school than would have been the case in the previous generation. The fewer kids who went to Catholic rather than public schools were more likely to go to high school. Less than half of my class did not go to high school. Jimmy "Pizza" Gregorio would go right to work at a bakery. Freddy Parziale would go to work in his family bakery. Vilma Cataldo, Mimi the pioneer, and I think I can safely say, the last two rows in our class, where Sister kept the slow learners, would not see any more school after eighth grade. The garment industry down by Chinatown, construction, and numerous factories, including canned crab, shoe, bottled olives and several more Chocolate factories which had sprung up, were ready and waiting for teenage workers.

My class of "53 would be the fourth graduating class of Christopher Columbus Catholic High School. New as it was, the Franciscans saw to it that the best and brightest were sent there as faculty. We had to wear a white shirt with a brown tie every day. The curriculum was the same as Boston Latin's except that we had more latin classes and four years of Religion. There were two tracts in which all the subjects were set, no electives. One track was called College and the other was called Commercial. In the college track there were two sub groups, I and II, which looked to be separated by ability, although I cannot say how they accomplished this. There might have been some early testing which I am not remembering. However, it came to pass I was in Freshman I and Sophomore I and Junior I and Senior I, which was the "smart group" in the college program.

The four years of math included Algebra, Geometry, Solid Geometry, Trigonometry and a little Calculus.

The four years of science included General Science, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics.

The four years of history included Ancient History, Medieval History and American History.

The four years of language included Latin 1,2,3 and 4; Italian two years

The four years of religion included Apologetics, 1,2,3, and 4.

Most of the classes held my interest. I did very little homework since I was still plagued by snail paced reading speed. I kept my marks up by cramming for tests.

As a high school kid I had lost some status with my newest expanded street gang, the Dukes, which was just as well since I had begun to lose interest in punching and petty crime. Other gang members felt compelled to test whether I could still be a tough guy and a school boy at the same time. This test became much more difficult to pass when I became a “college boy”, which will become apparent. Some things I was learning from Ancient History were applied directly to the leadership problems of the gang; other learning got me wondering about the future of the gang in this new broader society which they knew nothing about.

Just as the Holy Roman Empire brought together formerly warring tribes of Celts and Romans, the catholic high school brought together the warring ancestors of those tribes.

Despite the fact that Columbus was in the North End, very few kids in the school were from the North End. In fact, my class was less than 25% North Enders. The few Italians from East Boston brought the Italo's up to less than 50%; the majority were all Irish. The only Irish I had seen to that point were in the ethnic gang wars on the Charleston Bridge, or in the boxing ring at the Charlestown YMCA.

My freshman year I was bullied by an Irish senior, twice my size. I offered to meet him in the school yard after school. His friends came as well and made a circle around the fight zone. This event gave the Dukes the opportunity to become part of the new high school. The Dukes, my gang, hung out at Cowboy's Coffee Shop, which just happened to be half a block from the school yard. I was amazed to see the turnout for the fight. My opponent had four or five inches on me and maybe 20 or 30 pounds. But I knew that fast hands and Tony La Bella's footwork could make up for such disparities. We began boxing. I could see he didn't know how to throw a punch. But I also saw that if he got hold of me he could tear my head off. Fortunately while I was dancing around dazzling him with my foot work, ducks and dodges, one of his friends put out his leg causing me to stumble. That made it a gang fight. One that embarrassed me for the rest of high school years. One of the Irish kids had a bat which justified Mimi producing his hunting knife and his tomahawk. The guy with the bat was cut, and then the mini war broke out for about 10 minutes, when suddenly a van jumped the side walk and drove right into the school yard scattering my gang. It had an ad for a South Boston flower shop on the side. All the Irish kids piled in and as the van sped away, I heard shots fired. To my chagrin, one of the Baliro twins decided

to bring his gangster older brother's gun to the event. Most young teens had homemade zip-guns, not the Baliros; they had a store bought colt.

The Baliro's were a large family and had once been involved in a feud with the Ciampas (my Dad and his brothers), but things were patched up now. I was warned to stay away from the Baliros. Nevertheless, I had recruited Rudy and Blinky (Anthony) who were twins, and we had done some crazy things together. They were my muscle along with Mimi. Thank God, Blinky couldn't shoot straight. The shots that hit the van did not hit anyone inside or my life would have been very different.

I found myself in the Principal's office the next day, but before that, the senior who really started the whole thing asked to meet with me. He saw what he was dealing with and that he would have to deal with it every day or change schools just before graduation. We met in the bathroom next to the principal's office. It was amazing how such a nasty SOB could suddenly be ready to kneel and kiss my ring. That makes it harder for me [Wa] to give up violence in favor of more civilized roads to power. We agreed that he would make sure I didn't get in trouble with the school, if I would guarantee his safety.

The Principal's name was Father Thomas Nicastro. I believe he was Italo-American but not from the Boston area. He was ready to pounce on me because I was the North Ender and a lowly freshman. He did not want his Irish clientele to have any problems with these Wop gangs. The senior interrupted before the tirade was over and insisted that he started it, and, furthermore, that I had nothing to do with the rumble afterwards. They were just kids who jumped in. And he got creative and told how I protected him.

Father Thomas kept a poker face. I will never know whether he believed the lie or decided it was best to live with it. We both received a warning and went on with our lives.

The Irish kids walked on egg shells around the school and usually traveled in a pack to the subway or the bus stop. I actually made friends with a couple of them. One in particular, Gerry McNeil, actually hung out with us after school.

Young Man With a Horn

Italian kids in my high school class were from the North End and East Boston, none of them were gang members, and they looked to me for protection after school. Apparently gang membership and high school were mutually exclusive. I [Wa] could not help taking advantage of my unique position, even though I [Th] knew this was wrong. One of my “protectees”, from East Boston was Vic Popeo, who played the trumpet so well it blew my mind. He actually made a living with his horn playing any kind of music, including classical. He taught me a few more scales. This was the tail end of the big band era. Movies like “Young Man With A Horn”, and 78 records by Harry James inspired me. I played the bugle in Saint Anthony’s grade school band so I had an embouchure. But I still had to play by ear. My reading block was double trouble when it came to reading music. My eye could not find the next measure, let alone the next line of music. I found a trumpet in the attic and experimented with it for hours to the distress of all within earshot - and there were many.

Auntie Minnie and her daughter, Lorraine, aka Laurie, were living in the attic of 48 Snow Hill. Laurie was pretty and already a teenage “bobby soxer.” She had a steady boy friend named Rollie - Roland Manozzi. They took a shine to me and would bring me to the movies, and to outings at Walden Pond where Thoreau dropped out. None of us knew who Thoreau was then. I learned that later in College.

I found Lorrie and Rollie fascinating, especially since he had his own band and played the trumpet, and she sang like Sarah Vaughn. My Dad coached her singing and got her into some of the amateur shows. Rollie gave Lorrie a record player for her birthday on April Fool’s Day. In addition to the ribbon, it also had carrots tied on (not sure why). At one point, a song Rollie wrote, “Where Are You”, a rumba with nicely rhyming lyrics, which I can still recall, was made into a 78 single side record. My classmate Angelo Lupis had a much older brother who played the accordion on the record.

Keep in mind, except for the radio, the victrola (record player) was the only media. TV was still a rare little box which offered only a couple of shows on Tuesday night. People still went out to dance halls and night clubs to hear bands. There were live orchestras everywhere in church halls and clubs. And, of course, Boston was a tour stop for “big” bands

which played the ballrooms reachable by public transit. Roseland State; and Revere Beach Drome were the big ones. While I was still too little to jitterbug with a “bobby soxer”, I could stand unnoticed, at the foot of the band stand and watch the tapping foot of Dorsey, Basie, Ellington and Harry James. I lied about my age or snuck in with Laurie and Rollie.

The attic trumpet with the bent bell and I spent a lot of time together. Eventually, I could play *Stardust* and *Tenderly*. Aunts and other collateral victims chipped in and bought me two mutes for my birthday. My Dad was disappointed that I had virtually given up the accordion, but one day I caught a glimpse of him standing in the stairwell to the attic, listening and nodding with approval.

The Bridge

While I was in high school, my Dad was having a midlife crisis. He was in his forties now, and there were no more shows to sing in, and no more clubs and no more applause. He was drinking more than ever. He was part of a construction union and he managed to work every day before he came home drunk in his Nash Rambler. My brother and he had a falling out which led to my brother leaving Northeastern University (where he wasn't able to concentrate). He joined the brand new US Air Force, which had been the Army Air Corps. My Mom knew about it and didn't blame him for wanting to get away. She never told my Dad until the day he left. My brother said good bye and left my Dad feeling betrayed by both his wife and his son.

Dad blamed Ma, resulting in a terrible fight, after which he decided to leave home, and take me with him. I was always on his side no matter how wrong he was. He and I drove for a while in the Nash. I was honored that he would take me with him, but had no idea where we would wind up. We stopped at a race track in Rhode Island and I ran back and forth with the tickets on horses. While he was on a winning streak he kept ordering drinks; there was a bar near our seats and a traveling beer cart. By the last race, he was so waisted he could hardly walk. He leaned on me as we made it to the car. It was obvious he could not drive. I pushed him across the bench seat of the Nash and slid in behind the wheel. Struggling to hold his head up he looked at me behind the wheel and chuckled.

“You know how to drive?” He slurred and smiled broadly, pleasantly amazed that I was suddenly so grown up behind the wheel. My legs were barely long enough to reach the pedals.

I started the car. I knew what to do but had not mastered the clutch, so we were jerking across the parking lot. Eventually he made me pull over and he took the wheel.

We were not on the highway ten minutes before we were pulled over. The State Police took him away, had the car towed and left me on the highway to fend for myself. Believe it or not that's how it was with Irish cops and wops. He handed me some money before they took him. I hitched a ride to the next town and called my Dad's first cousin also named John Ciampa, who worked for the Boston Police Department. Cousin Johnny from East Boston got my Dad out of jail without any sanctions, but that night he decided to sentence himself.

Remember the Charlestown Bridge I told you about, and how Mimi's dive had to be careful about vessels passing under the bridge? Well, no one was there to give my Dad the all clear signal for his jump, just after midnight, one cold winter night, and fortunately his splash down was so close to the passing vessel that they couldn't miss seeing him, and couldn't help fishing him out of the water. He would not have lasted 3 minutes in that water. Somehow they got him to an ambulance and to a hospital.

There was a small article in the paper, and my Principal, Father Tom (who would keep me out of Harvard later), visited my Dad in the hospital, and then my Dad visited him from time to time. Whatever was going on, my Dad changed for a while. Psychiatry and psychoanalysis and addiction treatments were new enough and rare enough and unavailable for the rank and file. Even social work had very little psychology in it. Priests took on the role of counselors, but Dad never went to church. Whether because of or in spite of Father Tom, my dad stopped drinking and in his recovery period, decided to get more involved with my Christopher Columbus Catholic High School. His new sobriety came with a duodenal ulcer which changed his life. Nevertheless, he helped direct the senior class musical which I wrote based on Virgil's *Aeneid*.

He was a different man for this short period. He was reading classics and fixing dinner for the family, as he wasn't able to work. Ma doubled her work life. She worked in the chocolate factory and then began cleaning offices as well.

Supermarket

While at Columbus, I worked after school in what we were told was the first super-market in history, E. Gray's. E.Gray's was in Haymarket Square where all the push carts sold everything from soup to nuts in all seasons, in all weather. The open market was an old Boston tradition that went back to colonial times. Around the open market there were shops where you could buy coffee which was scooped from burlap sacks into paper bags. There were shops where you could buy cheese and butter. There were butcher stores with animal carcasses hung on hooks outside, and even an apothecary where you could buy customized pharmaceuticals. There were grocery stores which had groceries and canned goods stacked on rows of shelves behind long counters. Clerks stood behind the counters and reached up to six or seven feet with a pole-clamp device to get the item you asked for. They would scribble the price of each item from memory on a brown paper bag, which tally would serve as your receipt after they packed the bag and handed it to you, all in Haymarket Square.

E-Gray's changed all that when it opened just after VE Day. It was self service. There were aisles with everything at a level the customer could reach and put in a market basket; the idea of giving every shopper their own market basket was brand new. Inside the massive store there were concessions for meat and cheese. The amazing thing was there was a line of cash registers where you checked out, and the machine totaled and printed a receipt. This sounds pretty mundane, but in its day it was like a trip to the science museum. People came from all over.

By the time I got to work there, they had worked the bugs out of how to keep the shelves stocked and the prices stamped on each can, but there were people who didn't put all the purchases in the basket. Instead they would put it in their own bags or large purses. So all bags and large purses had to be checked before you were let into the self service aisles. Mr. Moynehan thought I would be best for that job since I was the only

street kid from the North End on the staff. We thought people who were reluctant to check their bags would be more inclined to hand it to someone they knew from the streets.

While I was preventing crime at E. Gray's, I was committing crime at all the nearby shops, which had to keep cash in the stores on weekends because the banks were closed. I can't remember who hatched the plan. It wasn't me, I'm sure of that. I had misgivings but eventually approved the plan. It might have been one of the older Baliros who had robbed a few of them at gun point. We were too small for armed robbery, but big enough for burglary. My gang made a couple of amazing hauls in the meat markets. It was more money than I had ever seen before, and for a while we were living high.

My brother Joey woke me one night pointing to a pile of cash in the night table between our twin beds. "What the hell is this?" He asked.

I remember this moment because it was a turning point in our relationship. The trust angle was shifting. He could not hide his admiration, as he cautioned me about this new life I had chosen. He was the clean cut athlete and I was now the gangster. He knew the Baliros had guns. He made a feeble warning about the danger of my new associates, but let me do my own thing. In fact I loaned him money from time to time.

Life of Crime

The idea of a life of crime lost all its appeal late one night after Mikey T, Rudi, Blinky and I burgled a shop on an old cobble stone street behind Ye Olde Oyster House.

I [Th] knew it was wrong, but somehow I [Wa] still could not let go of the of the excitement and the street approval and the power this brought to my deficient ego. I had overlooked the fact that our scores had become a pattern, so obvious, that the police anticipated our next target. They waited for us that night. They had all the narrow escape routes blocked with cruisers. There were no burglar alarms then, which is hard to imagine, but true. When we came out of the butcher shop door, having popped the lock, I could hear the car engines all around us. We ditched

the loot, weapons and tools and I told everyone to split up and run in a different direction.

After they all left, I took off down the a fourth alley. I remember I [Wa] was amazed and thrilled at the speed I was managing, I was almost flying, and when I came to the police car blocking the alley, I vaulted over it, an amazing leap into the waiting arms of a big Irish cop. They slapped me around in the street, and then brought me into the Fulton St. Police station at the mouth of the Sumner Tunnel. I was held in a room which had only a switch board near a second story window. It was summer and the window was open; I could see down to the driveway where the police cars were parked.

They played good cop, bad cop for some time. It seemed like hours. I told them I was a student at Columbus High School and gave my name, but would not give the names of my collaborators. At one point they asked me if I knew anything about the Baliro gang (it wasn't the Baliro gang; it was my gang, but Baliro was the big name in crime, I was eclipsed). I [Th] had to stifle my [Wa] ego to keep from correcting them.

“Who?” I convinced them that I didn't know any Baliro, and that I did not know the names of who I was with, just nick names I made up on the spot. At one point the bad cop left the room and the good cop came in to tell me that he could see I was a good kid and he was appalled at what the bad cop was doing, and that Father Thomas was coming down. I would be let go if I just told him who the bad kids were. I repeated the made-up Italian nick names. Well, then there was nothing he could do. The bad cop would have to come back this time with a hose. He left me to think for a while. Just then what I saw in the open window, I thought was a hallucination. I could see Rudi's tousled blonde hair and his blue eyes and I heard him say: “What do you want us to do?”

Blinky was on the roof of a paddy wagon, Rudy was standing on his shoulders so that his eyes were at the level of the open window.

They were that crazy brave to attempt something right at the police station. I learned later in my college Great Books class that Homer had drawn the same distinction between the “crazy brave” of Ajax and the “mindful brave” of Achilles. It took a lot more courage when you were smart enough to know what was really happening. The Baliros were crazy brave. They followed my orders and disappeared before my next beating.

My face must have looked like the inside of a blueberry muffin by the time Father Thomas showed up with my Dad. They demanded to see me. When my Dad saw me, he leapt at the cop and would have strangled him had he not been held back by Father Thomas. I suddenly realized that he cared and had balls. I thought he would beat me, but no, he went after the cop. I thought I would never forget the bad cop's name, and now I can't think of it. I think I must have blocked it because I never wanted to believe the story I heard, that one day years later when that very cop was picking up his bribe from Bunny's bookie joint on Margaret Street, the Baliros dropped a curb stone from the roof of the building, which missed him but still injured him for life.

I spent less and less time with the Dukes. Bobby DiFronzo and I decided instead of stealing, we would run dances and splash parties at the YMCA and charge admission. We could make enough at that to maintain our status as "wise guys". Before long, I was no longer president of our gang, and members found their way to legitimate jobs or the rackets. The Baliro's became major gangsters, and eventually were both arrested for murder. They escaped from life sentences and were arrested again, and if I have the story right, escaped again, and were at-large for a long time.

I was stimulated by high school math and physics and especially Latin. We had four years of Latin culminating in readings of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Latin continued to fascinate me because it was at the root of other languages and I liked the complex order of the syntax, the declensions and conjugations.

Author, Author

As I mentioned earlier, I wrote our senior class play based on the *Aeneid*. It was a musical in English with latin words that popped and purred. Angelo Lupis played the accordion, Vic Popeo played trumpet and helped me with the musical composition. My friend Tucker Sarnii played drums and supplied the rest of the band.

There was a new Sunday show on TV called *Omnibus*; it was all the rage. Alistair Cooke sat in an armchair at the opening, and made you feel as though you were in the historical event that was about to unfold.

Our parish had just opened a community center on Prince Street not far from Hanover and we got permission to use it. Actually our show brought in the very first audience, which may account for the full house. People wanted to see the inside of the new building.

My Dad was very much involved in the stage craft; we had to recreate the River Styx and Hades (hell). He knew what to do with the lights and how to create the foggy atmosphere without a fog machine. We used cigar smoke just before the curtain went up. At the opening I sat in the corner in a pin spot with a grey suit like Alistair Cook and did a monologue like the ones he used to open *Omnibus*.

While I was doing my monologue, there were swoons from girls in the audience, like they did when Sinatra performed. Here it was again “adulation.” All of a sudden every self doubt,[Wo] all negative feelings were eclipsed. I [Wa] could see how this could be addictive.

Adulation aside, except for saints, doesn't everyone have a secret need to stand out, be outstanding? Maybe not. I did for whatever reason. It's just a question of how much your circumstances encourage or discourage it. There is no question that the vast majority give up early and become followers and celebrity fans instead. But I did not give up at this time of my life. I could see that there was a “big time” and that I was not in it.

Dexter, the social worker, and Caddy Camp Director, introduced me to Mr Howe - Henry Saltenstall Howe, who owned vast estates called Ponk-a-Pog in the Milton/Canton area. He would have boys, hand picked by Dexter, to help in the forest. He would fix us grown up cocktails - side cars. I don't know what was in them, but there was never enough for anyone to get out of control. And we would go to the original Howard Johnson's for dinner cooked by Mr. Howard Johnson, who I met. Maybe Mr. Howe was gay. Now that I think of it, neither he nor Dexter ever married, but they never did anything off-color with us. Whatever they did, the motivation was definitely Yankee altruism.

I was drifting away from the gang by the time I was finishing high school. By some curious coincidence, my two best friends were teenage professional musicians. They only knew each other through me. Vic Popeo was from East Boston and played the trumpet so well that his swing band was booked every weekend in the winter, and in the summer of our junior year, he won an audition to play first trumpet in a European symphony orchestra. He actually went to Europe. Tony Sarni, nicknamed "Tucker," played drums in professional swing and jazz orchestras. At 17 he was able to buy a brand new Lincoln Continental, which he let me drive to Richard's. Richard's was the very first drive-in at the beginning of the Felsway where Medford begins. There, girls in shorts roller skated to your car and hooked a tray of burgers, shakes and fries on the car window. The strict order not to fraternize with the customers was countermanded by the short shorts. Tucker was short and round, so he let me do the talking. The car and my lies about who we were got us a few dates. This was a very special prize to be dating, blond blue eyed, non-Italian girls.

Nobless Oblige

The Boston Brahmins - Henry Saltenstall Howe and John T. Dexter talked me into going to college. The idea of the priesthood as a next step was now totally ridiculous. They decided I belonged at Harvard and since they were both graduates, I took their word for it. They actually went out of their way to talk about me with the admissions office. Either they didn't know, or thought they could get around the quota system. Harvard had religious, ethnic, and geographic quotas, all three of which intersected right across my application. Because I was Catholic, Italian, and local, I would not have been acceptable even if I had already discovered a cure for cancer. I don't think you'll find even one Italo-American or one North Ender on the Harvard roster; maybe one Catholic. That Catholic was from my school - David Doherty, class president, quarterback of the football team and middle class. Another reason why I might not have been admitted might have to do with the essential principal's recommendation which would countermand any thing Howe and Dexter could do for me. Father Thomas Nicastro knew about the gang fight my freshman year, knew about the Dukes, my juvenile arrest, and my crazy Dad. Why would he want me to be the first chance Harvard took on a Columbus graduate. Truth to tell, it was amazing they took a

chance on an Irishman. David Doherty was the first and only Columbus graduate ever to attend Harvard. Doherty wound up a bank teller, so I'm told.

I was crushed by the rejection and gave up on college, but these two Boston Brahmins, who talked me into applying to Harvard, made up for all the anti-Italian oppression by sticking with me and convincing me to apply to Boston University (BU). Boston College was a possibility, but they offered more Catholicism and they wanted money. BU was a Methodist school but really non-religious and with a full scholarship.

There were a few North Enders who went to college in my Dad's generation, but almost none in my generation for some strange reason. The only college students my generation of North Enders knew anything about were gays looking for "rough sex" with ghetto youths. There was a well-beaten path that crossed the tracks between the two worlds. The gay students would pay to perform oral sex on groups of Italo teenage boys. How long this practice was in effect or how it got started or why, I don't know. I actually encountered them once while I was still in pre-puberty. I happened to be passing the back alley where this strange ritual transpired with my older cousin and his buddies on the receiving end. The gang would line up for blow jobs and when it was over and they had the money, they would rough up the gay students. The reason I bring this up is because now I was a college student haunted by the misconception that there was something about college that made you "a queer". I had to literally and figuratively knock that misconception out of the heads of some of my old gang pals. Once it was established that all college students were not queers, there was considerable curiosity about what college was all about, in some unlikely former pals.

One fall day when the sun was particularly bright, I allowed a wise guy character to drive me to BU in his convertible. He had to wait outside on the quad while I attended class. When I came out, I found a small group of on-lookers around Blackie Pete, trying to hide the fact that they had just come upon an alien from another planet. Blackie Pete, from the Di Fronzo family had decided that the unusual fall sunshine presented an opportunity to give his tan a last boost before the New England skies turned grey for the duration. Blackie Pete (the nickname has something to do with his obsession with tanning) had taken his shirt and pants off and was laying on the hood of his car, illegally parked on Commonwealth Ave right next to the campus. I thought at first that he did this to

embarrass me, but later learned that he confused the campus with parks where this behavior might have been a little less untoward. As I stood there on the bridge between these two worlds, I felt decomposed and out of place. There was that much separation between these lives a mile from each other.

When I called his name, Pete popped his head up and looked around surprised that a small group of students was staring; maybe they all wanted to blow him. The onlookers found reasons to linger within earshot as I approached Pete. Without being conspicuous, I'm sure they wanted to hear what I would say, and in what language.

Students in the fifties were pre-beat and way pre-hippy; they were "preppy," obsessed with fitting in, which meant the right saddle shoes, the right sweater, etc. So, Pete might just as well have been lying on the hood of a flying saucer. None of them had ever been to the North End. None of them had ever seen anyone from the North End. All they knew about it was what they read in the tabloids. When they heard us arguing about him putting his clothes back on, the fascination was even more peeked. I was less of a spectacle, but still stood in my peg pants and DA haircut sticking out from under the "BU beanie" freshman had to wear. But this strange interlude brought out some special strangers who became life-long friends. Ken Lappin and Parker Kirk introduced themselves to me, and told me that they had thrown their beanies away. They got to meet Blackie Pete.

BU put me in an experimental program which was called General Education. This was a movement in higher education associated with RM Hutchins at the University of Chicago, and Harvard had a similar experiment. The now sprawling Boston University took over the General Tire Company on Commonwealth Ave to house the College of General Education. I wondered whether "General" in the Tire sign had anything to do with the name selection for the new college. All they had to do was replace "Tire Company" with "Education" and they already had the sign for the building.

In '53 we called it CGE - the idea was that a well rounded generalist was better suited for whatever specialty he or she chose later on. There were lectures and lots of seminars and projects.

My first college buddies were actually closer than any gang relationships. They were Ken Lappin, Parker Kirk and Eddy Rivas (a wealthy Cuban escaping from the Batista regime). Eddy had a sporty Buick Riviera with custom car horns that could play simple melodies. Eddy played the banjo. Did I mention that I had learned from Joe Foritano and my Dad to play a little guitar? It was enough to play along with Eddy. I hid the accordion in a wall closet in the attic. It was so “grease ball” that I wanted no one to know that I ever played it.

Ken Lappin was the son of a doctor who lived in what to me was a mansion. He was Jewish, although that meant nothing to him or me. Boston Jews changed their names and lived in Newton and ran the symphony and the opera, not at all like their extravagant cousins in New York. Whether he intended it or not, Ken helped me shed my North End persona. Ken fixed me up with Jewish girls, who were much more intelligent than the the North End girls. Part of my new cover was comedy. I [Wa] would do accents with my yiddish jokes. Ken would roar, even at the ones that were not so funny. Ken was in this program because he had to transfer from U Mass in Amherst (not studying- bad grades). Parker Kirk was in the program because he was one of the rare students thrown out of Harvard in his freshman year. Eddy, as I said, was on the lamb from the Cuban dictator that had put his father and grandfather, both senators, in prison. I was there because some guidance counselor couldn't figure out where I belonged. We four musketeers were inseparable, and this was one gang I could not lead. Remember the name Eddy Rivas; he will become one of the coincidences that make me wonder whose pulling the strings in this puppet show.

As I said, I showed up in peg pants, my one dress up costume and my only jacket which was a hip length wrap around with a tie belt. The antipode of preppy. I had a DA (Ducks Ass) hair cut, long enough to slick back into a seam on the back of my head. The fact that Ken, Parker, and Eddy would dare to be seen with me was testament to their non-conformity. They were prep school graduates all, and had never seen anyone get punched out, which happened during “rush week” at a frat party we crashed. An inebriated upperclass frat brother who was teasing me about my hair cut made the mistake of uttering the ethnic slur. The fact that he was an upperclassman and a bigot would have been enough, but I wanted to be civilized and so I did my best to ignore him. When he staggered over to touch whatever it was that made my hair shine, the punch just launched itself. It was not my Sunday punch; it did not land

square, but the drunk frat guy did fall through the window screen of the first story window and I became Rocky (not Rocky Balboa, he wasn't born yet, Rocky Marciano). I think he would have fallen even if I missed. The nick name netted me recognition but more isolation to go with it. Eventually Ken talked me into a hair cut and loaned me enough money to buy a green turtle neck sweater at J. Press in Harvard Square, which didn't really go with the peg pants. I think the mixed image was even more confusing for my fellow students.

I loved the intellectual freedom of college, as compared to the dogma of Catholic high school. We talked all night some nights. They were very philosophical and agnostic, which started me questioning all the rigamarole of Catholicism. I was twelve years with nuns and priests and I must say I wasn't spiritual at all. It was the fear of the punishing God that I lost, with nothing to replace it. So it wasn't long before I had embraced existential humanism which was the platform of contemporary intellectuals, even though I didn't really understand it.

With the sports car, customized horns, banjo and guitar, we had no trouble finding girls. Every body drank and smoked; there was no such thing as "too much". It was still ok to be drunk as long as you sobered up for class. I enjoyed being in shape so I tried to smoke less at a time when TV doctors were endorsing Camel cigarettes. My summers on construction provided muscles, which I maintained in the gym. Look like Marciano, sing like Sinatra, and talk like Alistair Cook. That was my new wannabe image.

I confess now that I was ashamed of my heritage and actually thought about changing my name, like my cousins who became the Alexanders. I really wanted to fit into that Yankee upper class. BU, while it was no Harvard or Yale, had more middle class than upper class, but class none the less. Parker's friends at Harvard drew no distinctions and were socially very available to us and so we had access to the Harvard orbit, albeit as satellites.

Social Climbing

Cambridge in the fifties was an amazing place. Without trying Harvard had succeeded in re-establishing an American aristocracy, and even if you were not included, just being close made you feel more important.

Harvard Square was the special apron blending into the more public but still special streets. Snobbery was frowned on at Harvard, which helped keep the American myth of social mobility alive. The Harvard students in our circle never gave the impression that they were slumming, even though that might have been part of the attraction. For me the buoyancy was irresistible. I was sucked into this much more civilized world, more humane, more thoughtful, and much more comfortable.

The idea of the coffee house was still brand new. There were two we frequented - one on Mount Auburn Street, which had been a dry cleaners. A red head named Glazer was the entrepreneur. I played the guitar there a couple of times for tips. Folk music between poetry readings was still a new thing.

I played the trumpet at the other coffee house, "Tula's One Lung." Bill Keogh by day was a telephone installer, by night he was a pretend Harvard preppy, who played swing and dixie changes only in the key of C. That meant I had to learn to play my b-flat trumpet in the key of D - two sharps. It wasn't so hard because we played the same four tunes over and over. I did not have the jazz chops to really improvise, so I would memorize licks and play the same ones over and over. I was a pretend Harvard intellectual, a pretend jazz musician, and a pretend folk singer. All of these identities would rattle and crash when I had to return home each night to the North End, where I was a genuine street guinea. So sometimes I didn't go home. Eddy Rivas had enough money to have a suite in the Myles Standish Hotel which had become a BU dormitory. Many nights we all slept there and used his meal card to eat there, and at Vinnie's pizza across the street. In spite of Parker and Ken's family wealth, they were as broke as I was. For some reason their families had cut them off. Only Eddy Rivas had money and he was extremely generous to his friends. The money I had came from working on construction in the summer. All school tuition and expenses were covered by scholarship. I needed an MTA fare, 15 cents, to get to my other world and 50 cents to eat lunch and dinner. The beers and other alcohol were provided by Peter Pane and his housemates at Harvard where the supply seemed endless.

During those years when you have just become an adult, you are open to support from peers going through the same changes, so much so that I don't think there is any other period where you are as suggestible and as connectable. And the connections are mostly by accident. In my case it

was the accident of bumping into Ken and Parker that first day of school. Had I sat next to young fascists, or young republicans.....I don't know. Maybe it was dumb luck, but then you have to ask what is luck. I always knew that luck was a question not an answer. Whatever it was, this top had bubbled up into another atmosphere.

Ken had already bubbled into the elite class; he was coming from being a Jew. He didn't look Jewish, or act Jewish, he had the preppy thing down, but was truly curious about the deeper meaning of life. Ken knew who I was, so he wasn't only a social climber, or you could say he was interested in climbing in all directions.

He forced me to take him to the street corner and hang out with the gang. He saw street fights and heard jazz. Ken became a life-long friend. He told me later in our lives that I was a major influence in his life. He said I introduced him to jazz and his undying love for Italian food. Anyway, for sure, I got a lot more out of our association than he did.

Having gained entrance to the upper class, we chose a subdivision of that class which was challenging the elitism on which the class was based. The counter culture hadn't begun yet, so we were not hippies; that didn't happen until the 60's, but the seeds of change were already sewn. We would go to the free openings of Thornton Wilder plays, Samuel Beckett plays and concerts in the Boston Commons, and to the Shell where we pretended to understand theater of the absurd, Charlie Parker, and the beat poets. Our embracing black music and foreign students in the fifties is one of those minor social currents that fed the river of social change known as the 60's. The fifties questioned monogamy, religion and capitalism without proposing any alternative. McCarthyism was really a reaction rather than a major force.

In Cambridge our group included some real Harvard students - Tony Allen, Robin Hoen, Peter Paine, whom I already mentioned, and a few others. Ken had a way of making this integration more fashionable than exclusive, which made him and us more than welcome at their inclusive "we are not Harvard snobs" parties. Tony's brother, Steve, had flunked out of Hamilton College and was struggling at BU, but he grew up with these upper class wasps. He became a regular with us. Steve had a trust fund behind him but worked for fun with us at the Church St. Garage. Like it or not (and I had both feelings at different times), I was

slated to become a major part of Steve's entire life, which was the earliest to end (more on Steve later).

Before leaving Cambridge, I must tell the Church St. Garage story. The Church Street Garage was a famous Harvard institution, just off Brattle Square right next to the Harvard Yard. It was once a livery stable that had become a Texaco station in the thirties. The Greenough family had owned it from the very beginning and now Mr Greenough ran it as a first class full-service station. It still had the wide floor boards and barn doors from its' stable days and a rope pull elevator had been enhanced to allow special customers to store their cars on the second floor. Mr Greenough insisted that we always wear our Texaco uniforms and that they be spotless.

At the time, American TV had only two channels, each one ran for a couple of black and white, flannel fuzzy hours in the evening. One of the shows was the *Texaco Hour* with Milton Berle. In those days there was only one sponsor for each episode and there was only one commercial at the beginning of the show. The Texaco show had uniformed gas station attendants wearing black plastic bow ties, who would descend on the customer's car, showering it with multiple, simultaneous services, while singing a snappy little ditty in harmony. "I pump the gas", "I check the oil", "I wipe the glass (windshield)", etc.. The reason I'm telling you all this is because Ken, Steve Allen, maybe Parker Kirk, and I decided to take Mr Greenough's aspirations to the next level.

We did this by learning the Texaco song from TV and then when we saw a car pulling in to the pump, we would all snap to attention and in a perfect column, in lock step, shuffle over to the car, and do just what the guys did in the TV commercial, singing the song while we pumped the gas, washed the windshield and checked the oil. The customers' reactions ran the gamut of hysterical laughter to no reaction at all, just assuming that it was part of the Texaco service, which would crack us up. So either they were laughing at us or we were laughing at them. When Mr Grenough happened to catch the act, it never occurred to him that this was a spoof. He thanked us for the extra effort but said we didn't have to go that far.

We would use Lava soap to get the grease off our hands and arms in the horse troughs basins of the Church St. Garage and spend our few bucks down the street at the Casa Blanca on Brattle Square.

Here is another minor social current that I witnessed becoming a major social movement. The Casa Blanca was a bar under a movie theater owned by a gay guy named Bryan Haliday, which only played the movie *Casablanca* over and over. The appetite for *Casablanca* and the print wore out at about the same time and Bryant became one of the first to import foreign films for his sophisticated audience. So, Casa Blanca became the first “art” theater and we got to see Fellini movies and Truffaut movies and other foreign art films. The bar in the cellar of the theater was cozy and laid back. You never knew who you would meet. There was not enough TV to keep people at home in those days; they went out to socialize at bars. Bryan, the owner, didn’t care if you stayed all night nursing one drink and talking. This was definitely a new kind of old world pub. He demonstrated that you could let folks hang out and still make money. I can still see the Toulouse-Lautrec poster on the wall “Alonzi a Bata Clan” keeping alive the pull to Europe.

Europe had become something different than it was in WWII and Bryan was one of the first to see that. It was my first experience with a saloon salon. We practically lived there, and that is where we met the Swedish girls. Every evening would start there and maybe end in Chinatown, or Revere Beach, or Wellesley College serenading some girls, or Melrose where we met some high school seniors. I dated Margie Gittes and Ken fell in Love with Claire Bagenstose, who became pregnant. So Ken married her, dropped out of school, and went to work on construction, but still hung out with our bachelor satellite Harvard party gang.

While struggling with his new marriage and son Mark, he inherited some money, and one night after a bunch of beers at the Casa Blanca, Parker, who by now had dropped out of school altogether, allowed as how he would be in Paris writing the great American novel but for the lack of boat fare. Ken called his bluff, handed him the money and Parker left for Paris soon after.

When Claire found out, she divorced Ken and that started some problem drinking in my good friend that made him almost unbearable at times.

I guess the same ear I have for music allowed me to lose my North End accent and eventually my Boston accent. But first to go was the “dees dems and dose,” gone by the end of freshman year. I did not stay in the General Ed program, but rather moved into the College of Liberal Arts as

a Political Science (Poli Sci) major. I became active in the Young Democrats and soon became President. I got to meet Stevenson, Keafauver, Hubert Humphrey, Paul Douglas and even Nixon, and I got to help elect Furcolo as the first Italo-American Governor of Massachusetts.

In the summer of '55, Parker was back from Europe with the great American novel unfinished, but a new flair for bullshit which was useful in advertising. Typical Parker, he invented an advertising career and had wrangled a job as head of PR at the Plymouth Rock Summer Theater of Music and Drama in Duxbury. Ken and I were still thick as thieves. Steve Allen occasionally joined our escapades. Eddy had gone back to Cuba almost a year earlier to start a revolution. We were supposed to go with him and at the last minute our three mothers met on the phone, from three different worlds. Mrs. Kirk, a wasp, Mrs. Lappin, a Jew, and Ma. Once they learned that we were not going to Florida for Spring break, but to Cuba to aid in a revolution, all cultural and class separation was bypassed by the more basic motherhood protection instincts to form an impenetrable embargo. Eddy Rivas went without us and became a hero and then a prisoner (The Pre-Castro-Havana student revolution). He continued to write me and understood why we stayed behind - more on that later.

Halcyon summer

That summer I found myself sleeping in Parker's cabin at the Summer Theater and falling in love with the oboe player in the orchestra who looked like the Ipana Toothpaste girl in the poster ads. She was a Radcliffe girl and her maternal ancestors helped found Connecticut, Clipper ships, oh yes and Yale. She was as "blue-blood" as you could get, but with no airs. On the contrary she was very shy and self-deprecating. How could I not be drawn in. It took all the courage I had to hit on her. The risk of rejection was worth it. She didn't reject me. I was a man to her, not a class member, and she was just a woman. She didn't even know what either WASP or WOP meant and had no idea where or what the North End was. I was relieved to learn that being tough was now déclassé and counter productive.

Cynthia Sterling Deery, was her name, aka CD, the oboe player. She lived in Manhattan when she wasn't in Cambridge, but we could spend weekends in the ultra civilized Stratford mansion of her grandparents, a special kind of American aristocrats with real class and intelligence. They had a black servant named Caesar who served "blu" roast beef (almost raw) at the long dinning room table set with lots of things I had never seen before. I pretended to be quite familiar with these upper class accoutrements. Once as I was about to spoon salt, from the sterling silver salt cellar, into my iced tea; they were able to stop me without embarrassing me. That's class.

That first weekend we met at the summer theater in Duxbury. We made mad passionate love on the set of *La Boheme* just after the performance. Then it happened again on a grassy knoll by a pond, where, a day earlier, I made love in the water with the chubby cellist of the same orchestra. It was still about conquest for most males, most of the time, Italian or otherwise. Remember please that feminism had not reached me yet in the fifties, nevertheless, this was the first time I felt something special. After sex, I usually couldn't wait to get away and be on my own or with the guys. Almost like the Catholic self was escaping the mortal sin, which the intellectual self had poo-pooed. And with guys, the conquest kudos overshadowed the Catholic guilt. But all that was different now. I wanted to be with Cynthia all the time, even at the risk of overstaying my welcome.

That halcyon summer of '55 I managed to bring into play the one plutocratic connection from my other life. You remember, my father's friend, Guy Peznola, who married my mother's friend Tessy. In fact, you may recall, the two couples were married at the same time, and my parents were "coombah" godparents for two of their kids. Guy who was one of the early auto-mechanics, was also a mover and shaker and wound up with a large DeSoto dealership. The richer he got, the poorer we got. He offered several times to make my Dad a partner; they were that close. My Dad was too proud to accept, but not too proud to allow us to spend weekends at Guy's mansion which had its own horse barn and race track, right near Duxbury. The Peznolas had a boy my brother's age, Chickie, a bit older than me and Donny, a boy a bit younger than me, Bobby, and a girl, Netty, a bit older than my sister. So growing up we were closer than cousins, especially when we would have sleep over visits.

The summer, while I was at the Plymouth Rock Playhouse near Duxbury, Donny was alone at their estate and had his very own, brand new Chrysler Convertible. He was shy and was yet to have a date, let alone anything more. So Donny was invited to the theater and the theater crowd was invited back to the private thoroughbred race track and mansion. This eliminated any need for background check, if anyone had any questions about me. (Maybe I was the only one with questions.)

I pretended to know which fork to use and was able to stay involved in conversations about Shakespeare. Even though CD's Granny and Grandpa Sterling Bunnel were founding patrons of the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, they were not snobs, as I already explained. I was intrigued and informed by these elders who not only spoke English without an accent but were genuine intellectuals. This was a world I wanted to belong to, not just the comforts, the culture. Nina Foch, a famous actress, would join us for dinner before she performed at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival. And Grandpa would put a copy of the play we were going to see on my night stand in the guest room of the Stratford mansion. That's class.

I was sneaking into CD's bed and couldn't get enough of this new sex with love, at these Connecticut honeymoons. One of our honeymoons was in Manhattan.

The relationship with CD began at the summer theater and lasted through college and then sprang up again much later after each of us had both been married a couple of times. More on that later.

I learned that CD was as 'easy' with the Harvard guys as she was with me. Because of grades and a paper I wrote, I had a once in a lifetime opportunity to be an intern in DC, and I knew that might cost me the once in a lifetime opportunity to be with CD. DC or CD? It was a tough choice. I chose DC in the hope that I could keep things alive with CD. I would hitch hike back to Cambridge every chance I got. Once I wrote one of her term papers while I was visiting, to see what kind of grade I would get at Harvard (I was able to get A's and B's at BU); the Harvard paper got a B, which made me think my intellect might be worthwhile, even though in-admissible.

Discovering DC

Travel from DC to Cambridge was unaffordable at any price, and had to be by “thumb”. Long distance calls in those days cost more money than I had. I would try to call whenever I could. She would tell me about other guys she was dating and I would hang up the pay phone and head out for the highway. Then I would hitch hike from DC in the dead of winter, all the way to Cambridge and win her back for a time. This happened several times. Some weekends I found myself stranded between rides on the Jersey Turnpike in the wee hours of a cold winter night.

One scene that sticks in my mind - it was about 2:am and the Jersey Turnpike was deserted. I spotted a shabby looking man moving toward me, in the trench on the side of the road and realized that he was trying to creep up on me. He had something in his hand. I wished I had a weapon, and I did, the Stanislavsky method, which I would study in the next decade. At that time I had some instinctive access to “the method”. I knew that I could convince him that I was armed with the right tone and gestures. What happened surprised me for years to come, one of those seconds where you can’t imagine where your plan of action could have come from. I turned and faced him with my hand in my coat pocket, extending my forefinger so it created a noticeable bulge in my coat.

My attacker spoke falteringly to the effect that he just wanted to ask me a question. The next sentence came out of my mouth with such conviction, I had myself believing that there really was something other than my hand in my coat pocket. With a cold, dry Humphrey Bogart tone, I said, “I’m going to shoot you, just because I can get away with it out here, but I will count to ten, and if you run like hell you might be out of range...One...”

The guy dropped whatever he had in his hand and sprinted down the ditch. I moved quickly in the other direction almost in the middle of the freeway.

I had no money. I can’t believe how nonchalant I was about being broke. I told my parents that everything was paid for at “Washington Semester”, which is the only way I would have been allowed to go. But actually only the program and room were paid for. Students had to fund their own meals.

My roommate in DC was from Nebraska and would roar every time I asked for a “Fawk”. I quickly picked up his Nebraska accent and kept it for life. He too was broke. So when our colleagues would have lunch and dinner at all the DC eateries, we would slink back to our room and eat the leftovers from the US Marines at Quantico, where Uncle Angelo was in charge of the kitchen. If it weren’t for Uncle Angelo my Nebraska room mate and I would have starved. There’s that luck again.

Toward the end of the semester, we crashed a party at the Pan American Union and my roommate got us put on a guest list. So every once in a while we were invited to a fancy dinner at which we filled our jacket pockets with rolls and whatever else would fit in our pockets.

One of my internships in that DC program put me in the Eisenhower White House as Assistant to the Assistant Press Secretary, Murray Snyder. Mostly I was a “go-fer” bringing coffee to the press room and also cutting clippings in the office in the back of the white house press room. The experience was an awakening for me. I had no idea that the leader of the free world and the Supreme Allied Commander of World War II could be so ordinary. He was playing golf all the time I was there. He built a putting green at the White House where he spent most of his time.

One memorable press conference stays with me to this day. I was standing 20 feet from the podium. The US had embraced the founding of the new country of Israel, and now there was a war with the Arabs. The block headlines all over town were as big as the ones for VE Day. “US TANKS TO ARABS TO FIGHT ISRAEL” Sherman Adams came into the room first, then maybe Hagarty or I think it was Snyder thanking the press for their patience and making excuses for the President. Finally Ike walked in to take the podium; again I was a few feet away. Before he could greet the press, a mad house of questions were popped at random from all over the press corp: “Are we supporting the Arabs?” “Have we given up on Israel?”

I was close enough to see Ike knit his brow which attempted to cover his confusion. With a half smile to the audience which said “excuse me for a minute”, he turned and whispered to Sherman Adams. I couldn’t hear what they were saying, but I could tell from the body language that he was hearing about this for the first time.

At the DC program, Washington Semester, we were graded on the internship day work and the night classes, and also on the final thesis we had to write. One thesis would be selected for a prize which was a scholarship to Harvard Summer School or Graduate school provided you could be admitted. I won that prize, and got to take some Harvard classes finally.

Despite some disillusionment, I did come back from DC still sanguine about democracy and politics. I became the President of the Boston University Young Democrats and Vice President of the the New England Young Democrats. And somehow managing, along with a Professor (Harry Scoble), to wrangle a Faulk foundation lecturer fund designed to introduce Political Science students to our national leaders. I had a say in which political leaders were chosen. They received a fee, gave a talk and then had a laid back chat session, sometimes with a fine dinner, with a handful of students chosen by me. You can guess at my popularity with my fellow Poli Sci students and faculty.

One such dinner set the bar for statesmanship in my mind. It was at Durgin Park (a famous Boston eatery, which served enormous slabs of roast beef in Haymarket, right near where I got busted). The guest of honor was Senator Paul Douglas, who showed signs of becoming a saint in the candid discussion which lasted on into the night. Hubert Humphrey also came and hung out till the wee hours; Estes Kefauver, came and debated Richard Nixon. Pat Nixon gave me her pen at one of these events. She didn't know I was a Democrat. I still have my picture with Adlai Stevenson. When it was senator JFK's turn he had to decline. I kept the letter telling me he had some rare disease and to keep it confidential.

This was pretty heady stuff for someone who was not quite old enough to vote (the voting age was 21 back then). The long conversations with national leaders made me feel special, and they were inspiring. Nixon and Joe McCarthy were fear mongers and not even that good at it. Douglas, Humphrey, Stevenson, Kennedy all had real charm, ideals and genuine intellect. It seemed the Democrats had a monopoly on intelligence and idealism. There were no spin doctors in these intimate sessions. I wondered how they kept that jewel of the spirit clean in the sewer of politics.

I should point out a little known fact here. It was us the New England Young Democrats who arranged the first demonstration against Strontium 90 - even though we were not sure what it was. Remember the A bomb was still the hero that won the war and brought the boys home just a few years earlier.

State politics in Massachusetts was another matter. To get my hands dirty, I got involved in state politics. I worked for Furcolo - who was not your typical corrupt politician. We all knew James Michael Curly and the tradition of corruption in New England politics, also a Democrat, but this was different. Furcolo went to Yale, Not too many Italians could make that claim. My desk was right next to the campaign manager, one Chick McCarthy, who gave me lots of responsibility until we won, and then, when arrangements were being made for political appointments, suddenly I was in the bleachers and, to my chagrin, all the typical political creeps were dubbed into officialdom. I was offered some clerk job in the state house. I [Wa] was shocked. This was the beginning of my disenchantment with government.

The more I saw, the worse it got. Politics seemed to be attracting people who could turn off their conscience. The jewel in most cases was lost in the sewer. I [Th] turned to philosophy. As Plato suggested, politicians, (sophists) like cowboys, only need to learn how to prod the herd with hat waving and shouts. I [Wa] really learned how to do that, but I [Th] wanted more than that.

The eternal verities in the Great Books, like aged cognac, had to be sipped very slowly, which was more suited to my sluggish reading speed. (As I already mentioned my spatial disorientation would probably have been diagnosed as “dyslexia”, except that it would take another decade for that word to reach me.) It took enormous effort for me to get that A in “Great Books” the best college class I ever had, taught by Angelo Bertocci, brother of a well known philosopher, Peter Bertocci. Both were world class intellectuals who found themselves at a non-world class commuter university at that time, Boston University. Both the professor brothers were offered positions at Harvard, where every professor was automatically knighted and placed in the intellectual hall of fame. I don't think a lot of people knew this, but they both told me this personally, because of my fascination with Harvard. Both turned Harvard down on moral grounds without any grand standing. They felt that the socio/economic elitism on which Harvard was based was great for the few

included, but, ultimately, bad for the many excluded. The Bertocci brothers were my new heroes (and they were Italian). Their example made it possible for me to turn Harvard down when I finally had a chance at a scholarship to the Littauer Graduate School, now the John F Kennedy School at Harvard. I went to Michigan instead, where I had no idea what to expect. (Actually, let's be honest, it might also have had something to do with the fact that CD was in Cambridge and Margie Gittes, who looked just like Ava Gardner, was in Ann Arbor).

The church and the saints were now tarnished souvenirs from my Catholic past, my kneeling reflex found a new altar. If I may wax philosophical for a moment, I think kneeling and altars are indigenous to the species. It is the result of being overwhelmed with nature's complexity and the enigma of life and death. There is nothing wrong with the kneeling for high minded solutions to the inevitable quandaries of the human condition. What is wrong is taking advantage of those kneeling. I was headed that way. I was almost a priest and almost a politician, thank God for the Bertocci's.

Landing on Planet Manhattan

One of the CD honeymoons was in Manhattan, where her mother lived on the East side in a large apartment where CD grew up. Her father, a well known neurosurgeon, took his own life. He was Irish, a cousin of Bing Crosby. She was the daughter of a long line of Connecticut blue bloods. I was **not** invited to stay at the East side apartment, so I found a dive in the upper 80's where I could stay for a couple of dollars a night over a "greasy spoon" called Kamels, where I could get an affordable grilled cheese and coffee for 35 cents. As far as her mother knew, I was just a friend from Cambridge passing through. I never made it clear that I was not a classmate from Harvard. The grandparents money somehow was not available to their tall thin, pinch faced, intense smoker, daughter, CD's mother; I'm not sure why, but she had to work. She wrote the playbills for Broadway plays and earned enough to survive on her own. There was no money from her dead husband, who must have been the good looking parent from whom CD got her looks. CD was in prep school at Putney when he died. It affected CD deeply, of course, which is one of the

reasons she stayed in Cambridge and Connecticut, and found things to do even when school was out, like the summer theater where we met.

CD's older sister, Dee, also lived in the East side apartment and never came out of her room. Apparently, Dee was quite normal up until her father's tragic demise. She was in a fancy grade school and was friends with Jacqueline Bouvier (who later became First Lady). Dee only came out of her room once to warn her younger sister about me; that I was somehow going to cause her great pain.

In my second relationship with CD, decades later, I would make a relationship with Dee which lasted until I was the only hand she could hold on her death bed.

My first entry into the planet Manhattan was only a week long. Nevertheless, I was bitten by the bug that makes a universe out of this island. There is a famous New Yorker cartoon depicting this phenomenon. I think the brain has only so much room for "the rest of the world" and Manhattan fills that space. Anyway the point is, when you're in Manhattan, that's your whole world. As I left, I realized I had been infected with something that would bring me back, maybe it had something to do with the American myth of social mobility (I forget where I learned that phrase). New York definitely afforded more social mobility than Boston. There were many more steps, but all with lower risers. The top was much more about money than heritage. You can acquire money, you cannot acquire heritage. Naturally, I [Wa] was in awe of that class of Americans who never had to think about money. And I was drawn to that lifestyle, and live theater, which is available in Manhattan like nowhere else. I knew that one day I would live there, not sure doing what; but knew that I would be there one day.

Maiden Voyage

When I was in DC, the other Massachusetts representative at Washington Semester was Eddy Abrams. Eddy was so high class it never occurred to anyone that he was Jewish. His ancestors built the very first hotels and owned all of the Boston waterfront. He lived in a mansion next door to Arthur Fiedler and the Abrams had an Irish live-in maid. They were Boston Brahmin rich, not like New York rich, no chauffeurs; they both

drove Fords. Both his parents were doctors and deans; one of BU Medical School and the other dean of the BU School of Social work. Eddy had gone to prep school in Putney, Vermont and just happened to be in the same class as CD. They were shocked to meet each other again, when I brought Eddy to CD's residence house. I fixed him up with CD's roommate and later with big Ulla whom he married. Eddy was also fascinated with the North End and loved coming to my house for Italian dinners, and I didn't mind dining in formal dining rooms where servants brought in multiple courses. Like his parents Eddy was the opposite of extravagant. Eddy had a small car and a small boat, which provided my first experience with private boating.

One late spring day, CD and I joined Eddy and the Radcliffe roommate he met through us for a cruise down the Charles River and out to the Harbor and maybe up the coast a bit for some sea food. I had no idea what was involved in getting a boat safely from point A to point B. It seemed to keep me dry. The 21-foot Boston Whaler had an awning, but no cabin. With the awning down the metal frame of the awning had a fatal attraction for the compass needle, which kept it pointing north, no matter which way we were actually headed. Late that night as the shore line disappeared behind us, we realized we had been going East the whole time on our way to Europe instead of Gloucester.

We ran out of gas in the middle of the ocean. We rationed the beer and potato chips we had on board, which was all we had on board - no water, no radio, no life jackets, no flares. Just before dawn a fishing vessel nearly rammed us, but tuned a spot light on in time to veer off, and then had enough sea sense to come back for us. They towed us in to Cape Anne. From there Eddy's folks sent someone to pick us up. This was my first exposure to the size of that ocean relative to the tiny North End beach where we first met.

I had been on the East Boston Ferry and the Portland Maine Ferry, but never on a boat that could tip over, and it did a few months later. This is another boat story worth telling, since it will shed some light on my future interests in navigation and the changing social mores of those times.

I was still involved with the Cambridge crowd which mixed non-snob Harvard students and a few of us from BU, so it was only natural that Eddy would be included in the group after we got back from DC. Not long after he met this gang we had a wild party with gin from Peter

Paynes Harvard (Spee) Club, and late night roast beef specials from Elsie's in Harvard Square. "Why not keep it going with a river cruise?" Parker suggested.

Eddy kept his boat on the Charles not far from Harvard Square. So, too many drunks hopped into too small a boat and we headed up the river. Lots of laughs. At one point with Eddy at the helm, one of the newer Harvard members of the group stumbled toward the helm and inquired about how it was that a Jew would get into something like boating. Eddy hardly knew he was Jewish and had no comeback to the ethnic slur. Ken Lappin was aboard and he and Eddy were both over six feet tall. The Harvard guy was pretty big too. Neither Eddy nor Ken knew how to fight, but Ken stood in front of the Harvard guy, and I'm sure it was to argue, not fight. Parker who founded this group and was the smallest guy on the boat jumped between the two tall guys. Now the boat was rocking. None of the standing passengers, even if they were sober, would know to lower their centers of gravity. Parker loved to make a scene whenever he could. On one of the rolls, when the gunnel was inches from the water, Parker pushed the Harvard guy into the river. Whereupon his buddy tackled Parker and both were in the water. Naturally the next Harvard guy who stood up next to me found a quick right cross which landed him hard on the gunnel submerging it so the river could flood in and cause the boat to capsize. Whatever started the trouble was quickly forgotten in all the splashing and chill of the Charles. Instead we were all laughing and splashing like kids at the beach. We all made it to shore, which was only a few yards away and all lent a hand righting the boat and getting it back afloat.

Robin Hoen, who became a life long friend, and Peter Payne, who provisioned the voyage, were extremely apologetic to Eddy and Ken, for the ethnic slurs, which said something about the generational progress of the New York elite. The only other memory I have of the aftermath, is of Ken, Parker and I finding an all-night diner where we dried off and analyzed the events.

Uniformity

One winter holiday my brother and I were both home in Boston. CD and I had broken up, and I was crushed. My brother reached out to rescue me.

Whatever sibling rivalry we had as kids had now turned into a curious bond. We were as different as could be, but brotherhood seemed to trump every difference. He insisted that I drive back to Georgia with him and his family, which included John L. Ciampa, my first nephew, (a few months old). I would celebrate New Year's with Lieutenant Joe at Warner Robbins Air Force Base.

At one point on the drive, it became my turn to drive and Joe crawled into the back of the station wagon to get some sleep. Before shutting his eyes, he laid down clear instructions to his wife Mary, "Do not fall asleep. You must keep talking to him (meaning me); he can fall asleep on a clothes line".

Mary was not talkative, even when she wasn't exhausted. She fell asleep and so did I, while driving. We were awoken simultaneously by the brush of tall corn stalks on all the windows. Fortunately no one was hurt and we were able to get the car back on the road. We stopped only for groceries and coffee, and bathroom breaks. The South still had colored drinking fountains and separate bathrooms for "colored".

Eventually we got to Georgia and had some fun drinking at the Officer's Club. His buddies were cordial to me and tried to sell me on the life style. I thought about it. It would end a lot of questions about what to do. It was all answers. There is a certain bogus comfort about being told what to do, when and where, and never have to think about it.

I was already in the USAF ROTC. My USAF ROTC wing actually trained pilots . One instructor had two of his own planes, a Piper Cub and an Aronca. He was very young for an instructor. Joe Benkurt let me fly for free with the promise that one day, when I got rich, I would buy one of his planes. I never soloed, but to this day, remain fascinated with aviation. As cadets we had to drill after class at Braves Field. Boston University bought the field when the Braves moved out of Boston. I was already losing interest in becoming an officer. I did not understand why pilots needed to learn to march, nevertheless, I "hep two three four" grudgingly after class, but once football practice was scheduled, the drill schedule was changed to an earlier hour, before class, i.e. five am. I knew I had to do something drastic. I never slept well and always had trouble getting up in the morning. Five am was something I had never experienced unless we were up all night partying. There was no tolerance for late comers in this unit. What to do?

You will recall, I had learned to play the trumpet in high school from my pal Vic Popeo. I had a nice tone for a dance band and could pick out melodies by ear. But reading music was still impossible for me. The reason I am telling you all this again is because on the same day as the five am drill announcement, they mentioned that members of the US Air Force ROTC Orchestra and Marching Band were exempt from drilling. And I learned that auditions were being held to fill several new brass positions.

As I think back at the hutzpah it took to go to that audition, I [Th] wonder where I [Wa] got the nerve. BU has a nationally known music school, and obviously that's who would be at the audition - music students, real musicians. I already had a history as an imposter, like the time at Storyville (the premier Boston jazz club when jazz was king), where Parker told Symphony Sid (the premier jazz radio host) that I was the harbinger of the new wave of jazz from the West Coast.

Parker's lies were so convincing I wound up on the famous midnight radio jazz show with Symphony Sid banging on the ivories, while Parker explained the importance of dissonance. As I look back, I see now that this was a sacrilege that was received as a sacrament.

There is a mysterious momentum resulting from the angle of the communication plane, where insignificant drivel sent at the high end becomes an impactful, maybe even cherished message as it rolls down to the low end. The national radio audience of jazz listeners needed to hear something, and it created a focused intensity which affected all of it, even my faking on the piano. I [Wa] was fearless, or I should say once again the fear was converted to creative energy; like I had Dave Brubeck's chops. I never played one single tune, I just played thirds on the white keys with one hand and then black key thirds with the other and then swapped. I was pretending as far as I knew, but who knows.... I knew when to stop.

"Wow! Sid said on the air. "You know we just listen and we never know what is going down and what is coming next. Tonight we had it live. Wow, I hope all you cats dug what just happened. Ladies and Gentlemen John Simpa".

In the days that followed, real musicians I knew in the North End were ready to tar and feather me. My talent for faking and Parker's need for outrage worked to get us in and out of some tight spots. Parker would make some outrageous claim about me and then I would act my way in and out of it, with more or less success, but that is not the point here. This is just some background for the audacity audition I am about to disclose.

Here I was, pretending again, but this time my pretended expertise had to do with my Nemesis : reading music. This was no joke. When I got to the audition, there was a line of brass players, who just looked like they really knew how to play. The line led to a semi-circle of older persons seated behind a table facing the "hot" seat and a music stand.

I noticed that they put up the same piece for the all of trumpets. Still in line, each candidate was limbering up the valves on whatever horn: valve trombones, saxophones, a tuba. I drifted back in the line until I found myself behind two trumpet players. I made sure, after some casual banter, that both of them could read, so I would get to hear these four bars twice before I had to play them. And, as it turns out, that was just enough. I got the job.

In fact, after hearing my high notes in the audition piece, they offered me second trumpet, which I declined. Was there a fifth trumpet? No, only third. So I became third trumpet, one of two third trumpets and the other guy could read. I was to play harmony, mostly. The orchestra was so large and the conductor so small in stature and talent, that I got by for weeks unnoticed. A couple of times, with a new piece, I would have trouble making a chord with the first trumpet and the conductor would stop the orchestra, and try to find the flaw.

"Something is wrong - is it the trombones?" "Yes yes," "Let me hear just the trombones". Somehow I was never found out. Everybody would be carefully following every note, and I would be staring at the page trying to sound like the guy next to me, guessing what might come next from what had gone before. The other third trumpet thought this was hysterical and covered for me several times. We were issued special uniforms, and really good instruments.

While I was in the orchestra I also played a few gigs with my fancy new horn with the piano player I told you about, Bill Keogh. Every once in a

while I [Ti] felt myself injecting some soul in the music, but this was very rare. Of course, I [Wa] loved being listened to, but I [Th] knew I [Wa] was a fraud. Because I knew I would never be able to read music, I got better at faking.

I played as much guitar as trumpet. I knew a few chords on the guitar which Joe Foritano and my Dad taught me, and I realized that most often my audience could not tell that I was not a musician. They recognized the song and didn't care how I learned it.

Once at Storyville - a jazz club in Copley Square, Boston, this was in the mid 50's when jazz was a big thing, we went to hear Gerry Mulligan. Stars like Gerry Mulligan made thousands for a gig (like rock stars in the next decade). Ken and Parker and I were dating Swedish girls who were coming to the US as baby sitters, in droves for some reason. My friend "Tucker" (Anthony Sarni) was an accomplished jazz drummer, even as a kid, and he was with us. Between sets he chatted with the drummer, Dave Bailey. The other players in the group included Bobby Brookmeyer, trombone, Gerry Mulligan, sax, the bassist Henry Grimes and the flugelhorn player Art Farmer. Somehow the black side men wound up at our table on the break. Long story short, they wanted to jam after hours. Everything closed at midnight in Boston (Blue laws), and they asked us to arrange a party where we could all jam and, oh yes, bring some Swedish girls.

We arranged such a party the next evening, Tucker picked up the side men in his Lincoln and I wound up driving Gerry Mulligan and the singer Georgia Brown in Ken's old jalopy to Beacon Street where Ken was setting things up in his friend's apartment. Ken Lappin was so gaga to have these stars at our own little private jam session, he let the whole world know, and they all showed up. By the time we got to the pad for our little party, there was scarcely room for us. Nevertheless, they set up the drum set and were ready to jam. I brought my horn because this was about jamming with the locals. I could not improvise except for memorized licks in only two keys. But this was a jam session, they weren't playing dance music. Art Farmer insisted that I sit in on some blues changes they were "blowing" on. I figured out that it was in F; I blew a long polished B flat and then an F minor and a fake lick by using only the first valve which sounded like our local jazz show theme "Jumping with Symphony Sid". Gerry picked it up and flipped it around. Oh my God I was playing with Gerry Mulligan and Art Farmer. If only I

knew how to play. I felt like I was at the controls of an airliner having only flown paper planes. I made my excuses and “laid out” as they say.

Later that night we all crowded into the toilet and a joint was handed around. Ken and Parker and I had no idea what to do with it. We smoked it like a regular cigarette. I have tried to make clear that over-reaction was Ken’s natural state of mind. So just like he was jumping up and down about the unique company; the same was true for their unique behavior. The fact that he had been drinking too much may have had something to do with the fact that he ran out of the bath room and actually called the FBI to tell them about the marijuana. We spent the rest of our lives trying to figure out why he would do that. Anyway the FBI wasn’t interested, and eventually the police came because of the noise and broke the party up. We wound up at Revere Beach where Parker and I tried to drown Ken in the cold surf. We all, including Ken, wondered about the events of that evening the rest of our lives.

I would spend the rest of my life also trying to figure out how they found all those notes and put them in the right places. This caused me to gravitate to, yes, and worship musicians. They all were very generous and tried to explain the process, but explaining a mystery is an oxymoron. Still I knew it was there, and that I didn’t have it, but I had my polished tone.

1956-1966 THE IVY CURTAIN

In 1956 the Washington Semester scholarship to Harvard Summer School exposed me to professors Samuel Beer and Louis B. Hart. I was dazzled by the Harvard classes. Of course, my judgment was affected by the Harvard myth, but, whatever the influences, I thought they were brilliant. About that Harvard myth - it extended beyond Harvard's back yard where I grew up. It was world wide and made the word "Harvard" synonymous with "beyond the reach of every man. If it weren't for the Bertocci's, I might never have realized that non-Harvard humans were capable of brilliance, and that there were some Harvard products that were not so brilliant. In fact, I met some real dummies who graduated Harvard, who would never have gotten into Boston University, but for the influence of their families.

With the extra credits I had racked up during Washington Semester and the Harvard courses, I could leave BU in February and not have to wait until May. I was desperate to leave town because CD had broken my heart. She told me she was pregnant, and I agreed to marry her. Then she told me she thought it might be someone else's child, and then that she was not pregnant at all. I wanted to get as far away as possible. I had dated Margie Gittes (who, as I said earlier, looked just like Ava Gardner except she had a fuller figure). I was mad about her too, but her parents made me promise to give her up because I was not Jewish. I did, but we continued to see each other secretly. She was at the University of Michigan. So I applied to their Graduate School and got in with a fellowship.

Ann Arbor

When I got to Ann Arbor, Margie wanted to be "just friends", not lovers, because now she had a fiancé who was not only Jewish, but studying to be a doctor. A doctor's wife was the most any Jewish parent could wish for a daughter in those days. Art Laslowe was a nice guy, and he and I

became friends and remained so even after Margie dumped him. Eventually Margie married an eccentric cult leader, who was abusive.

This is hard for me to believe, looking back, but I know it is true. Just as with Washington DC, I arrived in Ann Arbor with no money. Remember me telling you about Guy Peznola? Well, Guy came through for me with a blue 1948 Chrysler limousine. Ken called it “Nick Likavoli’s get away car.” It had eight cylinders and burned a lot of gas which was not a problem in 1957 with gas less than 30 cents a gallon. The back seat, with the jumps seats folded away, was big enough to be my bedroom and I was allowed to park by the town house of my cousin’s cousin, a really nice person named “Cunnin” Tunerello. She worked at the University of Michigan (UM) hospital and later became a hospital administrator. I understand, she married a UM doctor who became very famous. But at that time she was not seeing anyone and she had two roommates. When it was too cold to sleep in the car, in February and March, almost every night they would invite me in to sleep on the couch. Otherwise, I probably would have frozen to death in the car.

Recreational Therapy / Lobotomies

Cunnin helped me get a job evenings at a Mercywood Sanitarium where they were experimenting with frontal lobotomies. I had no idea what that was when I took the job. I became a “recreational therapist” by telling bold faced lies about my graduate program minor “social psychology”, which really was totally unrelated. Now as an imposter recreational therapist, I ran bingo games, and any other recreational activities which would distract the pre-operative patients and aid in the recovery of the lobotomized patients. Naturally, I came up with the idea of forming an orchestra. As luck would have it the head Psychiatrist, Dr English, played base clarinet and loved the idea of an orchestra, provided he could be in it.

One of the catatonic patients, Sev, who had been in a Nazi concentration camp was brought to our rehearsals because his record indicated that he was one of the concentration camp musicians. He would sit with us in the rehearsals and just hold his trumpet. We were practicing for a dance which was to be held in a few weeks. The band included Dr. English on

base clarinet, a sax player patient, who could keep up most of the time, a patient who had been a piano teacher who played whatever was written, but could not swing or improvise, a rotating drummer from the nursing staff, me on trumpet, and Sev who sat next to me and never raised his trumpet in the dozen or so rehearsals.

The night of the dance, the drums were just in another world and could not keep the same rhythm for two measures. It always amazes me that some people cannot follow a rhythm; it seems so natural. I had the nurse drummer remove her foot from the base drum and just drag the brushes quietly on the snare. I was soloing on my trumpet to the tune "We'll Be Close As Pages In A Book". The added grace notes were supposed to be my jazzy improvisations, but they were planned in advance and practiced. I was in the middle of one of those "seemingly improvised" runs when suddenly my solo was ornamented by this harmonious, second voice of jazzy runs with flat fives and sounding like Miles Davis. Soon I laid out and the catatonic cat was blowing deep soul. I held my hand up for the drummer to stop, and let him blow. To this day I have no idea how he could have been exposed to the jazz changes and licks in Germany, let alone in a concentration camp. We'll have to ask Plato.

I had learned from my Mercywood job that no one checked on what kind of graduate student you were. If you were doing graduate work at UM anywhere around Ann Arbor, you were a genius. Michigan was called the Harvard of the mid-west. While I was the Assistant Director of Recreational Therapy at Mercywood Sanitarium, I was sexually desperate.

I seldom saw Cunnin or her roommates anymore. I was too young for them. I was 20 years old when I met Norm Levy. With the Mercywood job, I was able to afford a studio apartment in a modern town house not far from the hospital, but far enough from the campus to be affordable. It was close to Ypsilanti which is east of Ann Arbor toward Detroit. The rest of the house was rented by a group of Jewish fraternity boys from the University of Michigan who chose to live off campus. They partied all the time with girls from a nearby lesser known college. I was sexually drawn to absolutely every woman I met, regardless of mentality, body type, age, race, color, or political affiliation. My boss at Mercywood, a buxom older woman, toyed with the idea of having a fling with me. We came close in the laundry room one night. Her shift ended as mine began, and one night in her office we came really close. I lost my mind when bare breasts

touched my face. This foreplay was an almost irresistible enticement. Mrs. Williams was her name and she would not consummate the dalliance, which was frustrating. On rare occasions, I had sex with a student nurse.

At the Norm Levy parties hard liquor was provided by a tall, good looking traveling salesman, Alan Lebow, who was older than we were and uneducated, but was keen on hanging out with UM students. He lived in Detroit and we became friends, especially since he insisted on paying for everything. I had no qualms about leaving the Ann Arbor elite circles. Al introduced me to a great Jewish deli in Detroit; almost as good as the Essex Grille where Ma took me for pastrami in Boston. I can't be sure of the name, but I remember it was on the corner of Seven Mile Road and Livernois which was then a not-so-fancy Jewish neighborhood. Al introduced me to Jewish non-school girls; I introduced Al to nursing students. I didn't tell anyone he wasn't at UM; he didn't tell anyone I wasn't Jewish.

You may not believe that in the fifties at Michigan (and everywhere else) Jews had "separate but equal" facilities. There was a separate part of town for Jewish fraternities and sororities, separate tables in the dining areas, and a separate space in the commons, the "fish bowl." There was no de jur segregation but, de facto, there was almost no mixing.

On one of my trips to Detroit Al introduced me to his cousin Lanie Geller, who had been Miss Public Transit and was now living with her grandmother and looking for work as a model. I was attracted to Lanie, physically, but as in all cases, she had deeper interests. After two dates, she told her family we might be married soon, and of course, that I was Jewish and would be a doctor soon. The imposter in me [Wa] could tell Jewish jokes with a pretty good accent and I [Ti] was linguistically curious, so I knew some Yiddish words. I could even pronounce chalupshkits, her grandmother's stuffed cabbage. Eventually the honeymoon was over and the good looks were overshadowed by her desperation to marry up. I was an objective for her and she was a sex object for me. Neither of us were subjects. It wasn't long before I stopped driving into Detroit.

Mrs. Williams was about to fire me for inviting the student nurses to parties at my house. She might have been jealous that I stopped hitting on her. I decided to resign before I was fired. I was completely alone for

my 21st birthday, depressed, almost suicidal. Norm Levy insisted that we do the P Bell ritual.

The P Bell was a huge college bar and the ritual was that on your 21st birthday, if you could chug a lug (swallow with out stopping) an entire pitcher of beer, the P Bell was clanged, and your entire table got free beer for the night. There were a few tables back toward the kitchen where the Jewish partiers gathered. We took a table. Norm had announced to the owner that this was the big 21st birthday party, so we were escorted to a long oak birthday table, a long empty table. It reminded of the Chaplin movie. The two of us sat next to each other on the wall side. Norm, who planned the party, explained that everyone was headed home so not even Al Lebow showed up. I declined the birthday ritual. I paid for a pitcher of beer which we drank, and made sure there were no bells. Then he asked if he could borrow some money to help get him back to Brooklyn. I loaned him \$20, which he never repaid.

Despite the black mood I had to select a topic for my Master thesis. I began writing an almost science fiction scenario. Without knowing it, I was predicting the 60's and a Woody Allen movie. The idea was a kind of thought experiment where I imagined a world where all taboos about sex had been completely erased. Sexual pleasure was accommodated by all the laws and social conventions. You could literally "do it in the road" (which became the mantra of the next decade). The explosion of love energy triggered by cracking the nuclear family was enough to satisfy everyone on the planet. All the soul holes would be filled, and no more rape, no more robbery to get money for power to have sex, no more greed.

My thesis advisor could not see how this had anything to do with existing Political Philosophy or Social Psychology. There was no scholarship involved. What great works would I study? There was an early Russian period where communes tried to replace the family, but there was nothing scholarly to study.

Had I been more of a scholar, I would have found pre-Christian Etruscan cults that could have been studied, or the Moravians after the reformation, or the Mormons. It could have been scholarly and philosophical, in that it would explore how making it so hard to get laid created more evil than it prevented. I don't know how the idea came into my head, but making sex into something of a gift from God, instead of a

sin, intrigued me to the extent that I participated in abortive group sex experiments. Abortive because the participants were driven by mischief rather than philosophy.

Eventually my faculty advisor sent me for counseling with an older woman who was a protestant minister, and I did finally have sex with her.

My advisor talked me out of my idea and put me on a project that would benefit his own work in studying the social psychology of the Constitutional Convention. I [Ti] was flexible enough to move from my hot free love commune to the Constitutional Convention, where the only heat was provided by the Philadelphia summer. It was at this point that loneliness was almost ringing in my ears. So much so that I decided to drive back to Boston and rethink my life choices.

The Eisenhower super roads were just being completed. They were called “Interstate 90” going east and eventually “I-90”. The Massachusetts Turnpike was part of the system and was open, although not complete all the way through to Boston. It was something few people had ever experienced; six lanes, no intersections, no lights. My “Nick Licavoli getaway car” must have been going 90 miles an hour for hours at a stretch.

What I didn’t know was at that speed all those cylinders used up a lot of gas, which was now up to 38 cents a gallon. Somehow I was out of gas on the Mass Turnpike miles from Boston. I don’t remember whether I ran out of money or whether there were no gas stations opened yet. I walked off the super highway for miles to the nearest pay phone (remember cell phones were not even a dream yet) and I phoned home. My father came out with a tank of gas. He found out about Guy practically giving me the car (I owed him the purchase price, which was \$200), and Dad was ok with that. Dad would never let me borrow his car, let alone buy me one, and now his estranged successful buddy took over the parenting. Instead of being angry at me and Guy, which is what I expected, he seemed happy to see me. He was almost proud that his little boy was driving himself home from a graduate school, whatever that was. He was sober and pleasant, and really happy to see me. He showed me how to use the palm of the hand on top of the carburetor to suction the gas up to the combustion chamber. We got the Chrysler started and he followed me to a gas station in a nearby town. He knew the area well because he had worked on building the Massachusetts Turnpike.

As soon as I got home I reunited with Parker and Ken at my old haunts in Cambridge. They were proud of me also to my surprise. I couldn't see what there was to be proud about. They had both left school and I guess they thought I was pretty special to be a graduate student at a well known university.

Parker had forged a portfolio of ads and used it to get into a Boston ad agency. Boston was tired of sending the advertising business to Madison Ave. The new Boston ad agency took off and Parker took the credit. The last time I saw him, we were running out on a tab in Chinatown because I thought he had the money and he thought I had the money. As I already mentioned, Parker took a kind of pleasure in the untoward event. Now he had a fancy apartment not far from Harvard Square on Linnean St. He and Ken had steady Swedish girlfriends. Ken was now living with Ulla Carlson, aka, little Ulla. Eddie Abrams was living with big Ulla, and Parker was about to marry Maggie Nystromer.

Unbeknownst to me Parker's party was to celebrate my recently passed 21st birthday. He invited my Dad. For some strange reason they liked each other. I think it had to do with the fact that they both liked to sketch. Dad started drinking again at the party and was drunk in about ten minutes. It's as though there was a residue of alcohol in his system and just a sip could get him drunk. He was almost inappropriate with the Swedish girls when he caught a look from me, the birthday boy. He suddenly sobered up and felt completely out of place. He had enough consideration not to ruin the party. I wonder whether in all his travels he had ever been to Cambridge. He slipped away without fanfare. I felt sorry for him, but relieved.

Shortly after my Dad left the party Parker announced casually "I have a surprise for you. ... So I got you a little something for your birthday from Sweden" he said walking over to the broom closet. He swept the accordion door open and there was Bodil. She was stunning; she looked like Bridget Bardot (French movie star). I was delighted even though she couldn't stop giggling. She had to have been in the broom closet for almost an hour without making a sound. She was that compliant, which seemed like a plus at first.

Parker had met Bodil and knew from her girlfriends of her unusual personality. Not that she was slow, just not conventional in her

conversations. In fact she had taken all those years of English, along with all the other Swedish kids, and unlike her friends who were fluent in English, she either wouldn't or couldn't go beyond a few basic words. She was a beauty and would do whatever I wanted. She seemed to fall in love immediately. I [Wo] didn't mind that we could not talk about much; affection more than made up for the lack of intellectual stimulation. I [Ti] was challenged to learn as much Swedish as I could, so I could figure out what she was thinking. I'm not sure I ever did. Maybe in later decades when we reunited, I understood her more. Swedish is not hard to learn since it has a lot of anglo roots. Bodil enjoyed teaching me off-color Swedish expressions.

I [Wa] knew, in the early days of our relationship, that what I wanted was very different from what she wanted. It never occurred to me that we were making a baby. I [Ti] knew enough to know that what I was doing would make her pregnant, and maybe unconsciously I did not protect against it, or maybe (here I go again with the supernatural puppeteer) whoever was pulling the strings had to get my daughter born. She would eventually give birth to a baby girl, who we decided to put up for adoption, and who came back into my life much later and is now my favorite person in the world, Hildy, my daughter. We searched for each other for half a century and finally found each other. More about the reunion when we get to the 2006-2016 decade.

After this summer fling, we parted and eventually Bodil married a French count and lived on the Riviera or somewhere like that and had other kids, but hated her husband. Decades later we made love again when she was in New York without her family, and she got pregnant again. This time they discovered she had cervical cancer and they removed her uterus. She would never have gone to the doctor if she hadn't become pregnant. She wrote me and thanked me for saving her life, which sadly did not last that much longer.

Back to the Fifties - I learned about Bodil's pregnancy in the late fall of 1957, so it must have been November. I had her come to Ann Arbor. By then she was three or four months pregnant.

At the beginning of the semester I met three interesting guys (Jewish) who wanted to rent a huge house out by the football stadium. They didn't care whether I was Jewish. They were already into the 60's mindset. Mitch Zucker, Jerry Valberg and Larry Gould were intellectuals. I joined

them gladly. We each had our own bedroom and shared the living room, kitchen and dining room. We often dined together and had lots of parties. The primary lease holder was Mike Reagan, a Law Student who lived in the attic. Mike was Irish. He actually made a profit on the sub leases to us. Weird Gary Sellers - I mean really weird, like Jeffrey Dahmer weird, a graduate business student lived in the basement.

Weird Gary knew of an abortionist in Detroit. I was filled with apprehension as I agreed to go to Detroit to meet the abortionist. Earlier that week I had applied for an emergency “medical” student loan, and the application was red flagged and sent to the Dean of Students. He called me into his office and penetrated my lies in seconds. I broke down and told him the truth about Bodil. He amazed me with his kindness and understanding. I got the loan along with a warning about abortion, which I knew nothing about.

The setting for the abortion in Detroit was right out of a horror movie. As we were led through a beaded curtain to a back room lined with Naugahyde, something inside told me this was wrong, and so I was relieved to hear from the abortionist that at this point, it would be very dangerous.

We were both a lot happier for not having done it. We came back and partied with my house mates.

On the day of the “big game” (Michigan /Ohio State), I tried to explain American football to Bodil as we walked across the road from our “Animal House” to the stadium. She seemed interested, although a bit confused. She was all smiles and loved the idea of becoming the mother of my child. She loved the marching band and the party atmosphere in the stadium. She was all smiles until right after the kickoff when she gasped and buried her face in my shoulder. She had never seen that many men run at each other and suddenly crash into a pile of bodies. Seeing it through her eyes gave me a fresh look at something I had taken for granted. We had a great week and I promised her I would come back to join her as soon as I could.

She went back to Boston at the end of the week. Ken’s little Ulla had arranged a place for her to live and have the baby. I was completely distracted and loaded with guilt about how to use the money from my student loan. I think I paid for her trips with it and maybe

some other expenses. I know that I was there when the baby was born and for weeks, maybe months after until the adoption. I know how the adoption was accomplished, and I have a clear memory of the actual handing the baby to the adoptive parents, but most of the two million seconds of that period are buried somewhere I can't get to, even now. There are a few facts from which I can make some inferences.

Birth of my daughter

I think it would be fair to say that Bodil was more naive than other girls her age. She wanted to be a movie star, but had no idea what that involved or how to get there. She certainly could have been a model. There were still a whole bunch of things I wanted to be, but becoming a parent had never entered my mind or hers, for that matter. We had discussed getting married, just for the baby's sake, but something told me that might not be the best thing for either of us or the child. What cinched it was that I learned I was about to be drafted into the U.S. Army.

Since I had left BU and the Air Force ROTC program, I was no longer exempt from the draft. I thought being a graduate student might help, but it didn't count. I had to be in a professional school, i.e. Law, Medicine, or Theology. I put off thinking about this, since there were other things to worry about, but now it was in my face.

Somehow Bodil and I came to the conclusion that the child would be better off with an established family. I know that my sister-in-law's former boss was an attorney and he had a client who really wanted the child. I remember Ken helping me check them out. They were rich and intelligent and Jewish intellectuals. I liked all of that. Karen was Bodil's name for the baby, later named Hildy by her adoptive parents. I thought she would be a lot better off growing up with an established, intelligent, wealthy, New England Jewish family, than with two impecunious kids who weren't sure what they wanted to do and weren't sure about each other. Also this was a prelude to the "sixties". "Family values" had already begun to be questioned.

The "hand off" I can remember was outside the home where Bodil was staying and I do remember that the lawyer put through the adoption in

Portland, Maine. The new father gave us some money to help get Bodil back to Sweden.

The aftermath is much clearer. I took Bodil to New York for a couple of days waiting for the Kungsholm to set sail back to Sweden. Planes crossing the Atlantic were still quite rare. All the while we toyed with the idea of not separating. I could go to Stockholm, or maybe she could come to Ann Arbor. I finally saw that this was folly. I would probably be a private in the army before long. Best she should go back and we would keep in touch.

The day before the embarkation, while we were strolling down Fifth Avenue, a talent agent stopped us and asked us if we wanted to be on a well known TV quiz show. Bodil's dream was to be seen on TV but now it would mean she would miss the boat back to Sweden. I finally talked her into passing on the TV show. I saw her off and went back to Michigan. I did follow the road not taken in my fantasy - what if we let the Kungsholm sail and did that quiz show and somehow, with my brains and her looks, we suddenly became rich and and...

Once back at Michigan I met some freshman Jewish girls through my roommates in the Central Union. There was a large central glass lobby at the University we called the Fish Bowl, and there was an almost palpable line down the middle, on one side were the gentiles aggregated and on the other, the Jews. I joined the Jewish side along with foreign journalist students, black football stars and radical socialists. We were the opposite of Washtenaw - fraternity row. We even had renegade WASPs living upstairs and in the basement.

At one of these parties I met Carol, who was a freshman and later would become my first wife. Carol was from Janesville, Wisconsin and I fell in love with her mid-western life style, her town and her family. She was Jewish, but a very different kind of Jewish.

I was also trying to bury the guilt I felt about Bodil. Carol was very understanding for such a young girl. She was embarrassed about her sexual appetite, but that did not limit her encounters. I'm pretty sure she had multiple partners at some of our parties, including black football players, which was seen as bold and interesting by our set of friends.

Later that semester my molar was bothering me again and I went to the UM dental school for free dental care. Dental students had to do a root canal before they could graduate. I didn't know what that was and had seldom if ever been to the dentist. In those days there were no hi-powered drills and so the drilling was long and painful.

This is going to sound like a bad joke, but I assure you it is accurate. My senior dental student was named Sandy Greenspan. He was a married student from Connecticut with a Turrets Syndrome problem. Some of the Turrets victims had verbal outbursts, some had physical twitches. Sandy suffered from the later. The first sign of this was when he poked me in the tip of the nose with a dental probe, no blood and no injury, but it gave me pause. He explained his condition to me and promised that it would not get in the way of the root canal he had to perform.

In the weeks that followed Sandy had burned my face by putting the phenol on the wrong side of the rubber mouth dam/ antiseptic mask, he drilled through the top of my root into my palate. After each session I was provided with strong pain medicine. My roommates urged me to quit. I called several times to quit, and Sandy's wife would come to my room by herself with a home baked pie and a handful of pain pills, and dissolve into tears at what would happen to Sandy if I quit and he failed to graduate. I did use the drugs. I went back and eventually one of the professors who also felt sorry for Sandy finished the job and the tooth remained in my head for the next sixty-three years. As I write this, my tongue finds the healing gum socket from which the tooth was extracted last Wednesday, December 11, 2019. I stared at the extracted tooth before they disposed of it and thought of the different effects time has on objects and subjects.

Rat Pimp / Brain Surgeon

Shortly after I got back to Ann Arbor, after putting Bodil on the boat, I read about a position in brain research funded by the military which paid twice as much as Mercywood, and this new job was on campus, so I wouldn't have to commute to work from school.

Once again, I dusted off the actor/posier [Wa] and learned a few brain words I could throw around at the interview and stretched the truth about

my graduate studies and my lobotomy experience at Mercywood. I got the job. The truth was, I had no background in anything related to biology, physiology, neurology, and actually, had never been in a lab in college or high school (Columbus had two chapels but no lab).

The job was implanting electrodes in the brains of rats. Remember, now, I had never dissected even the traditional frog. After a thirty minute show and tell from Walter, the Head Lab Assistant, I was in charge of a colony of rats. My job was to cause a lesion in a part of the brain of half of the male rats and implant an electrode in the other half of the male rats. But first, there was preoperative mating data which I had to collect. This involved watching rats copulate for hours on end and ticking off on my counter board the female lordosis and the male ejaculation. This could be classified as live porn, but not arousing; some times I fell asleep and put in the log what I thought might have happened between the two lovers, given their recent history.

The pre-op data clearly showed that females definitely had favorites. The males were given odd numbers and the females, even numbers. The delta in the 'mounting' data pre-op and post-op for the lesioned males was to be compared to the same delta for the plugged in males, which would prove (or disprove) that the particular target in the hypothalamus controlled sexual behavior. The principal investigator was one Dr. Law, who never stepped foot in the lab, and drank a lot in his office upstairs. The few times I was in his office, he was clearly drunk.

Next door to Dr. Law was Dr. Olds, whose experiment was to become world renowned. He established beyond a doubt that a part of the brain, if stimulated, would cause the rat to eat itself to death, and if lesioned would cause the rat to die of starvation surrounded by his favorite food. He nailed appetite to some little piece of brain, but Dr Law's results were not so dramatic on the sexual appetite.

As I mentioned, collecting the pre-op sexual data was easy to the point of distraction. However, that phase was soon over and boredom was replaced by terror. I had suddenly been promoted from rat pimp to rat brain surgeon. I nearly barfed during the first surgery, hands shaking as the rat's tail snapped with every touch of my blade and drill. The head was held in place with a stereotaxic clamp which attached to the teeth/jaw and both ears, so the skull could not move on the chopping block. We could not risk too much sodium pentathol to put the patient out or he

might never wake up. So, yes, the rat was basically “awake” while I was drilling into his brain. Eventually I became inured and it became easy, so easy, that, once again, I got careless.

Two mirrored points in the hypothalamus were to be stimulated in one group and eliminated in the other group. Using the Bregma cross as the start point (Bregma is an intersection where the four quadrants of every mammal skull come together, leaving a noticeable cross at the top of the skull), the target area was 4 mm out from Bregma and 7 down in each lobe.

While operating on Rat 3, distraction and maybe that dyslexia I have been talking about, resulted in my completely reversing coordinates. Instead of 4mm out and 7mm down, I went 7mm out and 4mm down. This champion stud, male number three, was lesioned on each side of his brain at a new unmapped target point somewhere near the hypothalamus.

This accident produced what was obviously more significant behavioral changes than any of the planned, correctly executed operations. To wit, my mistake produced a rage rat who had lost all of the rodent instincts to hide and retreat. Instead he behaved like a lion. When I put my pencil in his cage to wake him from the anesthetic, normally he would cower into the corner of the cage hoping to blend into the wall of the cage. This time, he bit the eraser clean off. Three was now transformed into total aggressor. I sensed a scientific breakthrough and ran upstairs to Dr. Law's office and told him about this serendipitous accident.

He would not deign to come and have a look. I believe he was inebriated and this was mid-morning. He regaled me with a blurry speech on focus - “There are no accidental discoveries in the scientific method” he slurred. “You form a hypothesis and you test it, no, no, I form the hypothesis and you test it “

I tried to argue with him, I mentioned Archimedes bath. He told me if I wanted to keep the job, I was to destroy No. Three and continue following instructions exactly as they were laid out. I said “Yes sir” but did not mean it. I had to see what Three would do with his favorite girl Two. So, I picked Three up with a big welders glove, into which he sunk his teeth, and put him in the mating box where his favorite girl Two was waiting. Before I could intervene Three attacked and killed Two.

John was a stalker black man who fed the rats and cleaned their cages. When he came to feed number Three, I gave him the big glove but before I could explain why, John opened the cage and Three sprung out at him with super-rodent force. John batted him off his shirt and proceeded to run down the hall toward the hospital, with Three in hot pursuit. One of the other workers ended the charge with a broom. Rat stud Three was recaptured and re-caged by me with a welder's glove. While I administered the lethal dose of Sodium Pentathol, I knew that I was the executioner of a scientific truth. This got my inner philosopher wondering about the institutional "Gate Keepers," in charge of progress. The most important thing about humans is their capacity to create and discover. Now in the age of institutions, all of these creations and discoveries must pass through the credentialed Gate Keepers no matter how smart or how sober. This was intended to capacitate scientific progress. Until that moment, I never realized how much of a resistor this capacitor was. Nothing was true or beautiful until they said so and then it was made available to posterity. I now saw that, like anyone else, they could be wrong; that they may bless the wrong thing, or maybe condemn some great discovery to oblivion. How many great novels lay in publishers' trash bins? How many scientific breakthroughs are lost, because of myopia? Maybe not lost, because eventually the truth will pop up somewhere else.

FOOTNOTE

Months after I wrote this, I was watching Nova on PBS, in November 2019, and lo and behold there was my experiment in a Japanese laboratory, where rat aggression was proved to come and go based on stimulation of a part of the hypothalamus, a brand new discovery, which I stumbled upon a half century earlier, a tidbit of history known only by me and now you.

Survey Research

My real work at UM was not supposed to be physiological psychology but social psychology which I knew even less about. While the word "Psychology" does appear in my specialty, any one paying attention would never have hired me for the rat job; unless faking expertise is in fact a desirable expertise.

The movie *Great Imposter* was based on the true story of some Italo-American guy who pretended to be doctor, lawyer, airline pilot, and not only got by, but in some cases did the job well. I think beneath the lies was a hidden truth, which, when it finally dawned decades later, would make me a “generalist.” I learned later that adapting general rational powers to the external puzzles of the universe will one day eliminate specialties.

Both “physiological psychology” and “social psychology” were new fields, all of which used to be called philosophy, for which I was licensed by Sister Mary Carlotta. So, I could go ahead and present myself to Angus Campbell, who was not aware at that time that he would one day be a legend.

I did not have to lie about my work in local politics in Boston. But truth to tell I did not understand or appreciate what he was doing. What he was doing at the time, led to methods, still in use today, for discovering motivations of societal segments that would be predictive of their behavior. I had misgivings, but was in no position to be fussy. The misgivings had to do with what we now call “spin.” I could see that understanding what moves groups would also give you the power to move those groups. I felt somehow that “spin” and “spin” could dizzy the unwashed masses enough to exploit them.

I don’t think I used any spin to get myself elected as Chairman of the Graduate Round Table, a graduate student organization. I just said the right things at the meeting. The advisor was professor Sam Eldersveld (SE). One of the pressing issues for the Round Table was the town /gown struggle. Townies beat up students while the local constabulary stood by. Soapy Williams, Governor and the democratic machine boss, was not always kind to the University, which frequently criticized him.

The Ann Arbor mayoralty race was almost certainly going to be decided by the machine, which meant nothing would change with the anti-university forces and anti- student police. I’m pretty sure it was I who started the discussion which led to the realization political scientists should get their hands dirty with politics once in a while. We know how to study the electorate; why not put our skills to work. We had to figure out what would motivate people friendly to the University to come out and vote. Angus Campbell thought it would be a learning experience for all

his graduate students. As our advisor Sam Eldersveld was all for it, but it took some persuading to get him to run. He had a nice, clean job as professor; he was reluctant to learn, first hand, how dirty the job of mayor might be. We had to sell Sam (he liked to be called Sam) on the idea that professors in politics worked well. Woodrow Wilson was a professor, and thanks to the Falk Foundation while at BU, I had met Paul Douglas a professor, Adlai Stevenson, a professor, Hubert Humphrey, a professor. Dropping those names helped my argument.

In the end Sam Eldersveld agreed to become a politician. He was interested in political behavior, and as long as there would be a learning experience for him and us running the campaign, he agreed to run. We went to work getting out the vote. He won and became the Mayor of Ann Arbor and I must say things did change for the better in Ann Arbor, but I still had my doubts about the vulnerability of the democratic process to this new sophistry, social psychology. The doubts were deepened when I began to study Plato, and more so as time went on, up to the present.

Right now, on the TV news, just off my left shoulder, is the story of Cambridge Analytics, which leveraged the knowledge gained by access to FaceBook to sway millions of voters.

Draft dodge

I mentioned earlier that I had been drafted. I registered for the draft on my 18th birthday and was not bothered while I was in ROTC at BU. Now, they learned that I was no longer in ROTC, and I learned there was no such thing as a graduate school exemption. The only graduate programs which were exempt were Law, Medicine, and Theology. I had a note from Michigan Medical School that I would probably be admitted upon completion of some pre-requirements. That note did nothing to sway my draft board in Boston. I had to be “enrolled” to be exempt. It was too late for Law School; you had to have an LSAT test score, and too late for the seminary. Like it or not, I had to report for my pre-induction physical in Boston.

When I arrived at the draft board, it was kind of a pleasant reunion. Of course, I knew all my age peers from the North End, some were in my old

gang, the Dukes. Friendly banter and laughter masked our apprehension about what was about to happen to us. When the sergeant came in and shouted to keep it down and stand in a row, the North End guys were ready to rumble. I had drilled and worn the uniform and kept the guys from beginning their military service in the brig.

When instructed to remove all our clothes, Savino only did it after he saw all of us comply. Savino “hung” with the Dukes but never committed to being a full gang member, primarily because he was too busy working for his family business. His dad and mine were drinking buddies. His sister and I dated very briefly, and remained friends. The Savino father and three sons were all over six feet tall, Calibrese, all handsome, muscular and dumb as door knobs. No that’s not fair, let’s just say they were not assimilated as much as other families.

At one point we were all standing at attention, buck naked, Savino was standing next to me and other former gang members next to him. A man in a white coat with a clip board stood behind us while the sergeant who stood in front of us, barked the order “Bend over and spread your cheeks.”

Whereupon we all reached back, spread our buttocks and bent over, all except Savino. I can still see him now, bent over, looking up at the sergeant with unmistakably sincere wide eyed compliance - an index finger in each side of his mouth spreading his facial cheeks as ordered.

We all passed and were ordered to report back for induction and basic training on the 17th of the month.

The Cornell Law School

Ken Lappin was a proponent of preposterous plans. This preposterous plan was to go to the offices of the LSAT testers and find out if they would make an exception in my case; preposterous, but it worked. Ken had a convertible Oldsmobile and so he, Carol, and I drove from Boston to New Jersey and pleaded with someone there to give us a special shot at the LSAT (Carol had enrolled in Harvard Summer School and spent most of her time with us). I could not believe my ears when they agreed to have me sit in the office all by myself and take the test, correct it and

give me an LSAT score while I waited. Fortunately I had a good score, which I now could take around to the good law schools hoping for a last minute admission with scholarship. There would be no scholarship funds at the poorer second rate law schools. I had to be actually enrolled before September 17th or report to Fort Drum to become a private in the army.

I decided I wanted to be in New York, if possible. It was late on a Friday when Ken talked the admissions officer of Columbia Law School in conducting a special interview. He said that I could be admitted next year, but it was too late this year. Orientation had already begun. However, he had a friend at Cornell, which started later than all the “Ivies”. If I got in there, I could transfer to Columbia second year. He made a call to his friend, Professor Norm Penney, who taught Negotiable Instruments and also served as the Dean of Admissions. Cornell was the smallest of the Ivy law schools and very flexible. Professor Penney understood my urgency and instructed me to call him when I got to Ithaca.

Ken looked up Ithaca on the road map and we started driving from New York City with the top down, through the Catskills and up through the finger lakes. It was Saturday evening when we got to Ithaca. I called on Professor Penny at his home and he graciously stepped away from his Saturday night dinner party, interviewed me and accepted me right there on the spot. Ken got everyone involved in the urgency of keeping me out of the Army. The following Monday, the 17th, the telegram went out to the draft board that I was “enrolled” in the Cornell Law School.

The three of us slept in the car one or two nights after which I was fortunate to find another first year student who had rented an apartment and was looking for a roommate. Bill Porter was from Milwaukee and well-to-do. I told him I had no money, but would eventually be able to pay him as I was looking for part-time work. No problem. I moved in. Ken and Carol drove off together and may have had an affair.

I had to construct a new persona. I had never been a law student, let alone an Ivy League law student. I never lied about where I came from, but left out the details. When I said I lived in Boston, people imagined Beacon Hill, not Snow Hill. No one had ever heard of the North End. There was another Italian in my class also named John Petrucelli from Buffalo, also born on June 9th. We became fast friends. John gambled every night in high stake poker games in the back room of Joe Yengo’s Italian restaurant in downtown Ithaca. The rest of the class was fairly

preppy - graduates of Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth etc.. “American” and “aristocrat” were supposed to be oxymorons, but I already knew there was class in my class. I had already acquired manners and mannerisms from being around Cambridge and New Haven.

My Cornell class was small enough so that everyone knew everyone. We had the typical first year orientation speech. “Shake hands with the person on your left and the person on your right; only one of you will graduate.”

As it turns out, my class began with 116 and I was one of the 67 graduated. Ezra Cornell III was in my graduation class (his great-great-grandfather founded Cornell, somehow he barely made the cut).

Law school involves a lot of recitation. The Professor calls your name, you jump to your feet and he asks you to explain some case etc... Turns out I was pretty good on my feet and so, early in the first year when cliques are formed, called “study groups,” I got in with the smart guys. These study groups usually stay together throughout the three years of law school. The day I was invited into my group it already had four members. The final count was six and we stayed together all through law school. As luck would have it, I had the number one and number two law students in my group. Without this group I would not have made it to graduation. Again this thing I now call dyslexia meant that I could not possibly read all of the cases assigned. In fact, I never spent a dime on a law book because I knew it would take me a life time to read all those pages. Everyone else had hundreds of dollars of law books. Our study group wrote synopses of all the assigned cases, which we tried to keep to one page per case. These “cribs” got me through law school, without the books. I swear it, I never bought a law book. Of course, the classes helped a bit. At the end of the first year, there were lots of flunk outs. My group burned the midnight oil, and our rule was that we did not leave a particular subject until we all understood it.

At the end of first year finals, class standings based on grades were posted on a bulletin board in the student lounge. There were practice exams mid-year which did not count, but the year long final in each course determined your grade and your standing in the class. Three of our group were in the top ten. I was barely in the top half because I also belonged to a few other groups, not academic. One was an eating society which was composed of the few not so rich kids. This group ate

together every night and drank more than other law students. The food and drink were leftovers from the wealthiest Jewish fraternity on campus, for whom we provided two black-tied waiters for every evening meal. There was enough gourmet food and wine leftover from every meal to feed twelve of us, which meant I worked with another member every six days. Not bad considering what it put on the table.

I also got involved with some undergraduate musicians, all of which led me further away from law school. At the undergraduate parties I met some non-students as well. Sue Schmedes was a teacher who had just moved to Ithaca, probably to catch a husband. Even though I had a relationship with Carol, I had a mad crush on Sue. We necked and petted and almost- almost- a couple of times, but she was looking for a rich wasp. She held out and finally found a steady beau, who she met through me, an undergraduate friend named Jeff. Jeff and I played guitars together and he seemed to want to become a disciple; he ate up my stories about law school and Boston so much so that eventually, he entered Cornell law school, became a prominent Boston lawyer, married Sue, had kids, got divorced. He would help me years later with a complex probate problem involving Snow Hill, pro bono. The other non-law student friends were Jeff's fraternity brothers - Joe and Will. Jeff and Joe decided to go to Cornell law school, and Will became a veterinarian. Will was different enough to choose a path which led him to become a Costa Rican cattle baron.

One day, years later, when I was in Boston working on the Snow Hill probate and title issue which haunts me to this day, Will also happened to be in Boston. Joe and Jeff were in prestigious law firms, but we all found time to meet Will for lunch in Boston's Chinatown.

Years had passed and these party animals I skied with, and stayed up all night with, and chased girls with were now all grown up. Joe was so quick witted, he could have made a living as a comedy writer; in fact I thought he would have a career as a stand-up comic. Instead, he was a corporate lawyer, but still had his remarkable wit. It took a lot for me to admire some one's wit and Joe always cracked me up and others as well.

Will was a lady's man, always had a co-ed from Wells College on his arm, played hard. I knew what Jeff was like because we had seen each other a number of times after Cornell, but we were all waiting breathlessly to find out what became of our strange friend Will. Not long after we traded

comments on bellies and bald spots, I asked Will about the size of his ranch. He took a long breath and explained:

“Well if I set out on my horse at dawn, I would not reach the end of my property by sunset”. Without missing a beat, Joe chimed in: “Oh yeah, I had a horse like that.”

We sprayed each other with Won-Ton soup, and couldn't stop laughing for the rest of the reunion. Jeff and I kept in touch. I took Sue out after her divorce. She had become a super model, but now we were just friends and that kept anything else from happening. That and the fact that she was haunted by her own beauty. I have been close to several beautiful women and each of them had to struggle with becoming an object of their own beauty. Sue cashed in on it as a professional model. Some others tried to ignore it and get others to see through it, but all were challenged by being beautiful.

Back to Cornell, for whatever reason, our apartment became party central that first year. Law Students were not supposed to be drinkers and party animals, but somehow I fell in with that crowd.

Beu Geste I

Just as I was beginning to fit into this Ivy League law school culture, I got a phone call from Rocky Naturelli from the North End. Long distance calls got your attention because they were expensive and infrequent. This call from Rocky was amazing and alarming, not only because of the geographic and social distances it spanned, but also because of the location of the caller. Rocky was calling me from jail.

Rocky was older than I and had worked as muscle for the wise guys. He was built like a wrestler, had a broken nose and talked like a pug. One of his scores made him enough to open a second-hand store in the North End, where he bought and resold used stuff. He wasn't fussy about where the stuff came from.

I have to go back a few months to begin the story properly. It was summertime and Carol was at Harvard summer school. Her roommate at

Harvard was a girl also from the Midwest, who was very wealthy, anti-semitic, and condescending. Carol was not one to brook condescension. After a few days of combat, the roommate asked for a room change, which left the dorm room as a private single for Carol, which we all enjoyed. At the end of the summer while packing to leave, Carol discovered some jewelry. I think we all knew whose jewelry it was, but somehow “finders keepers” seemed like the right choice.

I took the jewelry to Rocky and we were paid enough money for Carol, Ken, Little Ulla and me to spend a long weekend at the ultra luxurious Maplewood Hotel in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, which is, you will recall, where I was enslaved as a young Caddy.

As luck would have it, and I'm sure Ken did not know this, his much older brother, a lawyer and their uncle, the dentist, with their wives were also at the Maplewood, an amazing coincidence. And of course, we ran into them. They were surprised to see us there as guests of this luxury hotel, but were, nonetheless cordial. We ate and drank like kings.

The roommate told her parents and the insurance company that that the jewels were stolen, rather than admit she had left them somewhere. When Rocky went to sell the jewels, he was arrested. Did I say he had a rap sheet? He knew I was in law school and he spent his one phone call reaching out to me at Cornell. I have no idea how he got the phone number.

You might have a sense of what I [Wo] was imagining at the other end of this episode in my checkered career. I shared my panic with my roommate, Bill Porter, who acted very lawyer like. Even though I still owed him rent, he insisted I borrow his new Dodge, and a few bucks to drive to Boston and make sure Rocky was not planning to implicate me.

On the drive to Boston all the possible scenarios were going through my heads - yes I said headS. In my street head, I [Wa] saw Rocky threaten me and I threaten him back. I would have to involve some of my old gang members. The Baliro brothers were now grown up and fearsome hit men. But they would have no use for me now that I had moved out of the cauldron. The other head,[Ti] the legal head, had me finding a way to help represent Rocky and proving at trial that the jewels were found by Carol who could not find the owner after diligent search, or they were given to Carol, or she won them in a card game.

I sat with Rocky in the visiting room of the jail. He was so happy to see me I thought he was putting on an act. What unfolds next is as true as it is unbelievable. You can understand how a memory this significant in my life would be preserved in close to its original condition.

“I’m so proud of you, wow - you gonna be a lawyer” Rocky said, smiling like we were at a re-union party. I took it as irony, waiting for the next sentence to show why I was not going to be a lawyer.

“Rocky,” I said, “I am going to find a way to get you out of here”? “No you’re not ! I don’t want your name in this at all. I plead guilty, I’m gonna do probably 18 months. You just go back and finish school, and don’t say nothin’ to nobody.”

To this day, I am waiting for the other shoe to drop. I have no idea why he did that. I thought someone might have threatened him on my behalf, but I don’t recall sharing this with anyone except Bill Porter. If this were fiction I would have to find some other motivation to make the story believable. I repressed the question until just now writing about it. I realize now this is one of those rare events in any life which cannot be explained, a *Beau Geste*. Unselfishness is hard to believe in a “Rocky,” but here it is. This happened. He takes the bullet for me, without any payment from me. My life would have been very different, if I had become a felon instead of a second-year law student at Cornell. (Please save some credulity regarding random acts of kindness because there will be another *Beau Geste* in a later decade.)

When I returned, it was the end of first year and there were exams, festivities, and a beehive of activity which occluded the Rocky story.

One of the Cornell Law School traditions was the skit put on by the first year students for Barristers Ball WeekEnd. I loved these weekend long festivals. It was like we created our own holiday season. I mentioned that I was a wannabe writer, actor, performer. So I and another student, who had been in the Hasty Pudding club at Harvard, were assigned the task of managing the skit.

At the time, there was a play on Broadway called *Inherit the Wind* about Clarence Darrow and William Jennings Bryant. We thought instead of the usual silly skit where we made fun of the faculty. Why not do a shortened

version of an important play. We already had the set, right in the Moot Court Room. We would surprise every one with our skit, which was supposed to be a surprise, but maybe not this kind of surprise. It took dozens of hours away from our studies in this critical first year.

I played Clarence Darrow and my buddy Bill Magavern, a Buffalo aristocrat (who looked like the movie actor, William Holden), played William Jennings Bryant. Alan Potter played the judge and one other older student played a minor roll.

The night of the skit, the moot court room was filled with law students, their dates, parents, alumni and faculty waiting for some silly amateur comedy. Instead, they inherited the wind. This time I had no trouble converting stage fright into stage energy. I knew I just had to say something, anything and the juices would flow. Once again I began by pulling on my suspender which released the easy flow of dialogue.

The playlet was a smash - people couldn't believe how professional the production was. We took our bows. There it was again - adulation - something told me to be careful not to take this too seriously. I did not want to be a disappointed drunk performer like my Dad when the adulation stopped and I knew it would. I remembered his bows.

Right after the play, standing in the urinal next to mine, both of us with our dicks in our hands, the Dean suggested I might be in the wrong school. I wasn't sure whether that was a compliment on my acting or a comment on law studies. A few days later, we were all dumbfounded to learn that Alan Potter, who played the judge, went to a motel with a 22 rifle and killed himself, a hard thing to do with a rifle. He had fallen behind in his studies as a result of the play, but that may not be why he did it; his wife had just had a baby. Bill Magavern flunked out and had to start all over again at the University of Buffalo Law School. I have no idea how I passed those comprehensive all-year first year exams, which took longer than the bar exam. Procedure, Criminal Law, Real Property, Torts, Contracts were covered. I already mentioned the "crib" notes; luckily that was enough to get me through. I made it to second year law school; we knew that once you made it past the first year, the odds that you would graduate went from 60% to 88%.

That first year there was little or no access to females. There was one young woman in our class, one Georgia Jones, a fun loving, Doris Day face with a Dolly Parton figure.

FOOTNOTE: I apologize if my constant allusions to movie stars are lost on later generations, but stars and their features become desire paradigms for every generation, male, female, young or old. I wonder what mankind did for paradigms before media.

As the single desirable female in the all male, sex starved, first year class, Georgia had to spend more time, than any of her multiple suitors, rebuffing and/or enjoying the attention. She flunked out after the first year. Georgia's roommate was Sue Schmedes, who you already met. I already told you about Sue, who handled Georgia's suitor spill over, including me.

Sue was amazingly athletic - skier, surfer, swimmer. While she was still available before she hooked up with Jeff, I thought a "Supie" dive might be the thing to impress her. There is a bridge over BeBee Lake in Ithaca that is more than 50 feet, maybe even 75 feet above the water. After an undergraduate fraternity clam bake, a group of Sue and suitors found ourselves on the bridge. Other suitors tried to ingratiate themselves by cheering, remaining on the bridge after Sue had made the jump and was waving up at us. I [Wa] decided to "take the gold" with a Supie, Mimi style swan dive. I [Ti] had no idea of the force my fall would put on my open hands. I [Ti] see now that both hands should have been gripped together into a single fist. When I landed my right hand flew back further than it could go; my right shoulder came out of the socket. I [Wo] surfaced in agony swimming with one hand. I [Wa] could not afford to look injured. I side stroked to a rock pulled myself up and found my way to the campus dispensary. I still feel the effects to this day.

Lots of pain was taken to get laid in Ithaca, including fatal accidents on the icy roads back from Wells Collage which took the life of my undergraduate friend.

Between first and second year, I see now that my lack of women combined with the lack of a father figure and the forces emanating from my need to move as far away as possible from Rocky and the North End, and the guilt about my daughter, made me susceptible to the urgings of Manny Birenholtz to marry his daughter Carol. Eight or more other

classmates also got married that summer, for whatever reasons. Maybe having a wife would cut down on the dangerous Cornell mating dances. I can't say for sure, but it seems all my single friends were all coupled when we returned in the fall of the second year of law school. Bill Porter, my roommate, married Susan, my friend Army married Maddy. Bob Zimmer and Alan Shalov in our study group married their college sweethearts.

My father-in-law embraced me as the son he wished he had, just as my *father-in-fact* had all but released me as the son he no longer had.

I was now remade into a mid-westerner who attended an Ivy League law school. I had a new, proud father Manny Birenholtz, who was the complete opposite of my real Dad. Manny only sold liquor (wholesale), never drank it. My father only drank it, never sold anything. I don't think anyone appreciated me more than Manny. When I would tell a joke with my Yiddish accent, he would double over in laughter. They were the only Jews in Janesville, Wisconsin. His wife's father, named Haskins, settled in Janesville when it was the western frontier in the last century, and never even mentioned to his daughter that he was Jewish. Manny grew up in Chicago where he knew he was Jewish but would just as soon have forgotten that. They belonged to the country club and were completely accepted by Janesville society.

Manny dressed me up and showed me off to all his friends. With Manny's help Carol and I had a wedding, a car and a place to live just outside of Ithaca. Manny was influential in forging my new image as an Ivy League, middle class, mid-western person with a Buick and preppy clothes like everyone else, but the street kid was still in there, somewhere.

As I prepared to relate this next incident, I realized that at this point in my life I was still uncivilized at the core, that I was still animal, still violent. Even though song and story from Homer to Hollywood continue to glorify lust and violence, I [Th] should know better. It is with shame rather than pride that I am telling you yet another punch story, but tell it I must, because it is true.

There was little or no punching in the Ivy League. As far as my classmates knew, other than Bill Porter, I was like them, a gentleman from an upper middle class background with a mid-level new car.

Obie's was a diner on the wrong side of the tracks, which was literally on the side of the tracks of the Cayuga Railroad. It had been a railroad dining car. The large picture window had a big diagonal crack in it, held together with tape and hardware. The counter and stools were original. Obie's was known for the Obie-burger which was a cheeseburger with bacon and a fried egg on top.

Like Ann Arbor, Ithaca also had an unannounced class war going on, a "town/gown" conflict. The same under class that serviced the elite Ivy League university folks secretly resented them. Obie's was primarily a biker hangout for the Townies, but the occasional unorthodox "gownies" would drop in on the "townies" after the frat party and then brag about the adventure to their more timid colleagues.

For whatever reason Carol and I, Arnie and Maddie (also recently married) found ourselves on the stools at Obie's well after midnight, waiting for Obie-burgers. Carol was on my left and Arnie and Maddie were on my right. The seat next to Carol came to be occupied by one of the bikers who came in drunk just after we had received our food.

"That looks good" the one next to Carol said, "and so do you." He reached for her plate, and then jumped to his feet as he saw me get up and move toward him. He stood in front of the cracked window with his hands open as if to say "bring it on." Before the other bikers or anyone else knew it, including me, my fist rifled itself to the most vulnerable spot on his jaw right below the ear, with all of my momentum behind it. The force of the blow was unimaginable. He fell back and through the window. Obie reached under the counter for a bat. The other bikers remained motionless as though nothing had happened. The next thing I knew, Arnie hustled us out to his car and we sped off without paying for the burgers. I was amazed at the glee and exuberance in the get-a-way car. They were acting like they had just witnessed a comet. When we said good night, Maddie gave me a French kiss (tongue in mouth).

Obie knew Arnie because he had been an undergraduate at Cornell and was a regular customer. He did not know me. Arnie paid for the replacement window, so there was no report of the incident, except for the fact that Arnie told everyone he knew and some he didn't know. The next day and for the rest of my time at Cornell, I was "Rocky" (referring to Marciano; the Rocky movie hadn't happened yet). Bill Porter found another irony in the nick name.

Weeks later we were at an undergraduate clam bake at the “jock” fraternity. Two muscle guys approached with a guy wearing a surgical collar and brace. One of them said “This is Rocky”, pointing me out to the guy in the brace. I was ready for another rumble, but this one looked like one I couldn’t win with a lucky punch. I braced myself. The guy in the brace put out his hand. “ I’m David Dodge” he said, and I just want to say, “I have never been hit like that before.” This “towny” was actually a “gowny.” The rough and tumble biker was actually a well-born aristocrat who pretended to be a bad-ass on weekends, and seemed to enjoy the injury I inflicted on him.

Nothing more ever came of the incident, but I couldn’t be sure of that at the time. I was looking over my shoulder the rest of the second year. I was still worried about the real Rocky, Rocco Naturelli, who was taking a wrap for me; this was yet another secret that was kept from the honor committee, which I later chaired.

New York Justice

After graduation I settled in New York City, took a bar review class, and passed the bar. By the time Carol came from Janesville to join me, I had already begun working as an insurance defense lawyer in Brooklyn and Queens. Manhattan had moved way beyond our reach; it might as well have been on the other side of the continent. We lived first in Forest Hills, Queens and then in the burbs in Long Island with lots of young couples.

I was working for a captive law firm owned by Liberty Mutual Insurance Company. The Company had firms with sur-names: Thomas F Keane, Ponzan and Meagher, designed to let the jury think the defendant was on trial and not his insurance company. New York juries had become a give-a-way show for plaintiffs. Most insurance companies went with the flow. They settled most of their cases and passed the cost onto the policy holders. Not Liberty Mutual. I don’t know why or how it happened, but Liberty decided to stand against the tide. They hired trial lawyers and investigators (modestly paid) compared to Wall Street salaries. Liberty had more lawyers and more trials than all the other companies put

together. I enjoyed trial work and got caught up in the optics of being from a law firm that represented the defendant rather than an insurance company. I quickly graduated from car accidents to more complex cases.

I defended Chef Boyardee against a claim that their meat sauce had a part of a mouse in it. I defended Horn and Hardat, the famous automat chain, from a false claim that their peach ice cream had a pit in it that caused choking and permanent mental ice cream phobia.

I defended Whitehall Laboratories against a model's claim for cosmetic damages to her vagina caused by Preparation H, a hemorrhoid medication. Cosmetic damages have to do with appearance, and appearance has to do with what people think. I focused my cross examination on how many people, typically, had a close enough look at her vagina. I got a lot of laughs from judge and jury. She got nothing but a little embarrassment.

After a few months of being in court every day, it soon became clear to me that in Brooklyn and Queens lower courts, "his honor" was not so honorable. Municipal Court judges could be appointed by Tammany Hall in return for a donation of \$6,000 and rumor has it that City Court cost \$10,000, which just happens to be the jurisdictional limits. There were many judges who had never been to law school, and a few who had never been to any school. One Italo- American judge (Vallone) tried to cajole me into paying a settlement. When I refused, he blatantly interfered with the trial. After every outrageous statement, I would ask the court reporter to read it back. The judge refused to allow me to have the record read back. I demanded a mistrial.

He said, "If you say another word, I will lock you up for contempt of court". There was a silence, and then he shouted angrily, "Get on with it!!" I remained silent. He held me in contempt and put me in a jail cell on the criminal side of the court, until I would apologize. I called my boss, Thomas Ponzan. He and the Bar Association, Judicial Ethics committee, and a few reporters were in court before I could finish the baloney sandwich they gave me for lunch. I was released and the motion for a mistrial was granted.

That is when I began requesting juries in all my cases, and as I said. I had an unprecedented run of defendant's verdicts with the juries.

The General Counsel of Liberty Mutual called me personally and promoted me to the largest cases in Supreme Court (that was the name of the State trial court in New York). Because my salary needed help, I was trying plaintiff cases on the side. All the good defense counsel did this even though technically it was not allowed.

In addition to plaintiff cases I took some criminal cases and even a US Special Forces (Green Beret) court martial case. Whenever my boss would scold me, I would simply tell him that I would be happy to notify General Counsel in Boston of my resignation, and he would relent. If he lost me, he would be fired; I knew that. There were not too many with a talent for trial work on the low paying insurance side.

One of my plaintiff cases involved yet another model with a cosmetic injury, but this time the scar was quite visible. She had a facial mole removed by a Park Avenue plastic surgeon and it left an ugly two-inch scar on her cheek bone. She swore to me that the good doctor was not in the room when the stitches were removed improperly by an unlicensed aide. The resulting scar could not be covered by make-up, which is what she was paid to model.

The doctor's malpractice insurer retained a fancy litigation firm. They had offered a token settlement and the defense was that he did everything a reasonable plastic surgeon would do and so there was no malpractice.

Credit Cards were few and far between in the early sixties. In fact there was only one that I had ever seen. That was the Dinners Club card and it was usually found in the possession of the economic elite. I was having lunch with my investigator, Bill, and he paid with one of these new Dinners Club cards. Not paying with cash was still quite a novelty. As he was signing for our lunch, I grabbed the receipt for a closer look, and noticed that it had the date and location on it.

I ran back to the office and applied for a "subpoena duces tecum" in my malpractice case, which may well have been the very first one Dinners Club had ever seen. Anyway, suddenly I found myself in possession of all of the receipts signed by the good doctor. As luck would have it, on the day the stitches were removed he had signed for a lunch at a Golf resort in North Carolina.

I let him swear under oath that he was in the room on Park Ave in New York and had removed the stitches himself. I made sure he told a dozen lies by pressing for details. Finally his lawyer objected and the judge asked me about my pressing for details. I approached the bench with his lawyers and showed him the Diner's Club receipt. I never got to ask him if this was his signature. We were looking at perjury under oath, a real mess. They settled. I realize now I should have demanded much more. Anyway it was enough to make my client buy me a fancy dinner with champagne in addition to my third of the settlement.

I had several criminal cases involving an angelic looking young red-headed defendant named James F. Jr. One of his early escapades involved a break-in into his neighbor's house, the famous Jack Parr. Jack Parr was a famous talk show host in the sixties. I walked James F. out of that one without going to court. I visited Jack Parr and pleaded my case to him before the court date. I knew he didn't want to come to court. This was not the kind of publicity that would do him any good. I got a signed statement from him and the case was dropped. James F. Sr. had made some money on Madison Ave and could well afford my meager fee. Another James F. Jr. case cost him a lot more. It involved travel expenses as well as a fee.

Not long after Junior became a Green Beret, he was facing a court martial for stealing a jeep and striking an MP. I travelled to Fayetteville, North Carolina to try my first court martial case.

I read the US Military code from cover to cover, but these different rules and procedures were not the problem. The problem was a rich kid's private attorney, while technically allowed, was not very welcome at a Special Forces Court Martial. I had to overcome this inevitable prejudice somehow.

I found a motel close to Fort Bragg and rented an economy car so as not to appear ostentatious. My client had to be examined by an Army Psychiatrist to prove he was competent to stand trial, and to be convicted. I had a meeting with the shrink. He was curt and dismissive. I subpoenaed his log and found the record of my client's exam.

On the way back from the base that first day, I felt very out of place. These were not like the people I grew up with - different values, different accents, different everything. Being from the North, being a lawyer,

being Italian,.... there was nothing to endear me to my new neighbors. Not far from the base, I drove past what surely must have been a hallucination, born out of my dislocation. It seemed I just passed a sign spinning around on the roof top of a one story office building that said: "CIAMPA".

I hit the brakes and backed up for a closer look at the sign, thinking I might need the services of the unfriendly Army psychiatrist. It was not a mirage; it said "CIAMPA". Inside I learned that it was the office of Ciampa Construction, Ciampa Insurance, and a few other Ciampa industries. It was strange to hear the receptionist say the name with her drawl "Mr. Ciampa" is not in, but can I help you with something?" I left my card and wrote down the name of my motel on Bragg Boulevard, where I ate grits for the first time that morning. Later that same evening, a limo came and took me to a beautiful home just outside Fayetteville.

Guy Ciampa was in the Army in World War II, stayed in Fayetteville after the war, and married into a prominent North Carolina family. For years now he had supplied all of the construction required on the Base, as well as auto and other insurance for all the soldiers and then some. At that dinner we figured out that Guy was my father's first cousin. Unknown to us, his father, my grandfather's brother was in the country long enough to marry and leave a son. He went back to Italy and died during the war. Guy grew up in East Boston unaware that he had cousins across the bay. Guy's beautiful wife and two children all had charming North Carolina accents, and Guy's Boston accent had now gravitated toward the South. Guy was a member of a fancy club where he introduced me to the Base Commander and the Chaplain. I was then introduced to the officers who would be on the court martial panel. I was no longer "persona non grata". In fact I was partying with the soon to be judge and jury, and was taught by them how to jump out of a plane. The court martial never happened, and James F. received a medical discharge. Once again, the indirect route appeared to be the most direct.

Carol was not happy in New York, and not happy with the life style I was able to provide. She was appalled at my artistic aspirations. I was learning classical guitar and studying acting instead of trying to take advantage of my ivy league law degree. Once she lost her temper and crowned me with my guitar which broke the back of the guitar but did nothing to my 'capo tosto' Calabrese head. I never laid a hand on her or

any other woman, no matter what. When she was angry she would tell me that the two children born during our marriage were not mine.

Eventually she found what she was looking for with a married neighbor, Bill, who she would eventually marry. Bill had a Cadillac and a garment business and could afford all the nice things I wouldn't buy even if I had the money. Once Manny (my father-in-law) died of stomach cancer, there was much less to hold us together. After our divorce Bill married Carol and they had more kids. They legally adopted the two boys from her first marriage, and as it turns out they and the children from the second marriage all had some genetic mental defect that we learned came from Carol's genome.

After the divorce I did try to help with the children, whether they were mine or not. I took the most retarded son into my home in California and tried to get help for him. (There will be more on that later in the story.) I also took the older boy to live with me when I was in Rochester. No one was any better off for the sacrifice - not me, not the boy, not Carol, and so I gave up. I buried it all in the same deep hole where I bury guilt about abandoned children. I had to make something of my new freedom.

I'll take Manhattan

My hasty retreat from the front lines of my marriage battle was on my Ducati motorcycle. I left with my guitar on my back, and a few snappy outfits I would need for my exploration of the new planet. By the time I arrived at 96th St. near Madison, where my old Cambridge pals Steve Allen and Robin Hoen lived, there were tears inside my motorcycle goggles. I chained my cycle to a fire hydrant, and stepped into the manually operated elevator to the penthouse (my rocket to the new planet). Roger, a uniformed old black man operating the elevator, smiled at me like he knew something.

The re-entry to the planet of Manhattan was as exciting as it was scary, which may have something to do with the ensuing, nonstop partying. Robin and Steve grew up together and except for the fact that they were both children of the original New York old money elite, they could not

have been more different. Robin was “movie star” handsome, a graduate of Harvard, a rising star in Rockefeller’s financial empire, but still liked to party with the renegades. He traveled everywhere for David Rockefeller and had friends who were the cream of New York society and the international set as well, including Karim Kahn, who went to a fancy Swiss prep school (Le Rosey) and Harvard with Robin. Yet, believe or not, Robin had no airs. He would just as soon hang with Steve and me, as attend cotillions and balls to which he was invited. He had recently been divorced from Alley McGraw (who later became a movie star) who was just moving from modeling to acting.

Steve and Robin’s penthouse was headquarters for my new gang. Great wild parties, guitar music, beautiful women, flamenco, photography, method acting, surrounded me. I was the only person without a trust fund. Nevertheless I was welcomed by these close friends. Michael Putnam, scion of a famous New York publishing family, Steve Allen, heir to two fortunes - one from the Wall Street pioneers and the other old New England money, Robin Hoen, who worked directly with David Rockefeller.

They all had time for esthetic pursuits and parties because they were rich. I had time for it because I didn’t mind being poor. I was accepted and as comfortable as if I had been to the manner born. Money was never an issue. By now I had left the insurance company and I had my own bit of cash from legal work, defending indigent defendants in the US District Court, which on occasion would be visited by my uptown friends; it was like their own private Perry Mason show. As luck would have it, I was attractive to and attracted by a certain type of women of that class. There was something unconsciously sexy about crossing class divides for both sides. It was their understatement and propriety that made the intimacy so exciting for me, and for them I suppose it was the muscle of coming up from the bottom. During the divorce rebound period, I enjoyed one night stands and multiple simultaneous affairs. Before very long, I found myself engaged to the heiress of the A&P fortune and spent weekends with the likes of Huntington Hartford.

One weekend at one of the Hartford family estates, an uncle invited me into his private study for a drink. He was chosen by the family to initiate me into the Hartford tribe. Like him, I was a peasant moving into the manner, and there were guidelines. The old Hartford, who amassed the fortune, anticipated that Hartford women might marry out of their class and provided an annual stipend pegged to the cost of living for such

husbands in return for a prenuptial release which kept their grubby hands out of the main “cookie jar.” In the privacy of his man den, the uncle’s tone changed from welcoming to warning. “You will be on quite a ride”, he said.” Just don’t expect to take your balls with you”. I [Wa] was excited about the social elevation, and at the same time, I [Th] felt my soul sinking. This chat was all I needed to break off the engagement.

The shock of separation caused Joy, my ex-fiance such distress that she had to be admitted to a special wing of a special hospital on the East side, where she could be sedated in her private suite. When I visited her, she ordered champagne and lobster from the kitchen for my visit. I could see through the ploy immediately. I moved on. Joy was sent on a European cruise to forget. She did, and on the return voyage married a fellow passenger from Bayonne, New Jersey, which, I was told, led to her second divorce.

With my guilty new freedom, I could take acting lessons and try my hand at play writing. Eventually 96th St was crowding my style, and I found a place in the Village.

I began studying method acting at HB studio, an old theater in the West Village, with Herbert Berghoff and Uta Hagen, mostly with Herbert. We would do scene studies and then have discussions. I could walk there from my new apartment/office at Abington Square (8th Ave).

The point of studying with Herbert was to get into Actor’s Studio. You had to know your craft before you could apply for an audition. Actor’s studio was not a place to learn method acting; it was a place for already accomplished method actors to sharpen their skills with the most important people in theater - Lee Strasberg, Elia Kazan, etc.

At the HB Studio, I was slowly getting turned off. I was surrounded by self-involved adulation addicts. I never ran into a fellow actor who I could say was enlightened. After a few months with Herbert, I tried auditioning for Actor’s Studio. I did a scene from the play *Mr Roberts*. Lee Strasberg and his wife were the judges and asked me what I was “working on.” This is “method” code for the underlying emotional subtext of the scene. This is how method actors breathe life into the dead lines of a script. When I finished my two minute analysis of the scene, Lee said, “I think you should look into writing or directing. A person can have too much intellect for acting.” He said that in so many words.

That did it. I gave up acting. I began writing plays by imitating playwrights I thought were revolutionary - Samuel Beckett, Genet - but alas "imitation is suicide".

My Village apartment/office was on the ground floor of an old apartment building. I slept on a bed that became a couch in the waiting room when I needed to see a client. As I mentioned earlier, I tried Federal criminal cases in Foley Square. I was on the Criminal Justice Act Panel where I was assigned to criminal cases that Legal Aid would not take because there might be some conflict with co-defendants or some complex appeal. The defendant only needed to say he/she could not afford a lawyer.

There weren't too many motorcycles carrying suits and ties to Foley Square, as my Ducati did nearly every day. There were short days and long days, but always time to enjoy the freedom afforded by planet Manhattan. You could be anything you wanted after work, and that was ok. There were Bohemian bars, gay bars, and coffee houses where musicians could "jam" in the Village. I had given up the trumpet and was playing guitar now, trying to learn flamenco and classical.

When I met Cynthia Burke, hereinafter, "CB", she was in love with Robin but allowed me a snuggle or two, which ended when her sister Lizzie arrived. I was quite taken with Lizzie, perhaps I needed to be taken. CB and I remained good friends and she introduced the Mastersons into our circle. Pete Masterson was a well-born Texan and Carlin, his wife, was a classy mid-westerner. They eventually had their own circle of friends which included actors who became stars like Robert Redford and Ellen Burstyn. Success soon found the Mastersons as well, but they kept their old friends, including me. At one point they were officers of Actor's Studio. Pete got me into the Actor's Studio, Director's unit, which was also for writers. A couple of my short plays were done by studio members. These were "script in hand" reading/performances, just to see whether the play should actually be mounted. A couple of these actors who did readings of my plays became famous. The plays did not.

CB, as I mentioned, was a good friend with strong mutual underlying physical attraction. She was married to Richard, hairdresser of the stars. CB was acting in TV commercials; in fact she was the RCA model for the very first Super Bowl commercial.

Sometime in 1963, I had put together some money from my sporadic law practice. I now had one or two clients who were not criminal defendants; instead, they were entrepreneurs. One had invented some plastic plants, another was opening an upstate sky resort. Sweat equity was my remuneration for the legal and other work I did for their unsuccessful ventures.

One joint venture with the artificial plant maker was based on my idea for decorative public trash cans that he would make, which looked like a tree trunk and displayed ads for nearby products, services, and restaurants. The “Panel Ad” company built a couple of prototypes and was looking for stage one angel funding.

On the day Kennedy was shot, we were in a Manhattan coffee shop, with a tycoon who owned an English Muffin company. We were about to talk him into investing when we saw waiters running back into the kitchen to look at the TV. We joined them and saw the shocking news and the now famous Cronkite gulp. The prospective investor said about President Kennedy, and I am still able to quote after all these years, “ The son of bitch needed another hole in his head.”

I managed to keep my right hand from his jaw, but I could not do business with such an asshole. I left the two of them standing there. I was tired of humoring assholes for money; tired of scrambling and stumbling. I [Wa] had to find some adventures that were more acceptable to the other selves [Th/Ti].

Up and Away

BOAC announced the very first jet flight to England from New York on the illustrious VC10. The package deal included a stay in a London hotel and a brand new Triumph sports car (the low end one) which had insurance for all of Europe. I talked Steve Allen into sharing the package even though he was deathly afraid of flying. No one I knew had ever been on a jet, and very few had ever flown anywhere, let alone all the way to Europe.

I thought Steve would wet his pants when the VC-10 angled almost straight up at take off. Unlike the prop planes I had been on, this launched like a rocket. I found it thrilling.

We made it to London. Jet lag had yet to receive a name but had its effect nevertheless. Moving this fast across time zones was a new and unsettling experience. I was woozy for a couple of days. We went to the hotel where neither of us could sleep. We were still “punchy” when we were picked up by the Triumph. The car had American steering which is on the wrong side for British roads, and of course the first turn we made we were nearly killed in head on.

As luck would have it, or maybe we planned this, Pete Masterson happened to be in London playing in an Actor’s Studio production on The Strand (British Broadway).

We traveled around London and went to see Pete’s performance a couple of times. One night Pete took us to a party. I met an English beauty, but Steve would not let me have the room. So I took a trip with her in our little car, and we visited Oxford and Cambridge. This may seem strange to you now, but no inn anywhere would let me have a room because I had no luggage and no proof that we were married. There was just so much we could do in the little convertible. We drove the entire night and by morning we were back in London at our hotel, too tired to do anything but say goodnight.

Steve pressured me to leave. His underlying reason for the trip was to get to Paris and visit family friends who had a daughter, who was his childhood sweetheart. When we got to Paris, I realized that it was my turn to be the ex-patriot and I began writing even with nothing to say. It was silly. I hated Paris. I was pushing to get to Spain to practice my Spanish, maybe buy a quality classical guitar, and then on to Italy. After a week or so, I got Steve to leave Paris and the old girl friend who was clearly not interested in Steve romantically.

In Barcelona I was amazed at Gaudi’s architecture and the Flamenco bars we found. I also found Casa Paramon on a side street. There in the shop I played on some Classical Guitars. As an imposter, I learned to master the outward appearances of a guitarist; in this case, it was tone and a few showy guitar techniques. I know now the shortcut was actually the long

way around. The hours of practice to play one classical piece would have been enough for any normal person to reach halfway to mastery.

The house founder, Señor Paramon, was still alive and heard me play and offered to build a guitar just for me. He measured my fingers and my fore arm. I was feeling like a celebrity and the whole time speaking to him in my broken Spanish. He figured out from my faltering Spanish that I was Italian. I told him he was half correct. “Italo-Americano”, I elaborated. He threw his head back in acknowledgment and told me he had built a guitar many years earlier for a famous Italo-Americano, Señor Al Capone to which I quipped, in Spanish, that he may have used the case more than the guitar. Paramon didn’t get the joke. In fact he seemed insulted. He must have thought I was saying the case was worth more than his hand made guitar. No matter, I now knew one thing more thing about Al Capone, the human condition and Spain. I was not just as a tourist; I was waiting for my personal guitar to be finished. It made me more interesting in the tapas bars and flamenco clubs. And we had more interesting relationships with the locals as a result.

Eventually, the guitar was finished and I could not stop playing it. I stayed in our room and left Steve to wander on his own, which made him restless to leave. As a compromise I agreed to leave Spain and head for Italy in our top down convertible Triumph. We drove through the Basque villages where all roofs were made of flat slate and the Riviera towns which were very snooty. This is before mass tourism changed every place into a theme park. We enjoyed the weather and the scenery. We gambled at the casino in Monte Carlo and stopped at a villa owned by Robin’s friend, Kareem Kahn, who eventually became the Aga. He wasn’t there but we were let in and offered refreshments by the staff.

Finally, we were in Italy. I had dreamed of this moment. Being Italian, I felt as if it was coming home.

Small hotels and “pensioni” were cheap and the American dollar bought lots of lire. I was amazed and pleased by the fact that everyone could pronounce my last name, and for the first time in my travels I didn’t have to explain about the missing “h”.

In Rome we were having trouble finding a place to stay because the new Pope was being elected and all the rooms were booked. We drove from one hotel to another with no luck. At one small hotel in Rome the

receptionist lit up when he saw the name and said I must be here to see if Cardinal Ciampa was going to be selected for the papacy. “Exactly, I said in Italian (completely covering my surprise) our family in America is very proud of our cousin.” Once again the odd Ciampa pops up to save the day. A team of attendants ran out to get our bags and park the car and escort us to our rooms. Unlike the Fayetteville Ciampa, the connection with this Cardinal Ciampa was completely bogus.

As an aside, later visits to Italy discovered that there was a Ciampi who was President of Italy.

When Cardinal Ciampa lost to Pope Paul, we left Rome and headed for Naples, and the Amalfi Coast where we would remain for a few weeks. We stayed at a Pensione which had been a Convent, in Concorde del Mare in the hills high above Amalfi.

Steve and I each had our own rooms and our own balconies overlooking a sculpture garden of stone outcroppings jutting up from the emerald Mediterranean inlet at the foot of our cliff. There were literally hundreds of stone steps to get down to the water. It seemed perfect, for the solitude I required to get to know my two new selves, the guitarist and the writer. It was quite the opposite for Steve who was trying to escape his selves, an impossible feat.

Our host was a professor of English at a college in Salerno; his mother cooked and his wife cleaned. There were only 5 or 6 rooms for rent at \$12 a day which included Italian breakfast and dinner. You were on your own for lunch.

Steve needed that Batman kind of friend to lead him into adventures. Without any discussion, when it became obvious I had backed out of the role, he found Alfonso, a waiter in Amalfi. Steve was either too desperate or too trusting to see through Alfonso’s freeloader game. Nearly every evening he would invent women who were waiting to meet Steve. Alfonso would ride through town in the convertible waving at his friends. He never once came up with anything but male buddies who wanted to drive the Triumph. They would take the Triumph flying around dangerous curves on the Amalfi Drives to Salerno and beyond and then stop at a bar and pretend to ask for Maria or Lucia, or Angela, who strangely weren’t there because of some family emergency, and then Steve would pay for meals and drinks.

Tourism in that region was confined mostly to Italians from northern Italy and in the early 60's there were hardly any Americans, if you can imagine that. The few tourists who came to Italy never went south of Rome.

One weekend in the early Spring, I could not have imagined the grandiosity of the special fiesta that suddenly engulfed us. This grand regatta and beauty contest was a long standing tradition for all of the original Italian City states, held in Amalfi. Contestants for both events from Florence, Venice, Pisa, etc. were crowding into the limited accommodations in Amalfi and some were staying as far away as Salerno.

This particular Saturday Alphonso had a new place where action was guaranteed. I decided to spend the day by the small swimming pool Felix had built on the edge of the cliff. I was alone with my typewriter and guitar. Steve never gave up prodding me to join them. Alfonso cut short Steve's cajoling because if I had decided to join them, Alfonso would have had to sit on the luggage rack with his legs tucked in behind the two seats, and where would we put the promised girls? You may know, and I already mentioned, that roads around Amalfi made driving a circus act. They left for God knows where and I stayed behind.

Felix had made some hasty accommodations for several of the beauty contestants who could not find rooms in Amalfi. The girls were chaperoned, of course. When they first came down to the pool, seconds after Alfonso and Steve left, I thought I was hallucinating. They were Sophia Loren beautiful (If you don't know what that means, it would be worth your while to look back at this special pulchritude) and they were all in a party mood, still fascinated by foreigners. This was one of the last seasons for that fascination, which would turn into contempt as travelers were ramped up into tour buses and dumbed down for tour guides.

I found it necessary to put away my typewriter and practice my guitar, which drew a few glistening bodies across the pool. Like the anchovies in the bay come to the night fisher's lantern, they came for a closer look at my G minor chord. I chatted with them in Italian. Trying to fit in, I sang some Neapolitan songs. Somehow, I happen to have a Neapolitan (Avelenese) accent. When I say accent, I mean occasional words from the Neapolitan dialect, but more than that, there is a rhythm and a dynamic inflection that is unlike any other dialect. Even though I was

speaking text book Toscana, proper Italian, pitch variations and pulse between the words made it the local dialect. I had begun to realize that Northern Italians looked down on Southern Italians. Now from the condescending tone, I realized that my speaking Italian had created distance rather than closeness. They, “Polentas” (derogatory term Southern Italians used for Northern Italians), were now looking down on me, a “Meridiano” (derogatory term Northern Italians used for Southern Italians). When I told them I was American in English, that would have changed everything if they believed me, but none of them had enough familiarity with English pronunciation to see that it was my native tongue. The chaperone was particularly dubious. I showed them the portable typewriter and explained that I was writing something for Hollywood. They were not buying any of it without some further proof. It would have been easier if the British sports car was still in the tiny lot at the top of the hill just above the pool, but Steve and Alphonso were gone.

Finally I was put to the test. One of the girls had homework translating a novel from English to Italian. She handed me the paperback turned to a particular page. “What means this word” huh American? , she pointed to a word on the open page. “Antimacassar” I paused for a long time. I had never seen the word and was trying deduce its meaning from the routes and context. The chaperone feigned a buzzer sound, “Time’s up!” Everybody laughed too long and too hard.

“Come mai, Americano,” which meant sort of “no way, are you American.” I sang “When Sunny Gets Blue” with changes Joe Pass taught me. That brought a few back to my end of the pool.

Just then, Steve and Alphonso returned. While Steve rubbed his eyes, Alphonso practically unzipped his fly as he flew down the steps to the pool howling, which brought everyone out of the pool as if lightening had suddenly struck. They never noticed Steve, who looked American, as they rushed back to their rooms. In the end we all remained celibate in the convent, as we had been for weeks and for months thereafter.

Synanon

You will recall my one paying client was James F. Sometime after his son was gone, and his marriage too, James F. asked me to represent, pro bono, one Chuck Dietrich and his wife Betty in an eviction case. They were being evicted from a townhouse on 78th Street just off Fifth Avenue, presumably, because she was black. I took the case and got my name in the *New York Times*. This was just before the Civil Rights Act. It never occurred to me that my client would change my life.

Chuck was the founder of a group called Synanon that was addressing the raging heroin addiction problem in the sixties with some controversial new methods which involved living together in communes. Synanon communities were already in Santa Monica, San Diego, and in the maximum security prison in Reno, Nevada. This New York chapter was just a recruitment station, but had to be billed in the lease as a private residence for Chuck and his wife, Betty, a lovely black woman who had been a prostitute/addict, now cured of her addiction and Synanon's First Lady. The eviction might have had something to do with the drug addicts who were coming to the townhouse for first interviews and eventual transfer to Santa Monica.

I am convinced now, looking back, that racial prejudice was involved. It may have been my idea to make it the main issue, but the times were such that it never occurred to the other side that such a strategy might sway the Court. The *New York Times* feature writer, Gertrude Samuels, played the race card for me. Landlord tenant judges were not accustomed to having their cases in the *New York Times*. Once again we won on the Courthouse steps.

After that victory Chuck decided that I possessed the genius he needed to confront the establishment. I decided he might be someone who could really change things. I was drawn in by his charisma and, of course, there was my penchant for monastic community living, from my earliest experiences with the Franciscans and the family clan back in the day. Synanon was a social a movement rather than a religion; nevertheless, Chuck set the hook with "faith" healing. He cured me of migraine headaches.

By now I [Th] was actually bored with both my love and work merry-go-rounds. Defendants I helped to get released would come back around on

another charge. Girls would get on for a honeymoon ride and then get off or be pushed off. This pointless ride may have caused the migraine headaches, or maybe it was guilt about the two mothers and children I pushed off the ride.

Chuck invited me to a weekend at the Connecticut facility, where a select group of cured addicts were preparing themselves to take leadership roles in the movement. I was invited to participate in “the game”, a kind of attack therapy. When he “ran the game” on me as the founder of the system, it was both an initiation and a badge of honor, like the Pope hearing your confession and blessing you. Anyway the headaches went away, magically, and I went to Santa Monica to become Synanon’s General Counsel, and Director of Public Relations. The pay was room and board, all the donated food you could eat, and any donated clothes which happened to fit. (sounds Franciscan).

As I already told you, Carol’s sons were adopted by Carol’s new husband, and the second son, Jamie, was passed to me in Synanon. My new position at Synanon included a place for Jamie. In the new world order, I [Wa] would have status and I could still be “Johnny on the spot” and save the world. I [Ti] was fascinated by this new bridge between psychology, sociology, and mind-altering drugs. Making saints of sinners also had a Christian lure for me [Th], which may not have been on my mind at the time. More importantly, and I didn’t think about this until just now, I [Th] was unconsciously fascinated by this as an experimental platonic community. Whether or not he knew it, Chuck was a philosopher king and we, his staff, were trained guardians in this autocratic aristocracy. We were unwittingly announcing to the world that democracy doesn’t work for stupid people. They need to follow the leader. You may already know that many California cults sprung up after Synanon.

I was the first “square” (non-addict slang term) living in Synanon, except that Chuck himself was never an addict. There was no prohibition on “squares” moving into the community, but no recruitment policy either, because it was slow to dawn on us that this was a way of life, not a rehabilitation method.

I had a bungalow on the Santa Monica beach, next to the Synanon old armory building which I shared with Shirley Williams and her daughter, September. Shirley was almost six feet tall, a black woman who weighed well over 300 pounds. September, her daughter, was only 11 but was

already the size of a grown-up overweight woman. Shirley was a nurse and a recovering addict and her sole Synanon job was to help me with Jamie. It sounded perfect. I had live-in help, and a live-in family and a racially integrated home. This might be just what Jamie needed as well. Of course it wasn't. As it turned out material, genetic forces responsible for Jamie's retardation could not be reached by the immaterial, social forces; so much for mind over matter. Nevertheless I didn't give up with Jamie.

Jumping ahead, a year or so later I moved out of Synanon to live with Joanna, with the idea that a smaller family and mothering might improve his condition. At that point I would discover that she had no mothering to offer, even for her own son, and that it probably would not have helped anyway. Eventually, Jamie wound up back with Carol, and then into a State Hospital in Illinois. The joys and sorrows of my relationship with Jamie are a whole other story, which I buried in the soul hole along with the other fatherly guilt.

What happened at Synanon, could be called a platonic blunder. Plato is constantly blamed for the evils of fascism, because most critics are only aware of what Hitler did, and what the Borgia popes did and not what Plato said. Plato would not crown any king whose sole aim was power. Plato's crown was reserved for the philosopher king. Once philosophy is superseded by the lust for power, Plato's seal of approval must be removed. This happened with Hitler and it happened with Chuck Dietrich, who also happened to be German.

Before my disenchantment, there was a comfort in the security of the structured environment. I think this drew followers to the fascist movements of the 20's and 30's as well as the strong leader cults which sprang up in the 60's. Synanon, I now see, was such a phenomenon, where regression replaced the will of the addict with the dependency on the leader, and the side effect was that they stopped using drugs. Chuck was the strong leader (parent) and his new world order (family) was the orderly life style which took away all the confusing questions that led to existential frustration, pain and maybe even my headaches.

For a time even my sexual appetite was brought under control by the regular "games." My status in the new movement and the fodder for my rescue fantasy had me feeling renewed. I was saving people, which is something I needed to think I was doing.

One totally unrelated rescue while I was at Synanon had nothing to do with social structure or Plato. “Johnny on the Spot” made the newspaper.

It was a dark and stormy night, literally, no kidding. I was strolling on the Ocean Front Walk along the Santa Monica beach not far from Synanon, when I spotted a girl jumping up and down waiving her arms and shouting “help, help”. I ran across the extraordinarily broad expanse of sand. I felt I was running across the Sahara. As I approached her, she pointed to the huge surf. “He’s in there”.....”a man was walking and a mega wave took him.” She was breathless.

Without giving it another thought, I [Wa- Johnny on the Spot] ran into the water, fully clothed, and once again I was led by the force of coincidence to my target (if you see the juxtaposition “force” and “coincidence” as an oxymoron, you are onto something big). A wave picked me up, and, literally, banged our heads together. He was a needle in this roiling oceanic haystack and somehow he landed in my hands. I was able to grab his collar and drag him onto the beach. Without knowing what I was doing, I placed him face down, sat on his fat fifty-year-old ass, pressed his rib cage. Gallons of water came rushing out of his mouth, and the drowned man came back to life. He began to cough.

The girl found some way to call for an ambulance. The police took my name, and then must have given it to the press. Months later I got a thank you note from a Miss Mitchell thanking me for saving her brother. Apparently, neither of them had any family except for each other. I don’t know whether he wanted to be rescued. I never heard from him directly.

“Or would you rather swing on a star..”

Synanon allowed me to continue writing while I served as General Counsel and Director of Public Relations. In addition to legally defending Synanon against its enemies, I was also charged with currying its friends. As Public Relations Director, I generated positive stories in major publications and media, including TV, documentaries and feature length movies. I helped write the voice-over for a British documentary film *House on the Beach* and approved the Lee Pogostin screenplay for the

Hollywood movie, *Synanon* (in the process, Lee took the time to teach me a lot about Hollywood and screen writing). I got to arrange other national TV coverage, including a CBS show that was or was about to become *60 Minutes* with Charles Kuralt. I also got to appear on a couple of talk shows, one hosted by Melvin Belli, where I won my case against the John Birch Society attack, once again, before I got to court.

Around the time of the release of the *Synanon* movie, it became fashionable for Hollywood folks to visit the Santa Monica Synanon facility. Because of my publicized legal battles with the John Birch Society, I was adopted by the Hollywood left wing, including some prominent artists who were black-listed by McCarthy.

All this is leading to how I spent an evening with Frank Sinatra. No matter what date it is when you read or hear this story, I will be surprised if you don't know the name Sinatra. He lent an intensity to popular music that makes him, in many opinions, the father of a new American art form, know by some as the "American Song Book". What is incredible is that he arose from the people, and more importantly for Italo-Americans from the ghetto. His acceptance was our acceptance. He was worshiped as a saint and secretly admired as a sinner by millions around the world. My meeting him was a one of those "coincidences".

The movie I mentioned, *Synanon*, had well-known stars such as Edmond O'Brien as Chuck; Eartha Kit as Betty (Chuck's African-American wife), and Richard Conti as Reid Kimbal (Chuck's number two man and a charter member of Sinatra's Rat Pack).

I was invited to speak at the Beverly Hills Hotel to a prestigious group called The Guardians (someone must have read Plato). After the presentation, I was met in the lobby by Conti. "Let's go have a drink with Frank," he said.

I followed him into the Polo Lounge of the Beverly Hills Hotel never thinking which Frank this would be, and then, just as big as life, there he was sitting at one edge of the opening of a large perfectly round, leather lined booth. Another stalky gentleman was seated at the other edge of opening. I was introduced to Frank Sinatra and Jilly, his friend and bodyguard. Frank was cordial, and shockingly down to earth; just like one of the guys. He was interested enough in me to ask about my background. He knew I was Synanon's lawyer, and had had some well

publicized trials. Sinatra had finished a much lauded Otto Preminger film about a heroine addict called *Man with the Golden Arm*. “You’re obviously a wop” he said, “.. but how can you be a lawyer? You look 12 years old.” Frank said. We talked for a long time. He told me he almost never slept and read books all night. He was much more intelligent than I had ever imagined. We talked about singing and he told me the most important thing was to think about what the words meant. He told me his favorite singer was Perry Como.

I could not imagine why Frank Sinatra would care to listen to my story, what I had done or what I thought about this or that. But he seemed genuinely interested. At one point he interrupted my narrative by raising his hand. He then leaned toward me and away from everyone else and in a low voice said: The next time you are in Vegas, go to the Sands, ask for Jack Entrata and just say “Jew feet”. (This will be an important password to a border crossing that shaped my life; so, keep it in mind).

Later we were joined by Dean Martin. He really did drink booze by the bottle. In the wee hours Frank asked what was my favorite food; I said Chinese. Frank beckoned for the waiter and handed him a hundred dollar bill (like a thousand in today’s terms). He said, “Get us a bunch of Chinese food.” Neither the waiter nor the manager ever questioned the request despite the fact that the Polo Lounge doesn’t serve Chinese food and most restaurants would have been closed at that hour. Somehow mountains of Chinese food showed up in record time, and was put out buffet style. Frank realized that this took some effort. He handed the waiter another 20 and said “Get yourself a B 29”.

I told Frank about the wars my great Uncle Pants had with Joe Kennedy and how I supported John F. for Congress and how his mother taught my mother. He interrupted and indicated with his expression that he was about to confide in me. “Let me tell you about the Kennedy’s”. Everyone knew Frank supported Kennedy; he even sang a special song for the campaign which I’m sure got more votes than any speech. It was not widely known at the time why Frank was suddenly banned from the White House inner circle by Bobby Kennedy. The rumor was his mob connections through Sam Giancana, but Frank was about to set the record straight when the phone at the table rang and interrupted our conversation.

That night Ronald Reagan was running for Governor of California with Frank's support. At Frank's request a phone had been brought to the table which had to be plugged into a jack under the table (wireless phones did not exist). The wire was long enough for Jilly to stand up and swing the phone like a tennis racket (why the scope of the wire is important will become clear).

After Dean Martin arrived, we were joined by a bevy of beauties led by Betty Resnick, who I knew slightly, a tall former fashion model who had recently separated from her husband. Frank, Jilly, Dean and Richard Conti, and I were seated opposite five attractive women; one, a dancer who, moments earlier, got a job on the Dean Martin TV show with a simple nod from Frank.

As I said, it was late enough for the Polo Lounge to be empty, except for our table and one tall, middle aged man, wearing plaid slacks and a cardigan sweater. That one man walked back and forth across the mouth of our booth several times, until finally it became obvious that he wasn't going anywhere, just gawking.

"Are you looking for your mother, buddy?" Frank said, hanging up the phone and handing it off to Jilly. The man stopped and towered directly over Frank and said "No, I'm looking for your mother."

The man had his back to Jilly when Frank jumped to his feet. I was still seated next to Frank and couldn't see behind the intruder where Jilly was sitting, but I could hear the jangle of phone bells and a horrible crack, before I saw the man fall to the floor by Frank's feet.

Jilly had opened the back of the man's head with a tennis serve swing, of that phone I mentioned. The intruder fell to his knees and then onto the floor, which was instantly covered by a river of blood. The manager and some other staff came running over stepping over the fallen victim who they must have helped at some point, but their first order of business was to escort the rat pack party out through a rear door. I found myself in an alley, catching my breath, next to the VW bug which was my Synanon company car.

The local sheriff, Pete Pitches, was a member of the John Birch Society which had elected Wendell Corey (also an actor) as Mayor of Santa Monica. As part of the conservative backlash, the Sheriff was after the

“rat pack”. The crackdown had already gotten him considerable publicity.

Later I read that Frank left the country and I assumed it had something to do with the assault, which fortunately did not turn into a murder.

Months later I had a letter from Frank Sinatra which elevated me to stardom in the Synanon world. In the course of that evening with Frank, I had mentioned that I was running an art auction to raise money for Synanon. Apparently Frank had visited Pablo Picasso at Ville Californie in France. Picasso had a fascination for American movie stars and now Frank was his guest. This letter informed me that Picasso had agreed to donate a sketch to the Synanon Art Auction. We never got the Picasso and the Sinatra letter remained as part of the Synanon archive.

1966-1976 SCREEN DEBITS

While still with Synanon, I met Joanna Lee, a tall red head. She was with another woman, Cecile, who was making eyes at me while I hosted the weekly Saturday birthday celebration service. This was an event mixing residents and outside supporters which celebrated each year of being “clean” for a few celebrants. In addition to the speeches, there was a little show biz on the stage where the Synanon orchestra and great ex-junky musicians and singers performed. I was the MC, and during the performance I sat at a table of a guest, usually a female and usually a bedmate after the show. This night I invited Cecile to go for a walk on the beach and since Joanna had to come along, I invited my right hand man and piano player, Arnold Ross.

Once we were out of the club on the boardwalk, Joanna injected herself between Cecile and me. She made it clear that she was with me and if Cecile wanted to come along, she would be with short chubby Arnold or go home. Her aggression, red hair and long legs intrigued me and I went along with the “changing partners” dance. She looked very much like Lucille Ball. But Joanna was anything but a comedian; she was already a moderately successful TV writer.

She managed to get me into a deal where I would father her son, Craig, from an earlier marriage, and in return she would mother Jamie. Joanna was sure that lack of mothering was at the root of Jamie’s problem.

It wasn’t hard to get me to leave Synanon, especially with the unwritten promise of getting me into the Hollywood writers community. I wanted to be a serious writer but maybe starting out in TV or movies might be a step in the right direction (actually, 180 degrees in the wrong direction).

Joanna was on her best behavior on our trip up the coast to San Fransisco. Halfway there, we made a stop in Atascadero, whose claim to fame was an asylum for the criminally insane. The only room we could find was so bad it made us laugh for the next year. What went on in the room was entrancing, literally and figuratively. She could get me to do anything at this point.

Not long after Atascadero, I left Synanon. I stayed friendly with the black-listed writers I met at Synanon who helped me with my writing career. And I kept the relationship with jazz great, Joe Pass, who taught me jazz chords on the guitar and Charlie Haydn, the great bassist. Both were also outcasts of Synanon and like me had misgivings about Chuck's new directions, which were becoming more and more militant after I left.

Joanna, our children and I moved into a dilapidated old mansion on Sunswept Drive in Coldwater Canyon. The house had been the home of silent film star Clara Bow. It still had an antique Rolls in the lower garage. Jim Neighbors (TV star) was our "neighbor".

We hadn't been living together more than a couple of months when Joanna wanted to take a drive to Las Vegas. Little did I know she had wedding bells ringing in her head. I swear it, I do not recall ever discussing marriage. As bizarre as this sounds, I also had no idea that she had a wedding party all planned for when we got back from Vegas, which I thought was just a fun weekend. She had formally invited all her Hollywood friends, caterers and my friends from NY, the Mastersons, who were now living in Tarzana, and some of my old buddies from Synanon, all without my knowing a thing about it. Either that or I have totally repressed those seconds where those plans were made. But try as I may, I cannot recall anything that could even remotely be interpreted as an offer of marriage.

When we got to Vegas, I surprised Joanna by suggesting that we go to the Sands Hotel. Casino hotel stays were surprisingly affordable because the room discounts usually more than made up for the gaming table. I did not tell Joanna about the Sinatra secret code. Why? Well, if it turned out to be nothing, I would not be embarrassed, and if it turned out to be something, then I would be mysterious.

Jew Feet

At the Sands front desk, I asked for Jack Entrada (the owner). Joanna looked at me quizzically. Then I leaned away from her and whispered "Jew feet" to the desk manager. In a flash Jack Entrada was there, in the flesh, offering us the presidential suite, dinner and a gift box of ten dollar chips for gambling.

The next scene is another of the few places in my entire life story where I draw a complete blank. We might have been stoned on marijuana, but that doesn't add up with the Synanon oath we both had taken. We weren't even supposed to be drunk. But somehow my recollection has me way south of sober. Maybe she put something in my drink. No, that would surprise even me. I cannot remember who said what to whom or how we wound up at two am at the Happy Bells Wedding Chapel. Ralph Donato - the cab driver and our best man assured us that the minister and his wife would not mind being awakened for the service. We both had trouble keeping a straight face when we heard the minister's lisp. He married us and his wife sold us a polaroid picture framed in an arc of artificial flowers.

As I [Wa] struggled filling the difficult role of husband to Joanna Lee, we sold a few law show scripts together. I had some luck with Kojak and Perry Mason, but I could not go all the way into the mental chewing gum business which is what TV was. As Henry, my guru, put it, I took the two dollars but wouldn't go upstairs.

I moved away from TV, to her dismay, and kept trying to write. So as not to live off Joanna, I took a full time job as a consultant which kept me traveling. Not long after that, we had to spilt up. Jamie (the retarded son I took from

Carol) had a live-in caregiver, Linda, (the daughter of George Van Epps, a well know jazz guitarist, who I had met through Joe Pass). Linda told me that Joanna was actually cruel to Jamie when I was on the road, and that he was kept in a basement room alone.

I left Sunswept Drive with Jamie and Linda and moved next to a school for autistic children in the Valley, which tried to work with Jamie, in return for some work that I would do for the school. That work involved a bit more "postering."

By stretching the truth a bit, I established that I was a therapist once in Ann Arbor, and that I did have a Master's degree from Michigan (never mind in what). I cited the years at Synanon as my internship, and voila I became a licensed clinical therapist in the State of California. Keep this in mind, because it will come in handy a bit later, helping some of my Venice friends. Salary for the part-time therapy job at this small school was just equal to the tuition for Jamie. I did need another paying job to eat, which I found. I was in charge of public relations for a drug company.

In my new job I met a friend who invited me to a roundup of wild horses in the California desert. These wild horses had escaped over the years from ranches, bred and somehow managing to survive in the central California desert. We, band of eight or ten amateur cowboys, and a couple of experienced hands were to round up the wild horses and drive them to the national park where they would be re-purposed as pack horses for Grand Canyon tours. (I sold the story of the roundup to *Sports Illustrated*. It was like the much later Billy Crystal movie about city cowboys.)

In that adventure another life changing event occurred. We rode all day and at night we hobbled the horses and slept under the stars. I knew how to ride and loved to ride, but being in the saddle all day and sleeping on it at night involved a lot of pains that were not pictured in the Westerns. All this was made tolerable by a chuck wagon that met us every night with steaks to grill, cocktails etc., which was also quite different from the Westerns.

One night Joanna (don't ask me how) showed up in a jeep with the Chuck Wagon. Even though the marriage was over, we smoked some pot and made love under the stars, and I think my son Chris's life might have begun there.

Birth of My Son Chris.

Once Joanna began to show, she decided that I should move back in just for the last few weeks. She was a celebrity now because of some of the TV shows and how would it look if she were an unwed mother. I moved back in for the end of the pregnancy and the birth. Joanna had lots of conflict with everyone she dealt with. She's gone now, and I hope she will forgive me for saying that she was impossible to get along with, not just for me. Fellow workers, her natural child birth coach, her doctor all looked to the heavens and shook their heads. I could hear Joanna howling in the delivery room. In the end she abandoned the trendy "natural" method which she had prepared for with months of training, and clamored for anesthetics and whatever else traditional medicine had to offer.

I was in the dad's waiting room when Joanna was delivering, and I wrote the new born son a poem to welcome him to this planet where King and Kennedy had just been shot.

Joanna insisted that he be baptized as a Catholic. Because I would not go along with that, she went to my mentor Dennis Karzag, (who you will learn more about later in the story) and had him stand in for my brother as godfather. Son Chris was christened in a quaint Spanish chapel in Santa Barbara. Joanna was in denial about being Jewish. Her father was Jewish, but became a Mormon, her mother was Jewish, but not practicing. For the world, Joanna was Austrian, descended from the Hapsburgs.

Jumping ahead, when Chris, was a young adult, while walking on lower Broadway in Manhattan, he was dragged into a "barmitzvah tank"- (a recreational vehicle where evangelist rabbis were bringing renegade Jews back into the fold) . In answer to the question "Are you Jewish?" Chris explained that his mother was Jewish. The rabbi explained that that made him, ineluctably (there's that word again) Jewish. As he was about to receive the blessing, ever the comedian, Chris blurted out: "Wait! What will happen when Barmitzvah mixes with Baptism?"

Joanna began to enjoy more and more success in her career as one of the few female TV writers, directors, producers. I would take Chris weekends and no matter where we wound up, usually in Venice, somehow we bumped into Joanna and, of course, she would stay with us. It became like one of her sit-coms. I would give her false locations and drive around the block in my VW camper, just to give her Jaguar the slip.

Now that Joanna was a celebrity she was welcomed back into the Synanon family. By now, the organized belief systems of Synanon had suddenly erupted into a thousand disorganized pieces. Bob Goldstein, a Synanon square, who dated Joanna after our divorce, changed his name to Werner Erhardt and founded something called EST. Bob Driver, another ex-Synanon square, founded something called Cairo down in San Diego. Fritz Pearl began a movement at Big Sur. John Maher began Phoenix House in New York City. Mike Marder, who worked for me in Synanon, had left and now had a position in Scientology. Mike told them I was really good on the stump and they were ready to make me a deal. I

didn't want to work under anyone. I was feeling like a prophet myself, and I already had a few followers.

Like everyone who left Synanon, I tried to recreate the magic. While in Synanon I ran a group call the "Square Game". You will recall, "Game" was a Synanon technique for using the pressure of the small group for attack therapy to neutralize the rationalizations which supported undesirable behavior. My "Square Game" members included famous radical priests like Father Du Bay, Hollywood directors who later became friends and mentors, actors and one really special client who became a life-long friend, Will Karush.

Will was a mathematician who worked on the Atomic bomb and was friends with all the famous scientists including Oppenheimer, Fermi, and Richard Feynman. He visited Will often because Will's wife, Ricky (Rebecca), edited a scientific journal Feynman published. Will grew up in Chicago with Saul Bellows and his mother's boarding house is the subject of some of Bellow's novels. Will's mother, a widow, ran a cheap hotel, also used as a whorehouse. Her three sons all received PhD's in the sciences from distinguished universities. I got to meet Will's brothers and they were all amazing scientists. Fred, the older brother, made some breakthrough discoveries in immunology at the University of Pennsylvania. Jack, the youngest brother, was a professor at Berkley, and Will, the middle brother, was one of the key mathematicians on the Manhattan Project.

Once while I was hiding out from Joanna, I changed my name to Montrose and used Will's home as my address. I actually lived in a van but used Will's house for mail and showers etc.. I had the good fortune of being at several of Will's backyard barbecues where, for the first time, secret stories of the Manhattan project and Los Alamos were aired. I learned about physics and mathematics from Will. I'm not sure what Will got out of our relationship. Maybe he just liked being around younger hippies. Later in this same decade, he left Ricky and became fascinated with my life style in Venice. He moved to Venice while he was teaching math somewhere, and consulting to Think Tanks in Santa Monica. In addition to learning all about Fibonacci and Moibus and lots of other Math wonders, one of the perks of being around Will was bird dogging his dates. Bird dogging is something you should not do to your friends. It means, basically, stealing their dates.

I talked Will into moving back in with Ricky, who was very grateful. By then, I was living with Jean Shore who I met through Will. One of my weekly game meetings was in Carl Reiner's house. His daughter, Annie, was in my repertory company in Venice.

So we had everything in place for a full blown cult to spring up - a fertile soil, a new belief system, celebrity followers. I [Wa] saw that it didn't take very much charisma to become "the shepherd" of a needy flock. Yet I [Th] could not bring myself to profit from my ministry. I [Wa] was tempted from time to time to take advantage of the easy access to sex and hospitality, and I [Ti] was fascinated with the psycho mechanics of manipulating my followers, but all the while, I [Th] was appalled by what Plato called sophistry, and the bogus connection to the divine. I [Th] don't think I [Wa] was enlightened enough, but for whatever reason, I did choose to elude the platonic power blunder.

Communes were springing up everywhere at the time. I made it a point to visit a few. One hippy commune which I bounced in and out of were all lawyers. During my association with them, I got to do a tiny bit of legal work on the famous Daniel Ellsberg case.

Psychedelics

No story of the 60's would be complete without psychedelics. My flirtation with psychedelics included pot, magic mushrooms and LSD. Hector, aka Madas, an Inca looking Mexican-American, gave me some magic mushrooms in Venice, California. I had smoked pot before and was expecting that kind of high but this was different. The first thing that happens is you get sick and vomit, after which you are supposed to see lights. This altered state had a long history with Mexican Indians. I saw the lights, but I'm not sure it wasn't the power of suggestion. I [Ti] knew that the pot smoking high had a lot to do with what the hippies called a "contact high", i.e., you align yourself with what others in your group are experiencing. I [Ti] had proven this, scientifically, with double blind experiments. While I was still back in NY, I rolled joints with straight tobacco from regular cigarettes without telling my friends, who got high anyway. It's like when someone yawns or laughs, everyone connected to the group feels an almost autonomic urge to laugh. This socio-psychological phenomenon in gregarious animals is actually more magical than any chemically induced effect. Psychologists call it

“entrainment.” Another experience with entrainment where I was the subject of the experiment occurred late one night in Venice, California.

I had this batch of LSD which had already provided an amazing acid trip (like a Disney fantasia movie), where every kind of gratification was magnified and colorized. Months later, I still had one tab left from the same batch. At the time I [Th] was engrossed in writing a play, and suddenly I [Ti] wondered whether my focus would immunize me from the socially expected effects of the acid, i.e. counter entrainment. This would be a perfect time to separate the chemical and sociological effects. I quickly popped the tab unceremoniously and returned to the writing focus. I never gave the acid a thought after that. I worked all night with no symptoms. In fact, I had totally forgotten that I “dropped acid”. Later that night I was out on the bench in front of my theater on Ocean Front Walk enjoying the night air. A young girl came and sat next to me. “I’m tripping” she said.

Suddenly the acid hit me like a sledge hammer and I was tripping. We fell in love there on the bench; she was Grace Kelly in my head. We drove in my van (this was a VW not the UPS Van I acquired later) up the Coast, made glorious love with visual fireworks. She came down before I did the next day while we were camped by a stream somewhere. When I came down, I discovered that I was with a most disagreeable, most unattractive young lady, which the acid had made into Grace Kelly simply because of her nose. That was absolutely all she had in common with Grace Kelly, and apparently, all that was necessary for the chemical transformation. Now the apparition was gone and I couldn’t wait for her to be gone. We had an unpleasant hour or two back to where she wanted to be dropped off, where she tried to steal a Swiss army knife. So, I had proved, to myself anyway, that consciousness forces had an effect on the neuro-chemistry.

The last acid trip I took, and will ever take, demonstrates this ‘mind over matter’ hypothesis, more dramatically.

This hallucination is what we used to call a “bum trip”. In any trip, the altered state actually uses your present perceptions to paint its bizarre illusions. Unlike a dream, it is based in current, waking, perceptual reality but with ringing overtones from some deep unconscious inferno. I think the original adjective in “bum trip” might have been “bumpy” and eventually I believe it led to the slang word “bummer”, still in use. In a bum trip everything looks like the worse

horror movie you ever saw, which suddenly jumps off the screen into your real life. It took all of my will power [Wa] to keep me [Wo] from curling up in a ball and sucking my thumb for the rest of my life. At the climax of the bum trip, I was walking down Ocean Front Walk looking over my shoulder for demons every other step.

“Leroy Brown” was a Venice character named after a hit song of the era:
“Bad , bad, Leroy Brown,
the baddest man in town,
meaner than a junk yard dog”.

The Venice Leroy Brown was a big mean black guy, whose glare was sufficiently weaponized so as to make his pan handling, armed robbery. “Gimme some money, motha fuckah” he would hold his hand out, the size of a catcher’s mit, to any white passer-by. And you would put something in it, avoiding his glare. Everyone did, no argument. I did too.

Leroy was in my path that night and he did his thing. Without describing what I saw in Leroy, sufficient to say it was blown out of context into the scariest moment of my life, so much so that I [Wo] ran, no, flew back to my pad and literally hid under the bed. I [Wo] had cold sweats, feeling the racial anger demons of all the generations of black America; all were ready to take their revenge on me. It took all of the will power I [Wa] had to come out from under the bed. A foot note here - The high mind voice [Th], now pushed way back, was barely audible, but still there. I now believe that it never leaves me; it’s always there if I take the time to tune it in. I did listen, and slowly, rational thoughts dissolved my chemically induced paranoia. I [Wa] saw clearly that It was Leroy who was in the wrong; and it was Leroy who should be punished for using his blackness to extort. Leroy was the “motha fuckah”, not me.

I crawled out from under the bed, I [Wa] was suddenly seven feet tall, with machine guns in both fists. I [Wa] flew back to Ocean Front Walk, half eagle, half lion. I found Leroy. He made his pitch . I put my face in his and said “What are going to do if I don’t give you some money mother fucker?” Leroy backed away so that he could get a look at my hands to see what I was holding that made me so bold. I was holding lightening bolts. He backed away.

“Come to me, come to me, my brother; it is our destiny to fight to the death tonight?” I intoned like a priest giving last rights. Here is where the

acid effect comes in. I must have been peripherally aware of a melted chocolate bar on the pavement by Leroy's bare feet. What actually happened in the real world I can only surmise: Leroy must have run away. I didn't see that. What I saw was Leroy melt, right there before my eyes in vivid detail; and then the melted Leroy fell to form the chocolate stain that was actually there at my feet right near where he had been standing.

That was my last trip. After that I knew mind alterations had to be philosophical not pharmaceutical.

Gurus

The two most important names for me to drop from my California experience were not movie stars, they were stars of another hidden galaxy, far removed from the lime light which gave them a more subtle, more lasting glow.

They were Henry Geiger and Dennis Karzag. Both shared their special wisdom with me and helped me build my new self. How and why we came together is another glorious coincidence. Maybe like a good virus, wisdom particles arrange the appropriate proximity for the transfer from one mind to another. Call it luck ,call it destiny, what's in a name?

Henry was a tall, older man who was Ralph Waldo Emerson reborn. I don't mean just intellectually. I mean physically, as well. Every portrait I have ever seen, of Emerson, and especially the one which hung over Henry's armchair, made them identical in my mind. The nose, the eyes, even down to the eye brows. I have never witnessed anything as close to a reincarnation before or since. I can't know what Ralph sounded like, but I bet it was like Henry's crisp, charismatic, "baso profundo" with a hint of New England accent.

Dennis was a short, bespectacled, bearded man with an Austrian accent, a bit taller than Toulouse Lautrec, but looked a lot like him.

Whatever drew me to these two, I can promise you it had nothing to do with social climbing or financial success. What I was given cannot be weighed or measured and yet is treasured to this day.

The confusion of my [Wa] own search created a suction of curiosity, which empowered an extraordinary flow of ideas, information and vicarious experience. I was not the only beneficiary of Henry's thinking. Henry's wisdom and scholarship was given freely to a small group of subscribers.

Henry wrote, published and printed "Manas" every month for decades. It was a black and white, no pictures, no nonsense, philosophical journal. The subscribers of his journal were like an international, intellectual "Who's Who" - CM Hutchins, Neru, Maslow. Most of his subscribers had no idea who published and wrote "Manas".

I met Henry when I was at Synanon and he asked me to write something about an important case I tried. The "Faucet" case challenged the science and morality of the California corrections law as it applied to heroin addicts. Henry read about the case in the paper and came to offer his support and that of an expert witness for my court case, who was his friend and long time subscriber to his publication. This friendly subscriber turned out to be none other than Abraham Maslow, already a legend in the social sciences. He came to California and stayed at Henry's place in Decker School Canyon above Malibu. I spent a life-changing evening with them, and adopted Henry as a role model. He had a do-it-yourself moral compass which did not require any church or priests. He was a living, practicing philosopher.

Maslow testified in my case which more than offset the crude science of California Correction officials; that alone would have been enough to win. However, not taking any chances, as usual, I tried the case before we got to court. Milton Berle's wife, Ruth, was friendly with the judge which pre-disposed him to our arguments.

We won and it was a triumph not only for Synanon but for the philosophical mind matter struggle. The materialist California State medical doctor mentality wished to reserve any and all cures for licensed physicians and drug companies, who at the time, were pedaling 'Methadon', itself an addictive drug that replaced heroin. Love and understanding and group encounters was unlicensed and illegal. The court found that it was not. The *Manas* article heralded this as a victory of philosophy over silly science, and so did Maslow in his book, *Psychology of Science*.

In keeping with his philosophy, Henry never signed an article. Once when he was sick he asked me to write an entire issue centered around a hippie commune I had visited. Although all Henry's work was unsigned, and he was super careful to eschew recognition, which he was sure would contaminate his quest for the truth, he would never push that belief onto anyone else. He knew that I didn't quite understand that at the time, and so he allowed me to sign the guest articles I wrote for "Manas". He would share all of what he had, but never force feed anyone.

When I visited Henry at his Decker Canyon retreat high above the North end of Malibu beach, he would magically be ready to bring the eternal verities to bear on the very issue currently perplexing me. When I say he was ready, I mean with citations from Plato, Emerson, and other philosophers, and some I had never heard of. He seemed to guess what I wanted to talk about before I opened my mouth. It was mind blowing. As I drove up the steep dirt road to Henry's homemade looking house, nestled on a hilltop wilderness above the Pacific Ocean, I might be perplexed about an anti-war march I declined, because I thought the marchers were about to make more trouble than could be justified. Seconds after we sat down, with no prompt from me, Henry opens with: "Isn't your brother a field grade officer in Vietnam? Is blood thicker than philosophy?" That would set the bar for the next hours of scholarly inquiry from the beginnings of Eastern and Western civilization to now. The scope of Henry's knowledge was oceanic. There were no clocks in the room where we sat after dinner; sometimes we talked until dawn. Henry convinced me that there were no new philosophical issues; verities are eternal and philosophy is timeless.

.....Switching to Dennis, in mid stream, if I may. I met Dennis when I was working as PR Director for Riker Pharmaceutical Company. One lazy afternoon, I let Dennis into my office without an appointment because of his odd looks and strange accent. I thought it might be amusing; instead it was life changing. He talked me into sending expired drugs to developing countries. He founded and ran the Direct Relief Foundation in Santa Barbara, California, and later organized volunteer Doctors to go abroad including Albert Schweitzer, the famous philosophical philanthropist. Schweitzer was not the only historical character Dennis knew intimately. He also knew Freud, Grandi and Hitler.

Unlike Henry, there were no scholarly references in Dennis's stories, just true stories with credible detail. Dennis, too, would take whatever time it

took, sometimes all night, to tell me his story. Neither of these men were braggarts. Neither of them went to parties or cared about impressing others, and so what they told me is not widely known; in fact, I dare say not known at all, except by me and now you.

Dennis's experiences provide a unique, private history of one the most significant 20th Century public history enigmas. Dennis grew up in Vienna. His mother was one of Freud's first patients. Dennis, in his twenties, invented a loom that could weave silk strands so that they replicated works of art in silk tapestries. This was before digital imagery, but the same mathematical problems had to be solved and applied in this case to mechanical looms - threads instead of pixels, instructions instead of software. The resulting "pastilles" were very successful and made Dennis and his partner Zimden very rich at a very young age.

Dennis at an early age was attracted to Rosicrucians and other forward thinkers who preached brand new ideas about growing and eating the right foods and other metaphysical beliefs. With his disposable income, he had hosted a group called Naturakarta which met periodically in his vegetarian restaurant, La Scala, in Vienna. Adolf Hitler was a member of the group which met in the restaurant. After Hitler went to jail for his early Bavarian putsch, Dennis saw something change in this very ordinary outcast. Dennis, who had personal experience with Freud's new science of psychoanalysis, saw the new Hitler as a case of long term hysteria, but was convinced that Hitler was only a danger to himself. Dennis never dreamed that such a condition, a madness, could be contagious.

When the Nazi tanks rolled into Vienna, after the annexation of Austria, Dennis told me his entire 'weltanschauung' , (world view) had changed so fast, he was dizzy for months. By nature Dennis was a man of action, and no problem was too big for this little man, but in 1938, he was confounded. This was around the time when Leon Blum, Prime Minister (who Dennis knew through his partner Zimden), had assured Czechoslovakia that the French forces were ready to jump in should Hitler attack. At this point Dennis had a mansion on the French Riviera, where he spent most of his time, trying not to think about what was happening to his world.

One day while riding in his silver Rolls Royce, he was accidentally stopped in front of a French recruiting station. Suddenly, Dennis popped out of the car without waiting for the chauffeur to open the door, like he

was propelled. Without missing a step, he presented his small young body to the French army recruiters, who led him into a back room from which he never came out. The chauffeur reported the abduction to Zimden, but Dennis was nowhere to be found.

The French Army (this is a year or two before Vichy) was expecting to be infiltrated by Nazi spies and, because Dennis had Austrian papers and possibly might have been a known associate of Hitler's, Dennis was escorted to a van which he thought was taking him to the French Army bootcamp. Instead he found himself in a remote prison outpost manned by the French Foreign Legion.

Dennis adapted; this was just a new set of problems to solve. After a few weeks it was clear that he, his fellow prisoners, and even the Foreign Legion guards had fallen through a crack in the new world order. This meant the camp had no connection with the Free French or the Nazi Vichy French government. Consequently, there were no provisions made for this prison camp, except to keep it off the charts, and the inmates and the guards were now starving and freezing. Dennis led prisoners and guards on foraging expeditions for food and warmth.

One day (Dennis used the term "magically") he stumbled into a Quaker group, which was let into the camp to distribute apples and blankets. Dennis counts that day as the happiest day of his life. He experienced an awakening to a whole new set of human values which can briefly be summarized in the phrase "love is all".

FOOTNOTE: Dennis didn't know Henry. Eventually they met at my 30th birthday party at Jean's house. I was honored because neither one ever went to parties. I alone knew that each of them had Quakers in common. Henry was imprisoned in World War II as a conscientious objector and was ministered to by Quakers, and you now know Dennis's Quaker story. The two great spirits, in different size bodies, from different worlds, recognized each other instantly and remained close friends for years after Jean's party.

Back at the forgotten Foreign Legion outpost, Dennis and Zimden finally made contact. Zimden sent money to buy food for both the prisoners and guards. By now, Zimden knew a way around the Vichy Nazi's to the free French underground. Zimden found a way to get Dennis to the US, and found an American document filed back in the late 20's, when

Dennis and he had applied for US citizenship in California, so that they could invest in a Hopalong Cassidy movie. The document was enough to establish an alternative American citizenship and Dennis was allowed to stay in Santa Barbara, California where he and Zimden acquired downtown commercial real estate, which eventually became El Paseo. As the war came to an end, Dennis told Zimden that he wanted out of business of any kind, and wished to establish a way to bring blankets and apples to war victims. The blankets and apples eventually became pharmaceuticals and medical services and the rest is Direct Relief history. By the time I joined the Board, Direct Relief was a large thriving philanthropy working in 24 countries, supplying everything from vaccines to eye glasses.

Strange Interlude

In this decade's gallery the hardest portrait to hang is the one of Jean. How can a beautiful women be intelligent, fascinating, humane and at the same time lusty. I really don't know. After all these years of thinking about it, I can't put it together and make it fit. At her Beverly Hills home, the same salon where the two great souls, Henry and Dennis bonded, a week earlier, there was a New England lobster and free love fete. Jean was able to operate on the same intellectual plane as Henry and had spiritual connections with Dennis, and yet had been intimate with Hollywood moguls and stars of both sexes.

Jean was ten years my senior and even at forty she looked like the calendar models you see hung over the work-bench at the gas station. Before her Broadway career, her almost olympic swimming talents got her into the water ballet in several Esther Williams movies. You may find it hard to believe that 90% of those pretty extras had sex with some agent, assistant director, director, producer or maybe all of the above. That's how it was. But there was more to it with Jean. Her flexibility was also her power. Her people skills and compassion made you want to do whatever she wanted to do.

When I met her, she had pretty much given up her acting career, except for a few TV commercials. She had been married to Mike Shore, one of Sinatra's managers and a friend of Jack Ruby's (he shot Oswald who shot Kennedy). Mike was much older than Jean who was unable to have

children. They adopted a boy and then a girl, who Jean raised after the divorce with only financial help from Mike.

I met Jean at a Hollywood party, a bagel brunch for ex-New Yorkers. I had left Joanna and was fleeing from her jealousy. Jean sat across from me and we compared jealous spouse stories. At the time I guess you would say I was a hippy - beard, pony tail, etc.. I have no idea why she chose me, maybe she was drawn to the hippy challenges to conventional morality, or the intellectual and philosophical discussions which were my shield. My exploits and chatter seemed to fascinate her. I brought her to Henry's several times, and to Santa Barbara to spend weekends with Dennis and his family. These were intellectual and spiritual weekends where Jean was just as comfortable and just as impressive. Her genuine interest in everyone she met made her interesting to everyone she met. Everyone felt close to her. Whether you became a sex partner or a confidant was entirely up to Jean. Like no one else I ever knew, she managed all the potential side effects of coming and going. There seemed to be no downside, no angry fallout, except for her ex, Mike, and my ex, Joanna.

I would have to say that eventually Jean did fall in love with me, and gave up seeing other men for a while because of me. Jean became monogamous and also a partner in my career. She took an interest in my theater and helped get it started. She brought celebrities to the theater which became an intersection for the Hollywood crowd and the Venice counter culture.

Beau Geste II

One of Will's ladies was beautiful and brilliant - M . When M and I met, it was love at first sight. I was living with Jean, but there was no way to resist M. As Sinatra crooned "I fell in love too easily". I fell deeply, as always, head over heels. Lady M is the other "Beau Gest" (Grand Gesture, great act of kindness) in my life which I spoke about earlier.

I cannot recall anything like the power of the instant bond between us. We made love the first night we met, and I was ready to change my life to be with her. It was on the third date with M that she told me she was dying of cancer and wanted me to stop seeing her. She was glad to have had the feelings she had for me, but she felt it would be too cruel for me

to get in any deeper in light of what she knew lay ahead for her. I insisted that I stay with her until the end.

One day she disappeared from her apartment and left no way for me to find her; she spared me the end game. I wrote poems and sent them to her address, not knowing if she ever read them.

Years later, after M was gone, her daughter found me and shared M's diary entry about our relationship. As short as it was, our love was the crown jewel of her life.

“Lets Put On a Show”

Venice beach ran from Santa Monica pier to Marina Del Rey. Old Jews from the East, young radicals from the midwest, lesbians, and body builders from all over each had their benches along Ocean Front Walk. The body builders worked out with free weights and bars in the sand next to the bathhouse. One muscle man with an almost comical Austrian accent offered tips to anyone who looked like they needed help. Later he became Mr. Universe, movie star and Governor. I am referring to Arnold Schwarzenegger.

I [Wa] never had the guts to dive off the bridge of every day life into the rapids of artistic truths. They say you had to have talent and I [Wo] just wasn't sure. But somehow I found the nerve to build my own theater in the lobby of one of the old beach hotels. The semi cone of four rows of old movie theater seats were supported on reinforced used shipping pallets, looking like a mini amphi theater.

It was much easier than I thought to pull together a repertory company of out-of-work actors who wanted to be seen on a stage, no matter what they had to do there; even if it meant interpreting the avant garde plays of a nobody. Instead of nobody, I [Wa] billed myself as Shakespeare with my own Globe theater, which was true, except for the great writing.

My theater was between the lesbians' and the body builders' beaches. We mounted three or four of my plays, some concerts, some small anti-Vietnam rallies. My small theater audiences began to gentrify the corner of Westminister and Oceanfront walk in Venice, which changed the menu

of Alberto's coffee shop next door, and also brought in more rent for my absentee landlord who was a wannabe actor working as a stock broker.

I called the theater Reredos (the backdrop of the first plays in the early church). Carl Reiner and some other famous people were kind in their support of our efforts. Carl's daughter Annie was a member of the company and his son Rob, who was a high school student at the time, dropped in from time to time to see his friend Kress Myrsky, who was already a natural method actor. But the plays, all written by me, were not traditional enough to capture the attention of the entertainment industry, and were not avant garde enough to capture the attention of the LA intellectual community, if there was such a thing.

Joanna persisted in her belief that she could trick me, or trap me back into her life. She had me followed by private investigators, and even arrested by hand-picked red-neck cops. I continued to see my son, Chris, weekends and tried to keep her insane jealousy at bay.

I could sleep in my theater or at Jean's house. As I said, Jean loved me and would bring any help I needed from her established Hollywood connections. I [Th] purposely remained on the fringe of the many California movements, including the Peace and Freedom Party. I was against the war in Vietnam where my brother was in combat, but never marched because I saw no long term idealism in the rebel rousers who led the movement.

After my theater hosted the first meeting of the Peace and Freedom Party headed by Tom Hayden, who was involved with Jane Fonda. (she did not come to that first meeting or any of the other meetings in my theater), no one came to the theater no matter what was going on inside.

I stayed with Jean off and on. At one point in 1969 I had news that my Dad was in the hospital in critical condition. Jean urged me to let him know how I felt about him. I wrote him a letter and then flew to Boston to visit.

I told him in the letter that I looked past all the bad stuff and that some good stuff from him would always be with me - love of music, humor, inventing - all of which he inspired.

As for as my Dad and others were concerned, I was the chip off the old block. My brother was more like my mother. That hurt my brother since we both worshiped Dad as kids. My brother ran away from home because of my Dad.

On his death bed my brother was present. I was still en-route. The last thing my Dad did was hold up my letter, call my brother by my nickname, "Johnny Boy", and say how beautiful it was to receive the letter. He thought Joe was me. Whatever else he was feeling, my brother shared the death scene with me without any resentment. I went to the funeral; it marked the end of an era. My brother and I became much closer than we had ever been.

Back in LA after the funeral, it was becoming clear that the Reredos Theater Company doing avant grade plays by John Ciampa was a no-go. I did readings from Joyce's Ulysses, and occasionally presented a musical act, Hector, aka Madas and Erlinda - a word more on this act.

As you know, Hector called himself "Madas" and doubled as a guru of his own brand of eastern mysticism. He told me that he played guitar with the Xavier Cugat orchestra, which I took to be part of his bullshit, since I could see he was much too young to have been in that orchestra. But, no matter, I knew a world class guitarist when I saw one and he was all of that. He also sang. His voice was very much like Andre Bocelli's. His sister Erlinda harmonized on several of the songs. These were arias from classic Italian operas, Spanish zarzuelas and Mexican classics with only a guitar accompaniment which at times were as elaborate as an entire string section.

Hector and Erlinda broke up and Hector performed alone for a while. I learned that half of what he said was imagined or hallucinated. He was stoned on magic mushrooms much of the time. Producers and agents who came to my theater with Jean were ready to snap him up, but then he would begin to talk in normal casual conversational tones about a tunnel where they needed to go together, on a lily pod which he knew would support their weight. That would end any deal prospects.

There were lots of pedestrians on Ocean Front Walk, but they only spent money on drugs. No restaurant or convenience store could make enough to stay open for very long.

After I disbanded my social movement, some of my “game” members remained in my life as friends, like Will. Another such friend was Anton “Tony” Leader, a well known radio drama director who moved into early TV, and was now a working director on the new TV series, *The Virginian*. He had a prestigious agent named Sam Adams who agreed to read my plays.

Adams, Ray and Rosenberg decided to represent me and assigned me to an associate named Robert Munch who sent one of my plays into the Shubert Award Committee. I won a paid fellowship at USC, which put me in weekly writer’s workshop with the famous William Inge, who won Pulitzers for *Picnic and Bus Stop* to name a few. He was a friend of Tennessee Williams and almost as famous in his day. By the time I met him, the sun had set on his career. He could not get a play sold and hated to have to sit with us wannabe writers at USC. After a couple of sessions, he moved the group to his home. Each week in his living room, we would comment on each others works in progress. He was struggling with a play called “Tube Boobs” about TV addicts whose infant dies while they are totally distracted by their favorite soap. It was a great idea but not a good play. It was not a happy time for Inge. He was now old and obese and a gay man without a partner. He asked me to stay behind one night and was almost inappropriate until I made it clear, I was on the other team. The following Wednesday we learned that he committed suicide by car fumes in his own garage. That ended the Wednesday meetings and any involvement I had with Shubert or USC. I was still in Venice.

I had not seen Hector for some time when I got the call from the LAPD. Hector knew I was a lawyer. He had been arrested for standing, buck naked, in the middle of La Brea and practicing judo on the police officers who tried to apprehend him. According to one observer, he was throwing cops around like empty jackets. Now he was locked up.

He told me that he had been in the Navy in World War II, and I thought, at first, that was part of his delusion. But I checked and he was. He looked younger than me, and now I had official documents showing that he was approaching 50 and that he was in the US Navy in WWII, I found a clipping which showed him with Xavier Cougat. This blew my mind. He looked to be in his twenties.

As I mentioned earlier, I had gotten a California clinical counseling license which was enough to get Hector into the Brentwood VA Hospital, which

had a heated pool, a nine hole golf course, and three meals a day. The VA was more like a resort than a hospital. It turned out Hector was a whiz at golf as well. His skills were as broad and deep as his insanity. While at the VA he taught me his guitar arrangements for some of the pieces he performed. I actually tried to sing them as well - Mexican classics, an aria from "La Boheme". He also introduced me to the magic mushroom which I already told you about. In the end, he was too crazy to deal with and I left him to his own destiny.

UPS Van Man

Now my theater was mostly dark. One of the guys who came to the Joyce readings was the publisher of some radical newspaper. He had a large former UPS truck which a previous owner had rebuilt into a fairly complete camper. It had a Cadillac V8 engine, new chassis and brakes. The inside had a bunk bed and breakfast nook that became a second bed. There was also a 5' x 7' flat area in front of the steering wheel which had been the package prep area. Now it had a corduroy covered mattress on which passengers could sit or lie in front of the driver without obstructing the view, and chat, gaze out at the road or up at the stars through the enormous windshield. I had traded the theater lease and all the furniture for the van. I added a roof deck on the van which was 20 feet off the ground. It had a retractable ladder so I could sleep up there al fresco without worrying about security.

This became my home. I learned to live in a van and later would transfer this skill to a European van. This California van was used to take friends including Jean and her adopted children and their friends, on camping trips all over the West. It also served as my headquarters in Venice.

While living in the truck, I mixed with the various subculture of drop-outs, anti-Vietnam radicals, lesbians, and wannabe artists, who played bongos all day in the gazebo just south of Westminster. Others got stoned in the morning on downers, still others drank wine most of the day.

Becoming a beach bum was never a plan for me. I just enjoyed the Venice sunsets over the Pacific and the low cost of living, i.e. zero, and the time it left for writing and reading.

One of the more interesting beach bums in my circle was Walter the Wino. His real name was Walter Schafer. He was a highly educated older man who had dropped out of a top secret job at a DOD think tank in Santa Monica. While he was a working scientist, Walter would come to Venice just for lunch breaks and eventually was infected by the “dolce far niente”. He had dropped out a couple of years before I met him, and now was living in an abandoned car with Francis the troll. Walter was around 6’ tall and Francis was around 4’ 4”. Weekends Walter had a stand on Ocean Front Walk and sold peanut butter sandwiches, wrapped in his own poetry. I bought from him and discovered, to my surprise, that even though the bread was stale, the poetry was not; in fact it was very fresh. We published a volume together called “Driftwords”, which I could not bring myself to pedal with peanut butter on Ocean Front Walk. Walter was ok with just selling his own separate pages around his peanut butter sandwiches. Walter and I became friends as long as he stayed away when he was drunk. I made that very clear. He would show up sober and with bruises all over his face, and that was ok with me, as long as he was sober. Francis would beat the crap out of Walter and throw him out of the car. Walter never fought back. I stepped in at one point, but to no avail.

I used my psych credentials, again - this time to get Walter, who was also a vet, into the Brentwood VA. I was already on file there as a referring clinician. We took meals there together every day. Walter was cleaning up nicely, and introduced me to some serious writers, who I would not have found but for Walter, especially Stendhal, and Nabokov. Nevertheless I became bored with my Venice freedom.

The tipping point occurred when an ex-Synanon friend with whom I played the guitar, Rick Purinton, committed suicide. He was an ex-Vietnam vet, ex-heroin addict who had been clean for some time, and suddenly had enough of Venice. I had had enough of Venice too, but chose another way out.

One day I met a young draft dodger, Philip York, who was on the run from Iowa escaping the Vietnam war, who offered to share the expenses for a van trip down to Mexico.

FOOTNOTE; Here is another strange coincidence. Today May 12, 2018, while working on this story I received a note through LinkedIn, from one

Philip York asking if I was the same John Ciampa that he met in Venice back in the Sixties. We have begun a correspondence.

When I met Phil he was anxious to get out of the country. That day we went to say goodbye to my friend Walter at the VA. Walter pleaded to come with us. This was a life long dream of his and he was now sober, so there would be no problems, and besides, he had a premonition that we needed to leave LA right away. We decided to include Walter. Since it would take several days to get him released, and since Walter insisted that we had to leave LA that same day, (he didn't say why it was urgent), we facilitated his escape rather than his release. He put a few things in a pillow case and we snuck out to the van through the golf course and headed for Mexico.

Walter and Phil were very happy since both of them had dreamed of touring Mexico. I had been to Mexico once or twice before, so I was less excited by the adventure.

We drove non-stop well past the border and headed toward the center of Mexico as sun rose that first day. We had the radio on and suddenly a Mexican news caster announced that all of Los Angeles had been destroyed by an earthquake. Phil was sure that that was Walter's premonition, and that he had saved us. The Mexican news was skewed either by wishful thinking or lack of ground truth, and for hours, we were under the impression that there was no more LA.

By the time we made our first stop and could get to a phone, I was mourning the loss of all my friends - Jean, my son, even Joanna. Thank God the reporting wasn't even half true. It was a serious quake out in the Valley and there were fatalities, but LA was still there.

Phil, Walter and I traveled all across Mexico sometimes sleeping in cheap hostels and sometimes camping out around the truck. We found magical settings and welcoming people from all walks of life, some rich enough to host pub crawls to all the posh clubs in elegant parts of big cities; some sharing delicious tacos cooked on inverted hub caps over open fires in their huts. The songs I learned from Hector helped, but more than that, you have to understand that Mexican people, like Italian people, were just so much more open to travelers than they would be to tourists once that industry reached its awesome and awful capacity.

In the mountain town of Puebla, we were camped out of town and were traveling in and out of town as the spirit moved us. The few hardy other travelers were either freewheeling like us or were looking to do some kind of business. One American warned us, whatever else we did, not to buy drugs. The Federales had an arrangement with the drug dealers whereby after the drugs were sold; the Federales would arrest the purchasers and hold them for ransom and then recycle the drugs back to the dealers who would do it again to the next unfortunate suckers. Mexican jails were hell holes and Mexican justice was not kind to gringos who couldn't pay the ransom.

One night at a cantina, we found ourselves seated next to three American women, not bad looking, not beautiful by any standard, but they were very friendly, maybe even aggressive, and before long the party moved to the house they were renting. We got along so well that we decided they would travel with us for a while and share some of the expenses. We spent the night with the women, each of us in one of the three bedrooms.

In the middle of the night, Walter came banging on my door calling my name. "I need my medication which is out in truck" he said. We were trying to keep Walter sober as much as possible, but there was no medication involved that I knew about. I thought at first he was flipping out and then when I opened the door a crack, I read that premonition look in his eyes. The eye message was "Let's get out of here, now and fast". Not what I wanted to do at all. "Could you come down to the truck with me.... I don't have the key. Oh wait, Phil has the key." Walter rushed over and roused Phil.

We dressed in silence and followed Walter on tippy toes, like ducklings, waiting to hear whether this was another earthquake or what. Once out of the house we ran, almost tumbling, down the steep hill to the truck, where he finally spoke out of breath.

"Did you notice the hat box each of them is taking with them tomorrow in our truck?"

Phil and I looked at each other with blank expressions. "Did you happen to look inside at the cocaine sombreros they bought?" "Oh my God!"

We got in the truck and let it silently roll down the rest of the hill before we started the engine, and then lit out of town.

It was still dark as we drove through a forest out toward the main road. Suddenly head lights on both sides of the forest road flashed in my face. I could see through my squint five or six Federales with World War II Japanese rifles aimed at us.

They ordered us out of the van. The Captain was surprised that we spoke Spanish (fortunately we never needed more than a few words). They searched the van. “No se compran sombreros?” -“Didn’t you buy any sombreros (hats)”? -They were looking for the hat boxes. “No Capitan. “

Walter noticed one soldier looking at our can of instant coffee, and voluntarily opened it and let the soldier, smell, and put on a pot of hot water and made the guy a cup of instant, while the others were searching. We convinced them that we had no money and offered them the can of instant coffee as a gift. They accepted and finally let us pass.

We were giddy with relief thinking about what might have happened had it not been for Walter’s second premonition, or whatever it was that caused him to look in the hat boxes.

Toward the end of a month-long journey, Walter started to drink again, and it was more than I could handle. So back to LA we went. I said goodbye to Phil, sold the van, and moved in with Will Karush for a few days, where I met Richard Feynman (more on that later).

I had written the screenplay which became the Emmy winning TV movie *The Law*, and my agent Sam had given it to the studios, but as far as I knew I had no reason to hang around LA. And so it was time to give up my California van and find my Europe van.

Hanomag Van Man

One of Will’s friends, Inga, a German woman, arranged for me to stay with her uncle in Tubingen until I could find a van to live in as I bummed around Europe. When I got to Tubingen I stayed with Inga’s uncle, who had lost a son and was very happy to make my acquaintance. I told him I

was a writer. His son was a journalist who was bitten by a rabid dog and died from the complications.

Inga's uncle was in WWII and we spent long hours comparing our quite different versions of our private histories. He spoke very little English, and I had just begun to learn German. We would sit at the lovely Victorian dining room table covered with embroidered lace, each of us with our dictionary at hand.

One night after a dinner of home-made spaepezle (a noodle dish) in the middle of our dialogue about the World War II, there was a breaking news flash on TV. The words came much too fast for me to grasp, but the tone was clearly "sky is falling" urgent. My host and his wife went running around the house pulling shades down. Both of them looked like they were preparing for the Dresden raid. "Vas ist lauss?" I tried to stay out of the way, but wanted them to know I had no clue what kind of trouble we were in. He lost whatever English he had in the panic, and all I could translate under the circumstances were the words "killed" and "Jews", which brought my confusion to the point where I thought I was in the Twilight Zone. "'Yetz'? - Now?, killing Jews now?" I said in unintelligible German. Finally I got the picture from the TV.

The Israeli Olympic team had been murdered right there in Munich. My hosts were sure this meant another allied attack. We didn't know at first that the terrorists were Palestinian. We thought they might have been Nazis. And he was in the middle of trying to convince me that the holocaust never happened. The panic subsided as soon as we heard about the Palestinians. His total denial was a residue left only in the minds of the older Germans. The younger generation was so ashamed that they changed their first names to American sounding names.

The next morning we went together to find a suitable van home for me which turned out to be a Hanomag Van (made by Mercedes) "gebroucht" (used). The dealer was shocked when I attempted to bargain. The German used-car dealers put a fair price on all cars which was non-negotiable, and they were insulted if you bargained. It would be like offering the grocer less for a loaf of bread. My host made apologies for the difference in our customs and I bought the vehicle, a newspaper van. It said "BILD Zeitung" (*Bild Times*) in big bold letters on the side and then across the bottom "Taglich lessen" (read daily).

I found out much later that this was the right-wing newspaper, which I would be advertising as I drove around the already very socialist Germany. And on May Day at a Communist rally in Frankfurt, someone inserted words under the logo “Macht taglich dummer” in red paint. So, now everywhere I went, the ad had become a political commentary. I was telling the German speaking public that if they read the *Bold Times* daily, they would become dummer each day. Most people would wave or clap as I drove by. The few right-wing older folks would shake their heads.

I set up some simple creature comforts inside the van, really simple. I slept on a roll up flokati on a rug which covered the floor of the van. I washed in a lavabo on a stand behind the drivers seat which poured into a large basin. I could dump the grey water out the window in most places. I [Ti] re-engineered the driver seat so it could easily be removed and replaced by a comfortable toilet seat, through which the solid waste was collected in a plastic bag held open by a wastebasket rim and the liquid waste in a detachable pickle jar attached to the front of the rim. All I had to do is find convenient places to dump the plastic bag and empty the pickle jar.

Instead of cabinets, I [Ti] purchased an array of nylon bags which I hung from a line with hooks every foot or so. Everything I owned was contained in color coded nylon bags strung across the length of the van on each side. I brought the Paramon guitar and my typewriter with me from America.

While part of me [Ti] was interested in concocting the most efficient cost effective home on wheels, another part of me [Th] looked at this as a voyage into the inner world through the tunnel of solitude - Aspen on wheels.

The first day on the road, I marveled at the size of the German town called “Ausfahrt,” printed on large green signs for miles and miles of autobahn. Eventually I figured out that Ausfahrt meant “Exit.” I [Wo] was already feeling lonely when I picked up hitchhikers from Argentina, a young man and his girl friend. I enjoyed their company for a few days as we headed toward Frankfurt.

In Frankfurt I played the guitar on the “Haupt Vaulker,” a large pedestrian area in the center of town, and discovered that Germans, even more than

Americans, love dixie and swing music. The second day I met another busker from Scotland, who right after asking if we could join forces, warned me that he had been in a mental hospital. He played the clarinet well enough to more than double the take of German marks, thrown into my guitar case. The Germans were throwing paper money into my guitar case, not just coins, so we did very well.

I could clean up pretty well at the lavabo in the van, but occasionally I needed a larger men's room with running water. I learned how to take a bath at a small sink with paper towels.

Traveling though Germany and northern Europe I found "Schwimmin Hals" (guess what that means: "swimming halls"), where one could have a swim and steam bath and a shower for a few cents. So, I was clean and well fed for not having a home or a steady job. I had money for gas, groceries and occasional restaurants from my street busking. The little hobo from Henchman Street was finally on the road, alone. No female companionship for months. I went all through Germany and Sweden.

While in Sweden, I went to Karlavagan 50, where Bodil lived. She was long gone. I learned she had married a French Count and was living somewhere in France. I made a futile attempt at love making with Parker's now ex-wife Maggie, and Little Ulla's big sister, but the almost having it, made not having it more painful. I took great pains to learn that being on the prowl was craving and craving was suffering. Appointments never made up for disappointments. I left Sweden and headed south.

One day, beside a deserted mountain road, I was forced back into boxing in a strange new ring with an extraordinary slate of opponents. The ring was an Austrian lake; the opponents were swans. I had taken all my clothes off and washed them in the lake and then was washing myself while the clothes were soaking. The water was so cold it was numbing. It took all my will power to soap up my hair and dunk my head in the ice water. As I did, graceful swans made their way over to me, as though they were coming for a pat on the head. Before I could withdraw my hand, the S in the swan's neck became a sling shot which sprung the beak at me like an archer's arrow. The other swans surrounded me and were banging away at my frozen flesh. I threw punches around the clock; a few landed but no knock outs, they kept coming and I had to scuffle backwards toward the shore, grabbing what laundry I could with my right

and jabbing with my left. I came away with a few bruises and without a pair of socks, and a new respect for swans.

When I got to Vienna, I parked in the Opera Ring parking lot, next to the cathedral. I was undisturbed for some time probably because the truck looked like it might be delivering newspapers. Living in the truck so close to the opera house, I was the first in line each morning for “Stehen-Platz”. This is a small balcony with no seats. Stehen-Platz means standing room. There was a long tradition of letting these tickets go for pennies, first-come-first-serve. It was a cultural bonanza for me. No travel agency could have arranged such a tour at any price. I saw dozens of operas, ballets, concerts. One evening I was so moved by a new tenor, I whistled, like we do for home runs in America. Before I knew it, I felt a hand on my collar dragging me out toward the exit, “nix fifen; nix fifen” (No whistling). Unlike American officials, European guards and even ushers have no qualms about laying hands on what looks like ruffraff. I did not realize that in this culture such a whistle was the ultimate insult, worse than a boo. The tenor was Placido Domingo, who went on to become world famous, and who would add another twist of coincidence to my story in a later chapter.

At one point, my ear for new languages was fatigued and I needed to get back to English. I found a ferry from Holland to England. I had a contact at Cambridge, Piers Gray, who was a guest of Tony Leader’s son Zack in LA. Piers introduced me to a circle of pot-smoking philosophy students, and some scientists. We drank beer at the pub where Crick and Watson discovered DNA.

When I got to London, I found a place to park the van in Chelsea just next to a lovely old library that had a writer’s room where Henry James sat and wrote, or maybe it was his older brother, William James; I’m not sure. When it was too cold to stay in the van, I wrote in that same room. I was comfortable and inspired, and often asked to leave when the librarian decided to close up, which was not according to any published schedule that I could find.

I met women in the local pub, but when they learned I lived in a van, that ended any interest they might have had. Also the younger Brits first impression of Americans was as fascists persecuting the Vietnamese for their socialist beliefs. It was getting colder, physically and socially.

I had a very brief affair with a woman friend of Melody Lawrence, Michael Putnam's wife. Her flat near Hyde Park was almost as cold as my van. She was desperate for a relationship and jumped the gun, as it were. One Sunday we went for a drive to the north of London and stopped at a cottage for tea. I was surprised to find that our hosts were her parents. Her father had been with Scotland Yard and was now retired; he had almost nothing to say. Her mother struggled to hide her xenophobia which underlined every look she flashed at this hippy Yank. This was their only daughter.

With tea I was served a crumpet, or some kind of a tart. I remember this scene very clearly because it was such a small thing, but said so much about the four people and the two cultures confronting each other. I used my teaspoon to take a part of the tart and before I could get it to my mouth, her mother, trying to disguise her cockney contempt as mild curiosity, asked. "Do they eat cake with a spoon in America, dearie?" "Yes, they do", her daughter snapped, "when they are not given a fork".

We left the cottage. The next morning I left London without saying goodbye to my hostess. I hope I at least left a note. I can't recall any note at the moment.

Whether it was me, the van, or Vietnam, the British were not very welcoming, except for this one desperate woman.

Rumor had it that Amsterdam was much more tolerant of eccentrics, and let's face it, that's what I had become, like it or not. So I made my way back to Amsterdam and parked not far from the main Dam (square). The cops had long hair, and everyone smoked pot. There were lots of foreigners living frugally and I [Wa] found a South African female to share my van for a very short time before her extreme lack of sensitivity made it impossible to be together.

The hippy cops need to be explained. Apparently there had been a movement of long-hair hippies who put soap bubbles in the main fountain of the "dam" and created havoc for the minority conservatives in power and fun for the majority of revolutionary young voters, which inspired the hippies to run for office and seize power. So, the hippies became the majority party.

The next story is a much shortened version of a novel called *Van Man* where I wrote about this part of the journey from Amsterdam to Greece. The characters included an Irish terrorist on the lamb, a German student, and a New Orleans con man, and their encounters with gypsies in Albania and nudists in Yugoslavia. I will tell you in advance that by the time the manuscript made it to potential publishers, Steinbeck's *Travels with Charlie* was already on the bookshelf; so it looked like I was plagiarizing, but I swear I never read or even heard of Steinbeck's book about traveling around in a van. My manuscript is lost now so no one but me, and now you, knows about *Van Man*. I'm not going to try to recreate the story here.

All Greek To Me

When we got to Greece, I called the fiancé of a woman I met on the plane coming over, a mixed race opera singer. Despite the extremely loose connection, he was suspiciously genial, but did help get me settled.

My traveling companions went their own way and I decided to settle for a while in Athens. My Greek friend introduced me to other Greek friends. One was a guitar-playing revolutionary. Another was a journalist. American-English teachers were in demand. The country was run by a US supported dictator called Papadopoulos who took power in a military coup in 1967. He was known as the Colonel and had been trained in the US and was rumored to be a CIA agent. Spiro Agnew, a right wing US Vice President, who was also Greek, was directly connected to the Greek government. Naturally, all US visitors were more than welcome and every ambitious Greek saw the writing on the wall and wanted to learn American English. In fact there was a law that in order to charge the higher "tourist prices," you had to learn English; if not, you must charge lower prices set for locals.

I [Wa] reversed the purpose of the law. I [Ti] learned Greek and ate and shopped with the locals, and for my troubles got twice as much at half the price. I worked, without a permit, playing guitar in a restaurant and I taught English nights at a Frontistirio. Frontistirios were night schools where working Greeks could come to learn business, accounting and mostly American English.

Classes began after dinner and went until midnight. Greek businesses were closed in the afternoon; siesta was still honored in those days. Greeks went home and to bed for the afternoon and then worked late at night when it was cooler.

Once in a while there would be a surprise inspection at the school. The lady who ran the school would burst into my class with a couple of gestapo looking guys and introduce me as “Lanny”. I [Th/Ti] had to greet and make as little small talk as possible with them in “demotiki” (street Greek) without any trace of an accent, which I could pull off for ninety seconds or so. The exchange never involved much vocabulary and always the same few words, so I passed every time as a Greek.

While I was in Greece, I lived in a part of Athens called Plaka and had friends from all over the world who lived on a nearby hill called Anaphiotica, right under the Acropolis.

Ex-pats were allowed to live in Anaphiotica freely, which is amazing, considering the government. These foreigners lived in tiny stone huts originally thrown up to house workers from Anaphi who came in the nineteenth century to reconstruct the Acropolis. Water had to be drawn from a well. Waste buckets were dumped in a common sewer. The narrow cobble stone streets made it very quaint, but I could not fit my van in most of the streets and so I would drive up and leave it on the edge of the cliff and walk. It was a genuine hippy international community, a mini UN.

My Greek friends required my accompaniment if they were to be welcomed in Anaphiotica and my Anaphi friends required my accompaniment if they wanted to shop in the Greek only store and have a real shower in my apartment. Where I lived, at the bottom of the hill, there were no foreigners. In Anaphiotica, at the top of the hill, there were no Greeks. So my apartment was the cross roads between the two cultures. Nothing like solitude anymore; I had to push friends away.

I learned later that the would be local antagonism for these international hippies was kept at bay by the Cleopatra of Anaphiotica. Her real name was Nizette Brenner; her father happened to be the American Ambassador or Counsel. Whatever he was, his power over the government trumped everything else. Like Cleopatra, Nizzete, was tiny but with a lovely body and pretty all American face. Remember the name Nizzette. She will be another amazing coincidence that makes this story

unbelievable even for me. I don't know that she ever thought of becoming "my" woman or anybody else's. Whatever the reason our relationship was sporadic.

I played the guitar with some Brazilian musicians at parties in Anaphiotica learning the Bossa Nova as I went along. Kitty Newkirk was the girl friend of the lead guitarist. Kitty was a tall and thin Dutch woman. I found her attractive of course, and when the Brazilian left town, she moved in with me without any hesitation.

Kitty had some amazing stories. Although she was Dutch, she grew up in Indonesia, which was a Dutch colony when the Japanese conquered. Kitty was a little girl who spent the war years in a Japanese prison camp. Her mother was in a work camp nearby and her father had been killed. She told me all her childhood stories, which contradict all the Jap stereotypes I had as a World War II kid.

It turns out she was treated very well by the Japanese and the officer who ran the camp became her protector, almost a father figure. So much so that one day when there was no food and Kitty's pet chicken was about to become dinner, the officer rescued the chicken and returned it to Kitty, not your standard version of Japanese prison camp.

One night Nizzette brought an American man working for the US Air Force to the Bistro where I was playing guitar with another Greek guitarist. The American was looking for talent for some event at the U.S. Air Force Base. He hired me, and not the real musician (based on "buy American" rather than talent). The gig was a live concert which would be broadcast over the U.S. Armed Forces Radio. As I have mentioned many times, my performances were based on rote memorization with no underlying general musical knowledge or skill. If I didn't forget which note came next and you didn't know much about music, you could be tricked into thinking it was professional.

I still had the Hanomag van, and was living in the same apartment on Chrisistomou in Plaka. For me to perform the entire repertoire without a mistake, it took extraordinary preparation and concentration. In the clubs where no one was really listening, it didn't matter much, but this was a concert where people came to listen, and a radio listening as well.

The night before, I was restless and couldn't sleep. My studio apartment was on the first floor across the hall from my landlord's architecture office. I could hear them doing business during the day but after 9 pm, while they were asleep upstairs, it was usually quiet. I finally fell asleep around two am that night before my ominous concert, and then was awakened a few minutes later, by some shouting in the outside vestibule of the building, a few feet from the headboard of my Flokati bed/couch. A man and a woman were shouting at each other. I got up and looked through the peep hole in the door to see the woman walking briskly down the narrow street. I was glad that was over. I went back to bed and before I could fall asleep a gunshot rang out, amplified by the acoustics of the vestibule. It knocked me out of bed. I decided it would not be prudent to run out; instead I plastered myself against the wall next to the door, which would hide me if the door suddenly burst open. I had seen this in action movies and somehow it occurred to me [Wa] the instant I felt danger. I stood there motionless for a long time, not sure what I would do next. There were no more shots or other sounds. I peeked through the peep hole again. It had begun to drizzle, and there was a slick of water on the narrow cobble stone street, which looked reddish through the peep hole, which I assumed was caused by the optics of the peep hole. When I looked out of my first story window, I saw a Disney "ruby road". All the cobble stones were glistening like giant rubies. The narrow street was now a river of blood. There was no way one human could have been the source of this Red Sea. Finally I opened the front door and found the source of the red Nile, a soldier in a heap with his own pistol still in hand.

By the time I was through with the police, it was almost sunrise. I decided it would be pointless to try to sleep. I drank some Turkish coffee and dragged my weary body around the block where I had parked the van. When I got to the parking place, I thought I was hallucinating. Only the van, and nothing else around it, was covered with snow. It doesn't snow in Athens, not like that. With the first wipe, I could see it was white dust from a sand blasting operation on an adjacent stucco building. I was wearing my one and only dark brown suit. By the time I had cleared the wind- shield, I looked like a powdered chocolate cruller.

There was no time to change, I was going to be late as it was. I drove at top speed for the van. At this speed, I had to remember to add oil or I would not make it back. The guards at the gate had my name and assumed I was in some kind of costume. "Hey man, what kind of party"

I didn't have time to chat. They waved me through. I got to the building where the concert/broadcast was to be held. I brushed myself off feverishly; now the white powder was stuck to my hands, which I needed to play. I wiped my hands on the suit; now the white frosting was back on the suit. I had to move on without panicking. I took the guitar out and left the case in the back of the auditorium.

The promoter was both relieved and a little confused when he saw me galloping down the side aisle toward the stage steps, looking like a palomino with a guitar. My suit would be invisible to the radio audience, but the large live audience which was much larger than I expected, had something to talk about while I sat smiling.

"We're airing live. There is no time for a sound check. Just introduce yourself and chat about what you do, while you are tuning up", someone whispered in my ear as he pretended to adjust the boom mike overhead.

I [Wa] took a deep breath and once again the nervous energy worked *for* me instead of against me. This magic, however, doesn't help that much with the rote recall of the note chain. I[Ti] needed to put each finger on each fret exactly where and when it is supposed to be there.

FOOTNOTE: Later in life I would learn that a broader mastery of basic elements would leave more mind for the finer touches which would make "music" out of the ordered sounds I made.

I sat, chatting in a relaxed fashion, as I tuned my guitar. I let some silence run before I played the first notes of "Romance D'Amor" by Tarrega. I was able to concentrate in spite of it all and the arpeggios were coming out evenly and in the correct order. I was just beginning to relax when another loud boom broke my concentration. This time it was the boom microphone falling and hitting me squarely on the head. I'm not joking, all this happened in one fell swoop, like Athena and the muses were sending me a message. I [Wo] would have panicked, but the magic was stronger. I made lemonade out of the lemon. With a straight face, I looked at the music and then shouted to back stage "That's not supposed to happen until the second chorus". Suddenly I was the Victor Borge of the guitar. It occurred to me that I might do better as a clown than a musician. Fortunately the boom mike was not high enough to

cause me any injury, and the audience enjoyed the accident much more than the music.

The only other time I tried to play in a concert environment the muses once again converted the performance into a comedy, this time in a cathedral. It was at a Christmas pageant where I was on the altar of the Episcopalian church in New Rochelle, NY, fronting the manger scene. In the middle of “Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring” the live donkey decided to leave the kid dressed as St. Joseph and check out the guitar. My first instinct was to try to ignore the donkey, but he was head butting me. The child holding the reins was clueless, and there was no one else close enough and big enough to help. Eventually I had leaned away too far and the donkey knocked me off the chair, while I was still playing. The muffled laughter in the congregation sound like a hundred punctured bicycle tires.

My music in the Athens club where I played was background for the muttered plans of revolutionaries. They had attempted to overthrow the Greek dictator several times. As I mentioned earlier, I played with another Greek guitarist who had dropped out of medical school and was a formidable player, and also an underground leader. Some times his friend, Apolstoli-Toli would dance flamenco with Greek man-dance moves. Toli and I became friends.

Jane

One night after work I went with Toli to pick up his girlfriend who worked at a sleazy club, where American sailors bought girls champagne which turned out to be gingerale. While waiting for Toli at the bar, a girl with a Canadian accent slipped onto the stool next to me.

Jane Reid was a gorgeous red head (I know I use the term a lot, but this time, trust me: perfect features, perfect body, natural fire-red hair, alabaster skin). Jane knew I was not a sailor and that I was with Toli who was dating her co-worker. So there was irony in her tone “Buy a girl a drink?” I knew on some level, those words were merely the envelope for the deeper ineffable message which I read in the half smile, and the glare of those deep green eyes. I’m not sure how long I was dumbstruck, but eventually I said, “No, but I’ll buy a girl lunch tomorrow at Cape Sunyon. Have you ever seen it?”

The next day Jane and I drove to Sunyon in my van. She told me how she was recruited by Nick, a friend of Toli's who owned the club. There were enough young women who came to Athens from all over and wandered around Syntagma where they could sit and rest for free. Nick had enough charm to pick the girls and at first offer them a free place to stay at his fancy house in Athens, and then get the pretty ones to work in the club. Jane Reid's shyness could easily be mistaken for lack of intelligence. I did not make that mistake. I could see that she was intelligent. She was from Thunder Bay, Ontario and had completed nursing school. She ran away from a troubled family household to Greece where she bumped into Nick. She clearly did not want to be hustling sailors, but felt she owed Nick something, and was a bit afraid of what he might do if she quit.

My *Johnny on the Spot* [Wa] rescue fantasy was fully ignited when Jane offered her resignation and Nick responded by not allowing her to take her clothes and belongings from his house. He also refused to give her the money she earned and insisted that she owed him money for rent which needed to be paid or else. The "or else" inspired me.

Nick had told Toli to warn me that I might be in danger if I continued to mess with his girls. Time for a live impersonation and maybe some boxing, if it came to that. Remember my Bogart scene on the Jersey turnpike? This time it would be De Niro, who played "Johnny Boy" in *Mean Streets*. Remember 'Johnny Boy' was my nickname in my mean streets, so, I had a deep connection with the character.

While I [Th] was appalled at the Italo-American stereotypes, I [Wa] was not above making use of those same stereotypes when I had to. At the time *Godfather* and other TV and movies would have you believing that all Italo-Americans were part of a deadly international organization. I wasn't sure whether that myth had made its way to Greece, but I was smitten enough with Jane to risk whatever would happen if my act bombed. I was ok 'mano a mano' with Nick, but if the fake didn't work and he was armed, I might wind up dead. I had a street sense that he wasn't a tough guy and as it turned out I was right. He could threaten run-a-way girls, but that was as far as his courage went.

Just the fact that I came to his club after he threatened me had him almost trembling as I walked in, slowly, with my hands in my pocket. Despite the row of empty seats at the bar, I stood with my back to the

wall and looked around with a menacing stare. Nick approached me nervously with both hands raised, as if to show me he was unarmed.

“I understand that you declared war on us.” I said with that crazy DeNiro smile I remembered from *Mean Streets*. He raised his eye brows as if to say there must be some mistake. I knew I had him where I wanted him and instead of menacing, I appeared to be kindly reassuring his safety, which was even more menacing. I bobbed my head side to side like De Niro with the insane smile. “I understand how this could happen. You have never been to America and you see only these poor sailor chumps and you figure....” He never let me finish. He was pleading for mercy. I got the money he owed Jane and left. I had to watch my back for a couple of days and then Jane and I decided this was a good time to leave Greece.

We headed north in my Hanomag all the way back to Germany. Stopping in Austria for Easter Sunday. Jane was the first completely beautiful female I had ever met who was completely oblivious of her beauty and so it never got in the way. Jane had no problem living in a van, and would do anything I asked, which actually turned out to be a minus rather than a plus. She was ready to be my slave; I was not ready to be her master, but of course, could not help falling in love.

When we got to Austria, Jean’s letter (you remember, Jean is the older women I lived with in LA) found me through the American Express office and told me she was coming to Europe to travel with me. I knew a threesome would not work for either of them. I was confounded for days and finally with half a heart, I put Jane on a plane in Frankfurt and told her she needed to go back to Thunder Bay and patch things up with her Mom (who was really crazy as it turns out).

I met Jean at the Airport in Frankfurt where I dropped Jane, and we traveled to Italy in my van. By the time we got to Florence, Jean guessed there was someone else. I told her about Jane. She suddenly became monogamous and heartbroken. Jean pretended to have other plans that didn’t include me. We parted.

Once I was back in Amsterdam on my own in the van, I found myself spending most of my time either thinking about or writing to Jane. I waited for her cryptic replies, addressed to me in care of the American Express office. At one point, I realized I had to see her again. But first I

had to get back to LA to make sure things had ended with Jean. I was still quite confused about women. I'm sure you figured that out for yourself.

I stood in front of the American Express office with a sign around my neck offering to sell the van and all its contents, except my Paramon guitar and my brown silk pinstripe double breasted suit. I thought if I had to become homeless, I wanted to look the opposite.

After a few days, I found an interested and interesting buyer. He was my age or younger, a very thin American who smoked Camel cigarettes incessantly. After he bought the Van and we were no longer in our 'arm's length' buyer-seller roles, he bought me a "reistafel" (rice table, a Dutch 'tapas' meal) with drinks, and told me he was dying of cancer, and this was his last fling. Tim (let's call him Tim; it might have been Tom) seemed like a cross between a con man and a CIA agent. He had some kind of underworld shadow to his polished manners. He certainly knew his way around Europe, and despite his rather serious problems, he seemed more concerned about mine. I told him I was trying to get back to LA, and all I had was the money he paid for the van. He excused himself and went to find a pay phone in the American Express office.

"You can get back to LA and have a couple of bucks leftover." He said, when he came back.

"How's that?" I was still suspicious of him and his whole story, and street wise enough to second guess any scam he might be running.

"You can get an open seat on an Icelandic Airlines Charter flight that leaves Lichtenstein and arrives in San Fransisco, and you will have enough for the PSA Shuttle to LA." He had it all figured out. Maybe he was a travel agent.

"And I have to give you the money, now...." I said with a smirk. "No, no, man this is no scam," He interrupted. You pay the airline in Lichtenstein if they still have the open seat when you get there." "And just how do I get to Lichtenstein?" I asked, still not trusting. "I'll take you, no charge. I'm looking for something to do." He got behind the wheel of my van, now his van.

On the road to Lichtenstein, I finally did come to trust him. I heard his life story and his 'bucket list' for his few remaining months. He was not going to quit smoking. There was no point. He did not use drugs, though he sold a few in his day. Having no plan was his plan. He would just bounce from one scene to the next until it all ended in this van, wherever that happened to be. I realized there was nothing I could do for him, but wish him well and thank him for all he did for me. He was genuinely interested in my love stories about Jane and Jean.

When I got to Lichtenstein, Tim waited in the van until I came out of the airport. I waved my ticket at him, and the van drove off to ... I'll never know to where.

The flight didn't leave until the next day, but I didn't tell Tim that. I did not want to spend the night with Tim in the van. Neither of us would get any sleep, and I didn't want him paying for a hotel.

The plastic chairs in the airport were most uncomfortable, and as night fell, a security guard informed me that I could not stay in the airport. He noticed my suit and the guitar, and told me I could get a cab just outside to a hotel in town. His tone of voice under the heavily accented English wondered why I hadn't thought of that myself.

I thanked him and walked behind the airport where, instead of a cab, which I could not afford, I found a grassy slope which I could afford. I spent the night lying next to my guitar, trying to sleep, covered only by my double breasted pin striped jacket.

In the morning I dusted the grass off my pin stripe pants and went back into the airport. I learned that the charter was delayed. I was directed to a lounge where free coffee and biscuits were being served. As I walked into the lounge, I noticed another man, also carrying a musical instrument case, and then another and another. Once again I thought I might be having an acid "flash back" (recurring LSD hallucination). I sat next to a friendly woman who had what must have been a flute case. I soon learned that this was the San Fransisco Symphony Orchestra who had chartered the flight, and I happened to buy an empty seat.

The flautist and I hit it off and she asked to sit with me on the flight. We were getting more than friendly on the short hop to Brussels where we landed for whatever reason. There I learned about all the other stops

before we got to San Fransisco. I had no complaints; the ticket was so cheap.

In Brussels we were asked to get off the plane and take our valuables with us. Apparently we were changing planes. After a couple of hours of orchestrated grumbling, where the flautist and I were spokesmen, we finally forced a representative to admit that the connecting flight was delayed because of a strike. He also warned us to stay in the airport because there were reports of violence and we might leave any minute. He handed out sandwiches and vouchers for drinks in the small airport lounge. By the end of the day, the flautist and I now knew each other's life stories. When it became clear we were spending the night in the airport, she and I reclined on the baggage belt which was the softest place we could find. I thought about making a move; I think she would have been ok with that, but I wasn't sure about the resilience of the baggage belt and the reaction of the rest of the orchestra. Maybe they would play some Debussy.

No one could sleep that night. I opened my guitar case, and began noodling on the chords Joe Pass showed me. She took out her flute and played along. Then came a clarinet and a viola, and suddenly we had ourselves a jam session. When they started playing classical music, I laid out and just listened. This was better than sex.

Before noon the next day, we were on the plane to San Fransisco; both exhausted, we slept soundly for hours.

After we landed in San Fransisco, the next flight to LA was affordable and trouble free. In LA, I stayed at Jean's until I found a car I could buy with my \$167 and the money Jean loaned me which left a few bucks for gas and peanut butter. I promised to pay Jean when she came out East. The car was an old Mercedes, which was sold on the cheap because the owner never knew when or why it would just stop. I drove to Thunder Bay, Ontario, nursing the carburetor every few hundred miles. I met Jane's parents and her friends. Jane was very happy to leave with me wherever I was headed, and her dad was relieved to get her away from her mom who was in and out of insanity. Her dad had also been a boxer. I promised him I would take good care of Jane, and I always did, no matter what.

We had auto mechanical adventures all across Canada. Finally when we were almost to New England, I found a spring from a screen door which worked to make the carburetor more responsive to the throttle and the gas pedal, and that '59 Mercedes stayed with me for some time, long enough to teach my son Chris to drive, and later became my sister's car.

Jane stayed with me at Ma's flat above Auntie Annie's in Somerville, (Ma moved there when she separated from Dad who stayed at Snow Hill with the Aunts, until he died). I was still welcome at Snow Hill. Ma wanted nothing to do with Snow Hill.

After a few weeks, Jane and I wound up back in Manhattan, and while I tried cases for those who could not afford a lawyer in Federal Court, played the guitar, and helped with construction work, Jane went to City College and demonstrated a keen scientific ability. I was willing to support her through Medical school after she completed pre-med, but she wanted to work for a while as a nurse, which she did. Jane proved to be an outstanding nurse, actually saved lives by second guessing doctors; one such life was that of the Secretary General of the UN, who would have died were it not for Jane. He sent her a box of chocolates.

At one point Jean came to New York. She had seen pictures of Jane and was desperate enough to try forming an unconventional relationship. I mentioned that Jane was completely compliant, but not where sex was concerned. She believed sex was between two and only two partners, and that was the one place she would not bend. I lost track of Jean and will be left to wonder the rest of my days about how that strange story ended. Unfortunately, I was there for the ending of the Jane story.

Jane and I remained friends even after I moved to Rochester, and after Rochester, all the way until I was in Florida after the millennium. When Jane called me to tell me she had throat cancer and it was fatal, I flew to New York and spent some time with her before she died. I was horrified with what the cancer had done to her beautiful neck.

Curtains for Hollywood

When I got back to LA from Europe, as I mentioned, I stayed with Jean for a few days. She told me my agent, Sam Adams, was looking for me.

He set a lunch at Universal with William Sackheim. This was before I left for Thunder Bay and Manhattan.

Hollywood loves lawyer shows because they are the cheapest to produce. A single courtroom set can fill more than half the screen time. I learned that Sackheim had already begun production on my script, “Some Sort of Justice,” renamed “The Law.” Since he couldn’t find me, he took the liberty of renaming the script and I later found out the author as well.

When I arrived at the studio, the TV movie “The Law” was in production and already green lighted to become a series. The producer, William Sackheim, said he was looking for me the whole time I was in Europe and finally found me through Jean. Sackheim was an unusual producer for TV. He had substantial movie credits. His TV efforts were edgy shows, a cut above the usual TV junk. He always pushed the medium a bit, but never enough to fall off the edge. Sackheim offered to put me on the payroll right away, a contract for the next twelve episodes, with editorial control of the series. This was more money than I had ever imagined. Sam, my agent, was thrilled. No new writer ever had a deal like this.

One day, while Sackheim left to arrange lunch for us in his studio bungalow, Johnny Badham (director) came in looking for him. I introduced myself as the author of the piece he was directing. He was already assembling the credits and let me know that somehow the writing credit for the pilot never mentioned me. Sackheim had put his own name and the name of a friend of his (Joel Oliansky’s) on the script.

While sipping expensive cognac in his office, after a “Nate and Al’s” pastrami (you wouldn’t think those two would work together but they do), Sackheim told me the story of how he came to this studio with a script, and let the producer take the screen credit. “I let it happen and you know what happened to me?” He opened his hands as if to unfold his fancy office and the studio beyond that. He explained to me that at the time he was nobody, like me. No one knew his name. So he let the producer/director Willy Wilder take the screen credit which gave the script much greater prospects, and that is how ‘Stalag 17’ was born and made everyone connected with it famous. Soon after the film’s success, Sackheim moved from the back seat to become the great producer that he is today. He had made some important movies, no argument there, and on one level I felt that I [Wa] was being initiated into the big time and

putting up with this plagiarism was a small price to pay. On the another level, I am so happy to report that, there was this other part of me [Th] that felt bigger than the big time.

I [Ti] also had the hubris to think that with the right tools I could spawn more breakthroughs than braided story lines. I [Ti] could change TV from a narcotic to a stimulant. I [Th] see now this was quixotic given the power of the establishment which dealt the drug. But at the time this seemed to me [Wa] to be an opportunity to be a part, no matter how small, of a media revolution.

Being a lawyer, I realized that I needed evidence if I decided to dispute the writing credit. My agent, Sam Adams (one of the best in the business), told me I was crazy not to just go along. I would be in a position to do whatever I wanted, just go along. All the while I was recording William Sackheim's and my phone conversations and got him to admit that I wrote it and that he would make it up to me. Radio Shack had just come out with a device you could stick to the receiver of the phone to record calls on a small tape cassette.

Whenever I [Wo] thought of all the security and status I [Wa] was giving up, I would waiver. Henry taught me that the fame I was giving up was poison for the soul and the money was worth much less than self respect. That resolve was shattered every time I talked to Sam. Sam was no dummy when it came to culture and human psychology. I was amazed to learn that in his spare time he played in a string quartet. Sam told me that what I was doing was sabotaging my own success because I was afraid I did not have what it takes to be in the big time. I [Wo] confess that rang true as well. Somehow the internal dialogue came together and we all bet against Hollywood.

For the record, my script was a walk-around look at the criminal justice system, the way Joyce looked at Dublin. I was inspired by how Joyce, in *Ulysses*, had cracked the Shakespearean atom. What I mean by that is that English literature, to the time of Joyce, assumed that the human attention span demanded that every story have a central character, like the nucleus of an atom, around which all the other characters, like electrons, were kept in their orbits by the gravity of the central character or theme. For Joyce, the nucleus is exploded: everyone in the story is a central character, which creates a new literary atomic energy. This was

revolutionary; Joyce demonstrated that the human attention span could handle this proliferation.

“Some Sort of Justice” made everyone connected with the criminal justice system a nuclear character - each juror, counsel, the judge, even the court reporter, and of course, the defendant. For TV at that time it was such a new form, I thought it would never see the light of day.

Before my script was shown to Sackheim at Universal, my agent Sam Adams, of Adams Ray and Rosenberg showed the script to another of their clients - one Robert Altman. Before I left for Europe, Altman talked to me about his making it as an independent film, which he never did. He was fascinated by the braiding of multiple story strands and the trust that viewers could jump from one to the other without losing their place. As it turned out the jumping around made them pay more careful attention. I cannot honestly say that I gave him the idea for “Nashville”, but he did make “Nashville” after extensive exposure to “Some Sort of Justice”. That made me [Wa] angry at first, and then I [Th] was ok with it. Thanks to Henry, I realized that good ideas are supposed to be contagious, and it doesn't matter who takes the credit. I caught it from Joyce, Altman might have caught it from me. However it came to be, braided story strands became SOP for screenplays, proving that Joyce's faith in the flexibility of the audience's attention span was not misplaced. Maybe jumping from one story to another and back again mimics how we witness reality.

Through Pete and Carlin, I found a lawyer in New York who was handling Marilyn Monroe's estate. We sued Sackheim and Universal. Just as the pilot received the Emmy Award, we filed an injunction and took it off the air. We thought that would open the check book. No, they had a more cost effective way of getting rid of upstarts.

At the deposition in New York, the studio attorney was romancing my attorney with the possibilities of new fees after this case and any possible conflict of interest; in other words, as soon as you get rid of this piker (me), you can make some real money representing the studio. I knew that was wrong and I would have done something, but I didn't want it to appear as a litigious nut, suing everybody, including my own lawyer. In the end it became clear that my lawyer would not honor his contingency agreement for all the work and expense of a full blown trial. I could not afford the trial, so I was forced to accept, what to them was a token settlement offer, a little more than ten thousand (like fifty thousand today),

which by my idiotic miscalculation, was all I needed to fund the media revolution.

The series was taken off the air, even though the pilot received an Emmy, and it was clear, whether I wrote or not, I would never work again in Hollywood. That did not bother me at all. I [Wa] had my ticket on the new information age express. The challenge was exciting to all my selves. The philosopher [Th] had a new paradigm shift to adapt, the performer [Wa] would now become a reformer, the inventor [Ti] would now have the challenge of applying the new tool of the information age tools to the old entertainment screens.

I founded the American Video Institute, a nonprofit, which would explore life enhancing applications of these new systems. Our mission was to explore how to make and disseminate serious video, an alternative to the mental chewing gum of Hollywood's TV. I also still had dreams of becoming a playwright, maybe a director. And, of course, I still wondered what it would be like to be a real musician. Yes, my work life was just as confused as my love life.

The Mastersons welcomed me back to Manhattan with open arms. Mary Stuart Masterson (She became a well-known actress), was young enough to bounce on my knee and I was her first date at age five or six. I took her to the Big Apple Circus and noticed how prophetically thrilled she was with the performances.

Pete and I had tried writing together a few times. I lived near the Mastersons on the upper West Side, and I spent a lot of time in their home, and at Actor's Studio with Pete, helping with a project that later became the "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas". It was a musical based on a magazine article. The article was called "The Closing of Chicken Ranch" (in Playboy magazine, I believe).

Pete used Actor's Studio to stage it. Ellen Burstyn told Pete that this was flying in the face of a new movement called feminism, and that audiences would no longer be amused by this light hearted musical comedy about exploited women. I joined in the warning, but Pete persisted. He looked at this as a method actor, which he was, rather than as a philosopher. At a scene study exercise, he had each girl make up a story of how she came to be in the whore house.

I was the guitar player in the whore house for early productions. I managed to play chords for the simple country ballads, written by a Carol Hall friend of Pete's from Texas. As was my bent, I got involved with the lead whore "Shy", played by Joan Ellis, and we were living together after one date.

Ellen and I were dead wrong about the public reaction to singing and dancing whores. There was a lot of excitement about the show; the backers brought in a real country and western band from Nashville, and Pete made it clear that they had to play with me or no play. The first night we managed to play through the book. Thank god they had another guitar player, who covered and made me look good.

After that first meeting, I was packing up for my gig at Beau's, the Puerto Rican night club on the border of Manhattan and the Bronx, where I opened for the big latin acts. The Nashville guys had nowhere to go in the big apple, so I took them to Beau's and they "sat in" noodling around my semi-latin-jazz-operetta-shit. Beau was delighted and didn't care what we played. More musicians on stage made him look like more of an impresario. Then we started playing country and western, and to my surprise the Puerto Rican audience loved it. Go figure.

The next performance of "...Whorehouse..." was moved from Actor's studio to a theater off Broadway. Carol Hall, now the Music Director, had written arrangements for the tunes in the show. They put a music stand in front me.

"Shy's first number has been changed to D flat; she's been choking on the high notes in E" she said. The key of E on the guitar has open E strings top and bottom, allowing my ear to find my way around more easily. As I scanned the music on the stand, I could feel the neural path between my visual cortex and my ear ice over. My mind was a block of ice, a mental block. I put my guitar back in the case. I had no idea where the fuck D flat was, let alone being able to transpose in real time all the tunes in that key, which is what any low paid professional musician could do in his sleep. I told Pete this was for the best, and that I would be here to help with anything he needed other than the music. I must tell you that after Pete became a multi-millionaire with this show, and had new and important friends, he never abandoned his old friends, including me. It was I who felt inadequate around his new "star" friends and distanced myself.

That was the end of the guitar. I was bedazzled by the soaring improvisations of the real musicians in my life and I thought I could never fly like that; I was driving my airplane on train tracks. My method of chaining together memorized “measures” condemned the music to remain as lifeless parts, and never a live mysterious “whole”.

Once “Best Little Whorehouse” made it to Broadway, Joan Ellis won a Tony award for her role as “Shy.” She had an electric piano with her when she moved into my apartment. Now due to the fact that I could play for myself through ear phones, I could spend long hours without embarrassing myself and without annoying others. I started to learn about key-board harmony. My friends who were musicians were constantly besieged by my questions about chord substitutions, and flat fives. They were all very generous with their knowledge.

In the early 70’s Pete had helped me get into the Actor’s Studio Director’s Group, which was also for writers, and there were a few script-in-hand readings of my dramatic efforts by actors who later became stars.

It wasn’t clear whether Joan was “my girl” or my roommate at first. We did share more than a bed. She was interested in my west coast friends now living in New York, as well as my Cambridge buddies now living in New York, and I was interested in the development her amazing talent.

Joan was already a member of Actor’s Studio and had been in other off-broadway productions. Joan was fascinated by coincidences, like the fact that all her men were named John. This new John (me) also had age, place of birth and ethnicity in common with her last John, with whom she was still friendly. That last John was John Cazale, who played Fredo in the “Godfather” movie. He was also Italian, son of a John, my age, and from Boston. Joan insisted that we had to get together.

Joan endeared herself to new acquaintances, and kept warm relationships with former friends. John Cazale was also in a new relationship with an up and coming actress.

We met John Cazale, and his girlfriend at a bar in Manhattan. As you may know, I was not a “Godfather” fan because it reinforced the stereotypes, which I was trying to live down, even though I used the myth a few times. I already had been to Hollywood, and so I was not overwhelmed at the prospect of meeting a working actor. His girlfriend at

the time was Meryl Streep, who was still unknown. After a few minutes across from her in a wooden booth, I knew that Meryl would not be unknown for long. Shortly after our meeting John Cazale died at a very young age, and Joan and I went to see Meryl in Shakespeare in the Park in an outstanding performance.

Joe Papp, the founder of Shakespeare in the Park and the Public Theater encouraged my playwriting, but never did anything more. Later I would have a long affair with his ex-wife, Peggy, who was a pioneer in a new brand of psychology called Family Therapy.

Cape Cod

My brother had been waiting to make full Colonel in the Air Force. Finally he decided it was not going to happen and retired, near Otis Air Force Base on Cape Cod, his last posting. His family had been living there while he was in Vietnam. Months after retirement, he went into the construction business; that's what Italians do. He began building a house for himself and a house to sell on an adjoining lot in Monument Beach on the upper Cape Cod. Once he was all settled in civilian life, he learned that his promotion to full Colonel had gone through. The Air Force didn't realize that he had already retired. But for a bureaucratic slip, life would have been different for all of us.

I lent a hand in his construction efforts and fell in love with the Cape. One day I would acquire my own place on Buzzard's Bay. Being back at the Cape with my brother and his family grounded me; helped me think about what was involved in the new path I found myself on.

I have harped on how technology has changed our lives, especially media technology. And maybe I [Ti] am deluded like so many other "Technotopians" (for the record I just made that word up, but it's all right if I don't get credit for it) . I [Ti] do believe that the collaboration of intelligent minds can produce enough clean energy to power meaningful convenience which would make the world a better place. I [Th] do not, however believe that the ideal world will happen by itself. I [Wa] know it takes good will for good things to happen, and I know that good will is a choice that each of us has to make each and every day.

1976-1986 CIRCUITS

I ended the last decade with doubts and dreams about the new information age; we called it the post industrial era at first. This decade I (Th/Ti/Wa/Wo = all of me) will have to deal with adapting old ways to paradigm shifts.

Connections between everyone and everywhere will become more and more seamless. The internet is based on the idealistic hope that facilitating human interaction will naturally result in desirable effects. The circuit will connect unimaginable numbers and kinds of different minds. I (Th/Ti) may be naive, but I will continue to marvel, more than most, at the good that has been bestowed upon us, but I (Wa/Wo) am aware of the new opportunities for evil. I shouldn't say "evil" now that I have read Hanna Arendt. She calls it banality. Others believe it is ignorance. Whatever we call it, we have to find it and fix it. How?

Cyber security will never be enough. We have to change minds. Now solitary petty thieves with rented lap tops, or gangs of organized cyber terrorists in tall state funded buildings with key strokes have the power to cause more harm than any carpet bombing. Rich and poor alike all over the world are the victims. Already too much of my time is spent dodging these cyber pick-pockets. Until now I expected the establishment to take care of this problem, without ever understanding that there is no establishment. No cops, no agency, no technology can lock them out of my shirt pocket, without locking me out of the circuit. Put a new lock on my digital wallet and they will find a way to pick it.

I realize I am starting this story at the wrong end, but I just got robbed for the fourth time this year by invisible cyber thieves, and I am fixated on finding a solution. So far, I have concluded that all the money we spend on technological solutions will be wasted, if we don't find a way to reach the hearts and minds of the banal. There has to be something, maybe a catastrophe, a new messiah, something that makes everyone feel so connected. Someone who misused the circuit, ipso facto, has no respect for the connection it affords. No respect for connection means no respect for others; no respect for others means no respect for self. It seems like an impossible job, but remember the circuit speeds up

changes. The communication channel is in place; we are just missing the message.

Sorry we had to interrupt this private story with a public service message; and now back to the story.

“I’ll take Manhattan...One more time ”

With the proceeds of my Hollywood settlement, I moved back to New York and founded the American Video Institute which you will now hear more about.

When I re-entered planet Manhattan, my old friends were still there and guided me into my new life. I connected to theater and method acting thanks to the Mastersons. Wherever I am, I always seem to manage to have close friends who are world class musicians. One such friend, Mark Gould, later became principal trumpet for the Metropolitan Opera, while working and recording as a jazz musician. When he separated from his wife, he shared my apartment on Morningside Drive for a while. I got to go to classical music rehearsals and have a front row seat at the new changes in jazz.

Ironically, the average listener, including Mark’s own mother, would need to be told that Mark was world class musician. She knew of his success and as a dutiful mother sat and listened to Mark play at The Met, Carnegie Hall etc.. One night I had a party at my Morningside Drive apartment and Mark invited his mother and her friend. At one point, he was asked to play something. Mark, half in jest, announced that I was also a trumpet player and that I should play. I had memorized every single note and a few planned “improvised licks” for a couple of tunes including *Stardust*. I whipped out my horn and played *Stardust*. Mark’s mother, almost breathless with delight, said “Oh my God Mark, why can’t you play like that.” The syrupy vibrato that would never have been acceptable to a musician, moved her. Mark witnessed, first hand, the audience nexus which would become a crisis for complex musical genres like jazz and classical.

Mark is also the only witness to what is probably my most incredible *Johnny on the Spot* story. Believe it or not one night, actually early morning, we were coming back from Greenwich Village and were waiting

a long time at the 14th Street Station for a subway to take us back up town. They cut the number of trains after midnight, but it is still the best way to get around in Manhattan. The subway platforms on both sides were nearly empty when we saw a young man drunk or stoned on the southbound platform across from us stagger and fall into the tracks. Without thinking, I jumped down into the northbound tracks, carefully stepped across the deadly third rails onto the southbound tracks where I bench pressed this thin man up, and laid him on the platform. So as to avoid paying another fare, I retraced my steps back across to the northbound platform and climbed back up with a hand from Mark. This whole rescue took seconds.

Mark stared at me, slack jawed, for a long time before he told me that he could not believe what I had just done. He said in a million years he would not have done what I did. He told me that his first reaction was to turn away so as not to see what was about to happen to either the stranger or me, his friend. We talked all the way home about whether his reaction or mine was the basic human action. Mark used words like crazy and courage in the same sentence.

Did you ever hear of Kitty Genovese? This is the opposite kind of story where scores of bystanders, like typical New Yorkers, minding their own business, let a young woman be raped and murdered in broad daylight on a busy street in Queens. I think this New Yorker attitude is the anomaly. Who in their right mind could leave the guy there, knowing the train would come and squash the life out of him?

It wasn't really that crazy. Once I committed to the task my mind and body were on steroids. I [Wa] had twice the speed in my legs and twice the strength in my arms. I [Ti] could see way down the track, like I had binocular vision, and could coolly calculate that there would be enough time to pull off the stunt before any train arrived. It's as though we are equipped to rescue each other. I believe that rescue is the basic instinct and turning away is the anomaly.

The whole thing is amazing on several levels, but I could never tell anyone, because it would inevitably be taken as either bullshit or bragging. So no one in the world knows about this but Mark Gould, wherever he is, and now you.

Technotopia

In Manhattan when I [Wa] was not trying a criminal case, I [Ti] was acquiring and learning how to use the new tools of the new information age - video, computers, etc. Suddenly a simple soul like me could store and retrieve sights and sounds, and distribute them across this new network. What to do with this new power?

Whether we knew it or not, many of us were instantly possessed by the vision of a universal network. Both storage and transmission technologies experienced simultaneous revolutions. There were many drawn by the vision, and somehow the revolution made us collaborators more than competitors. We gave to each other without regard for remuneration or recognition, remnants of that camaraderie can still be found, even in the internet's billionaires.

Mini-conferences at my American Video Institute, headquartered at Columbia University, gave me the opportunity to meet and pick the brains of many of the pioneers. All I had to contribute was my connection to the old world media and maybe philosophy. I [Ti] did bristle with new ideas, some of them silly, some not so silly.

Teleforum

At one point I used the unannounced, "technotopia" revolution as a subject for a modern play. The play was a satirical comment on the technologically enhanced voice of the people. I still wanted to be a modern writer, whatever that meant. The modern challenge for drama, as I saw it, was to provide as much nourishment with as little artificial sweetener as possible. In this particular piece, the dramatic conflict involved two characters, actually really only one character on stage, a kind of game show host and the other is the silent vox populi, (web-based college management software) the invisible TV audience, which we see only through the host's reactions.

I wrote and directed the teleplay at Brooklyn College where I met Nick Manning who was running a city funded TV studio. We had two days to shoot using student interns as techies. One tech rehearsal and then live

takes with two cameras. Dorothy Chiesa of WBGH, which now was in the new public television business, liked it enough to air it. She had a show at midnight that showcased new works.

“Teleforum” purported to be a live show where this new computer was able to collate input, via phone lines from the TV audience. Keep in mind this is way before internet and/or modems.

The audience participated by using the letters on the phone dial to spell out words. For the first letter on the key, you tapped the key once; for the second, twice and for the third letter you tapped the key three times. The interactive TV audience wasn’t real, of course. The reactive host was really an actor following a script, where the hopes and dreams for a democratic utopia turn into a crushing disappointment with dystopia in 39 minutes.

The genial host begins by instructing the TV audience on how to bring their minds together to solve political issues in this revolutionary new world. With each round of responses, from the imaginary TV audience, the host begins to see the audience for what it really is. The words coming in are misspelled, pornographic, racist. Finally he breaks down into a tirade, berating the audience and himself and Plato.

As in Orson Wells’ famous radio drama about the martian invasion, I did not tell the audience that it was fiction. I learned later that a few who were watching actually called the number, which was my brother’s phone, and tried to dial in words.

As it turns out, the show was kind of prophetic. The new communication tools became sex toys first. Erotica was the first thing on the minds of the new audience of the video revolution. No one ever imagined that repressed sexuality would be the driver for the information age autonomy.

The only way to make money for an independent video producer, at the beginning, was porn. I had the tools and the opportunity to go to porn. You know I’m not a prude, but somehow this disgusted me, wasting an opportunity like this. I turned down several lucrative offers. I might have let them use our AVI edit suite once or twice.

I wrote a few more plays for “rolling video” meaning one take, like the early days of television drama. None of the plays found audiences, and if

they had, I don't think it would have mattered, because they were all form without substance.

Back in those early days video was still new enough that it was hard to find experts. TV techs were highly paid by the old mass media and generally not interested in replacing it. Fortunately I [Ti] did find a few who would share enough for me to equip and manage and flounder into the new era. All my failed productions were to enhance individuals rather than distract the masses. You might have already guessed that we were not blessed with the instant success of later internet pioneers.

One prophetic failure was our "Great Teachers Series". This is one of those amazing ironies. You will recall, I was exposed to Harvard lectures back in the fifties. I m not bragging here about going to Harvard; quite the contrary, I am complaining about being kept from the excellence Harvard had to offer. I thought it should be shared with a much broader audience on the internet.

I was shocked at the qualitative differences in the broad class of humans called teachers - those I had been exposed to at BU (except for the Bertocci's) were tongue tied bunglers, compared to the eloquence and brilliance of their Harvard counterparts. I [Th] always felt it was wrong to reserve health care and enlightenment for the few. I guess that makes me a socialist, but one who does not trust the unwashed masses to do the right ting.

As one of the very few early techies with both intellectual and Hollywood connections, I [Wa] thought I had the power to change things. I wanted to invite the rabble into the salon after they were washed, like I had been washed. That's really what the American Video Institute was for, and while it is true that no one will remember it, it did make a difference. One of the main problems with the movement was me. I couldn't figure out whether to be a reformer or an artist. Trying to squeeze them both into my little shop and my little mind caused both to suffer.

In another futile attempt to write for the new forms, I wrote a piece for three video monitors. The piece was presented In Soho, and at Columbia. The three monitors sat side by side; on the one monitor was a young man, on the one next to that a middle aged man, and on the third one an old man. At the beginning of the piece, the three talking heads talk all at once unable to hear each other. This was like a musical chorus.

The words had a rhythm and spacing, like a rapper trio in synch. In the second phase they suddenly can hear each other, and talk across to each other. Eventually they discover they are the same person at different times, and they cross over into each other's monitors to experience that different life phase. The young man feels what it is like to be old. The old man remembers what it was like to be young.

In addition to artistic deficiencies there were technological problems. There was no device that could guarantee the precise synchronization of the video tape, which was essential if the script was to make sense. If it was off just a split second, it didn't work.

Later I tried to shoot it for split screen on one monitor, which was not as dramatic a separation as the three separate monitors. The piece was called "Trio" and never went anywhere.

FOOTNOTE Last night I saw a Netflix series called "Counterpoint" that had two different 'time realities' juxtaposed, but it was really an action movie.

I may have already mentioned that American Video Institute (AVI) had an office on the property of Columbia University right near the campus where I was given a non-paying adjunct position. I sold Nicolas Negroponte, (the real Information Age prophet at MIT) on becoming a Board Member of AVI.

FOOTNOTE: Nicholas Negroponte is the closest thing we have to an information age prophet. He predicted so many things that have come to pass, and actually pioneered touch screens, and speech recognition to name a few. There are many books about and by him which tell his remarkable story better than I can.

Nicholas was impressed by the endorsement of Buckminster Fuller (famous futurist), who I met through Shoji Sadao (not so famous architect), and Isamu Noguchi (famous sculptor). Harvard Law School was impressed by the MIT references and Columbia by Harvard etc.... Somehow I [Wa] had learned to make "cushion shots" which are key to becoming a pool hustler or promoter of any kind.

Within a few months, MIT, Harvard Law School, Metropolitan Museum, The United Nations Orchestra, NYU, Columbia, Actors Studio and several

Hollywood stars joined an eye catching list of world class celebrities and scientists. All found a place in our hearts and on our stationery, despite the fact that they may have had no idea who I was or what we were doing. Some details of these promotional cushion shots might be instructive here.

Buckminster Fuller always wanted to meet Dean Morton of St. John the Divine Cathedral. Dean Morton always wanted to meet the beautiful movie star Ellen Burstyn, who was already on my board. The only pay for Bucky was the opportunity to fulfill one of his life long dreams.

Bucky Fuller's ancestors were all plain cloth, New England clerics who eschewed the pomp of the Church of England, which somehow led Bucky to a fascination with same. His lifelong dream had been to march in a procession with all those Episcopalian vestments (very much like the Roman Catholic ones). Dean Morton was flexible enough to allow it to happen. This would all be done in connection with a Buckminster Fuller sermon at Saint John the Divine's Cathedral in upper Manhattan.

I had arranged for Bucky to speak at other venues and I knew that, no matter the size and shape of the audience, he spoke as though he were musing to himself on a park bench. And he would not be boxed in by any topical outlines or time limits; sometimes he went on for several hours.

Sunday came and the Cathedral was packed. Bucky was a big draw for scientists, architects, and the small new wave of "save the planet" liberals, who had just invented the word "ecological".

As promised, Bucky was escorted to the pulpit by a procession of prelates with shiny vestments and gilded staves and orbs and funny hats, and Bucky was centered in the procession, also wearing vestments, and grinning inappropriately at the crowded pews, as if he was on the way to a Halloween party. After climbing to the pulpit, Bucky was speechless for what seemed like hours. I thought he must be out of breath, and maybe was about to pass out. Finally Bucky's voice broke the silence echoing through the cavernous gothic nave (reputed to be one of the largest in the world). "You never think about the planet when you're peeing." Heads turned back and forth toward and away from each other, as though a whirlwind had swept through the nave. My first thought was 'He has to pee so bad that he has lost his mind', but no, Bucky was not making for a men's room; he was making room for men.

Bucky went on to project the planetary effects of billions of pee pee's and toilet flushes and the waste of all the components contained in urine, all because we don't understand that there is nothing automatic or infinite about this small planet's inventory of vital sustainable elements. This will sound mundane to you now after all the climate change and save the planet campaigns, but put yourself in that audience on that day. This might be the first time you ever heard anyone talk about peeing in public, let alone from a pulpit. It might well have been the first time you ever connected your toilet to planetary requirements for water. It might be the first time you ever thought of the planet as fragile.

That was the first time I heard the word "recycle". Now, when I look down at my water saving toilet which has a separate button for urine I think of Bucky.

One more cushion shot that almost backfired. Not long after the Bucky speech, AVI was presenting at the Metropolitan Museum. I had set up the interactive display of the brand new 12" laserdisc, which happened to have images of classical paintings, interfaced with a computer and some relevant data displayed on a monitor. The point was that such a system might enhance the experience of museum visitors with "just in time" exegesis. Keep in mind there was no technology in any museums at the time. So this was not an easy sell to an audience of art professionals and distinguished guests, including Jackie Onassis who came from across the street where she lived, and Caroline Kennedy who was down from Harvard, where she was studying graphic design.

Now, picture this audience of smartly clad international celebrities, and a dozen or so foreign manufacturers, trying not to gawk, all standing, still holding wine glasses, in the middle of one of the ground floor rooms at the Metropolitan Museum. In the center of the arc of onlookers, there was a classical pillar segment on which stood a monitor, as though the monitor was the culmination of the classical column. All the electronics and the disc player were stashed under a nearby table, covered with a green felt. Keep in mind at this time most people had hardly heard of computers let alone laser disc technology.

I must also tell you that I was in a rare mood that day. I had not slept the night before (nothing new there) and had no time to eat anything before

the gig, and should not have had any of the mimosa cocktails, courtesy of Digital Equipment Corp.

At one point a tall, very effeminate middle aged man walks to the center of the circle holding both arms in the air. He may have been the Secretary General of the Met, maybe Philippe DeMontebello, who was a friend of both Negroponte and my old buddy Robin Hoen. I can't recall his name and title for sure, but will never forget his persona. He spoke as though he was introducing the space shuttle to third graders. His upper class accent had a fascinating timbre, almost a crackle, and an unintended, almost comical dynamic, "... and we have something very special for you to see today, and that is John Ciampa's laser dick."

No one reacted, probably no one even noticed the missing 's'. But I did; "Laser dick" hit me in the funny bone. An image popped into my head where I would come out with my fist at my crotch flashing a red laser dick around the room. Trying with all my might, I could not control the giggles that kept bubbling out every time I opened my mouth. This went on long enough to stop all the chatter in the befuddled crowd around me, whose every eye was fixed on me. Finally I pulled myself together. I explained how the "laser disc" (emphasizing the penultimate "s") worked and went on with the demo. The giggles went on, as well, like CO2 bubbles from a shaken pop bottle. I tried to cough over each giggle. Tom Newman, the Director of Education for the Met, cut the presentation short, thinking I might have the flu or something. I assured him I was ok.

While we were packing to leave, Tom came back to the table. "Someone wants to meet you." he said, casually. I was totally distracted by my internal displeasure with my own lack of control. I was introduced to what seemed to me to be a plain looking flirtatious, late teen, early twenties girl. "This is Caroline Kennedy", Tom said.

That is a common Irish name and my greeting was very casual, until Tom restated her name with emphasis on the last name, and finally it dawned on me who she was.

We talked until everyone had left, and then we left together. I noticed it was raining and offered to drive her. She pointed out that she lived just across Fifth Avenue. I borrowed my assistant's umbrella and walked her back to her mother's apartment. Jackie answered the door in a peignoir and appeared to be more focused on me than the return of her daughter,

so much so, that I was sure there was some misunderstanding. Was it that she thought I was really “with” her daughter? Was it the ‘laser dick’?”

I stood dripping in her vestibule, declining her multiple invitations to come in for a drink, or at least to dry off. I remembered that CD told me that her sister Dee and Jackie were friends at some fancy grammar school. Yes, she remembered Dee and her sister CD, or so she said. Caroline slipped past us, peevishly, without greeting her mother and went into another room. It seemed to me that Jackie was coming on to me. I knew enough about myself and where my head was that day not to trust my own judgment. It occurred to me that this whole thing might be an LSD hallucination. I remember flying across Fifth Avenue without the umbrella that I may have left outside their door. The next thing I know I’m standing in a puddle in the parking lot in the back of the Met next to my VW bus. It wasn’t until I was half way across Central Park that I began to kick myself for not accepting that invitation. I wonder to this day where I would be if I had taken that strange turn in the road.

Looking back as carefully as I can, even now, I still can’t believe that an international celebrity would come to the door in a nightie and invite a strange young man in for a drink. I didn’t realize then that public figures were private humans, as well, with needs and foibles. I remember that what was pressing on my mind at the time was that I did not want Jackie to think I was taking advantage of her teenage daughter. And I was totally surprised by Caroline’s reaction to her mother’s greeting. If it had been any other day, I might have stayed long enough to make sense of this strange interlude. I [Wo] am ashamed of myself passing up the opportunity(ies) for whatever, and I [Th] am ashamed of myself for thinking about the opportunities.

Despite the “laser dick.” the Metropolitan Museum event added a few more dignitaries to our roster. Columbia trustees got to rub elbows with Metropolitan Museum officials; Harvard Law School Faculty got to meet computer people. The chemistry arising from the odd mix of dignitaries made it much easier than I could ever have imagined. In fact so much time was taken up by these promotional meetings, I was kept from some of the really important developments accomplished by my colleagues.

AVI did manage to use the new portable video to document the important voices of our time (again, these never found major audiences). The teachings of Lee Strasberg, Buckminster Fuller and others, all hosted by

the lovely Ellen Burstyn, who was an academy award winner and very charismatic. My failure was in the distribution to the burgeoning population of VCR owners, who could not be torn away from their new private porn.

Some of our talking heads aired on PBS “American Masters” series hosted by Joanne Woodward. We got no money. There was a built in resistance in the establishment to the idea of “talking heads.” No matter what they said or how well they said it, talking heads was considered taboo by media moguls.

The irony is that right now four decades later *Amazon Prime*, via my tablet and iPhone, brings me hundreds of talking heads - *The Great Courses* where I have received the equivalent of six new degrees in Science, Humanities, Music, Philosophy, Romance languages, and Religious Studies. This was bound to happen. The only thing more amazing than the existence of *The Great Courses* is the fact that so few even know they exist. It is without a doubt the most important best kept secret. Somebody tell Jeff Bezos.

Oh and I forgot to mention, *Ted Talks*, which is the work of yet another single powerful man, who has brought more truth to more people than any university.

My “Great Teachers” series was a failure as I already confessed, and I’m sure those great new talking heads I just mentioned knew nothing of my fiasco. But still I [Ti] give my visionary self the credit for insisting that this should happen, even though I had nothing to do with the fact that it did happen. My own pat on the back is more important than any accolades.

To make ends meet I also ran a graduate seminar at NYU’s brand new Graduate Program for Interactive Telecommunication (may not be the right name) started by Red Barns and an entrepreneur who came from Britain with some IT research in replacing snail mail, Martin Elton.

In that class I had only graduate students; some were already media professionals. Our mission was to design a wish list of programs for the new world of the information age, assuming that storage and transmission technologies would provide whatever bandwidth was required. The list we came up with included online employment agencies,

online dating, online mating, online voting, to name a few. This is before any one had email or cell phones.

Jim Robinson came to work for me and we found a young Chinese programmer I called Will, whose real name I couldn't pronounce which may be why I forgot it. I learned a lot about electronics from Jim and also jazz music. Jim played the bass professionally with my friend Mark Gould. They both went to BU School of Fine Arts which had a world class music program, nothing to do with my BU. In addition to his musical skills, Jim was one of the early synthesizer pioneers. I had the money to buy the tools and Will and Jim joined the few who were trying to marry the two new technologies - video and computers. This is before the success stories of Bill Gates and just before Apple.

One fiasco, called Auroscope, was an attempt to use video to teach the sight reading of music, something I could never do thanks to Gulizzio. It was a series of tapes with visual graphics that would promote ear training. The challenge of presenting these graphics caused the invention of a number of devices including chip sets called graphic boards and software, developed for me by a Carnegie melon computer scientist who figured out how to create computer graphics.

Before that we did it the old way. We had this room full of boards and lights and dollies and switchers. This first attempt at synchronizing note lights with sound involved a massive mechanical system, with an array of telephone switchers triggering, an array of Christmas lights along a wall of printed notes, panned by a video camera moving on tracks.

My two unpaid partners in Auroscope were Amos Shamir, an Israeli electrical manufacturer of Christmas lights, and Michael Jang (spelled differently in Chinese) who was an architect in the firm of Buckminster Fuller, Shoji Sadou, and Isamu Noguchi (all mentioned earlier).

Isamu owned an abandoned silent movie studio the size of a small village under the 59th Street Bridge on the Queens side. He graciously provided AVI with a large work space in return for my legal efforts to get the NYPD to control the junkie neighbors in this abandoned part of the city.

While I write this I am looking at a minimalist sculpted natural stone, the color and shape of an animal tongue made by Naguchi's assistant. In this his later period, Naguchi is famous for letting nature do most of the carving. I still have this little sculpture on my coffee table and every time

I look at it, I think of the day the Japanese sliding paper wall/door above our work space slid open and Nizzette Brynner, last seen at Anphitica, Greece stepped out. This is another bizarre coincidence in my story.

Nizzette, you will recall, was the petite beautiful daughter of the American Consul in Athens. Remember our failed attempt at a relationship. Now here she was on the other side of the world, standing over me in a sweatsuit and sleeveless T-shirt. I [Wo] was sorely tempted to try again. I was living with Jane at the time, who you will recall, I also met in Athens. We did have one date in New York, which is when she gave me the sculpture, but Michael, my Chinese partner, made it clear to both of us that Noguchi was jealous. Noguchi had a rich fancy woman his age (60 or so) but Nizzette must have had some role in his or their sex life. So, Nizzette and I settled for just being friends and sharing Noguchi's generosity, which included gourmet sea food, furnished fresh every day by a Manhattan merchant in exchange of one of Noguchi's sculptures. These free meals were served in the elegant dining area Michael Jang built in another wing of the sprawling studio/village.

At the Noguchi studio, I learned to solder, not very well. Michael was much better at it and so was Amos. We soldered thousands of wires to create a light array which would illuminate the musical notation for the correct sound duration. It sounds silly but you would have thought we were inventing a time machine; the dedication and the passion, and of course the disappointment. It was always a cold solder (usually mine) which would ruin a take, and we would have to reset the entire system. A lot of my money went to AT&T to purchase a step-switching machine with thousands of circuits (robust computers were not available to us, yet). The machine was not doing all that it promised, and the money from the Universal settlement was just about gone, and so it occurred to me that another legal settlement might be the easier route to more funds.

I sued AT&T for breach of implied warranty of fitness for a known use, and was sure there would be a quick settlement. That never happened. Instead the law suit went all the way to trial.

The AT&T lawyers were wall street litigators. I knew how to judge shop by then, and jockeyed the trial around until this particular judge would be sitting. He had been a Legal Aid lawyer who I knew only slightly. I figured that having represented the poor he would not automatically be

prejudiced in AT&T's favor, and would not be snowed by the wall street firm. I decided we would do better with a jury, so I filed a jury demand, as well. Now we were on trial.

In the jury selection process, the wall street litigators used all their preemptory challenges to remove all Italians, Asians, and Jews, and so the jury was almost completely white male protestants. The lead trial counsel made it a point of continuously mispronouncing our three names - Ciampa, Shamir, and Jang.

"I'm sorry Mr Simpani, did I say that right, sorry... sorry" and he would gesture to the jury, as if to say how the hell am I supposed to know how to pronounce these foreign....."Now Mr Shakir....." "Is it Jing or Jong, I'm sorry....."

The judge saw through his charade. Finally at one point the judge, feigning a helpful attitude, leaned over to counsel and said loud enough for the jury to hear "If it would be more convenient for you, counselor, you can just call them the Jew, the Chink and the Wop." I swear to you, that happened in the City Court of New York, Borough of Manhattan.

I jumped to my feet before opposing counsel could be recognized in case he was thinking of moving for a mistrial and moved for a directed verdict which would tie the hands of the appellate court. "Your Honor, if the court feels that my brother at the bar, is it Mr. Ligget or Biggot... I'm not sure how to pronounce it..., has sufficiently prejudiced the jury, then I would move for a directed verdict at this time.

The whole scene took just a couple of minutes but it remains with me to this day. However, I can't remember whether we won or lost, which apparently didn't count as much for my internal private historian. Memories have their own mysterious gravity. I can tell you that Auroscope went bust in the end.

American Video Institute (AVI) was flexible enough to keep going without the Auroscope music project. Sony gave me some equipment and following their lead, other companies did as well. When we weren't inventing, AVI continued to record significant events and concerts not covered by main stream media.

One such event was truly memorable for several reasons. We were recording the UN Orchestra commemorating Hiroshima in a large church on Fifth Avenue. The music was Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and all of the players came from different orchestras around the world, in keeping with the "Ala menchen" theme (All mankind should be brothers). Famous camera men, like Haskell Wexler, also came and volunteered on this multi-camera video shoot.

Fayrouz

AVI at that event was discovered by the AAL (Arab American League), which then hired us to go on tour with a huge Arab show, recording every event all over North America, Canada, etc.. There had been a lot of bad will built against Arabs during the Iran hostage crisis and earlier tensions. So this was an attempt to bring Arab culture to Western audiences. The biggest star was Fayrouz. For Arabs, Faurouz was bigger than Frank Sinatra. To say she was worshiped would not be going too far.

The Washington based AAL had somehow talked her into doing this arduous tour, and she had to sing the big hits of her ex-husband. Being Lebanese and having been married to a Christian, she was also in the middle of that middle eastern Muslim/Christian dilemma. Would this heavenly Arabic idol dare to sing songs of the Christian composer?

The advance men for the tour were either incompetent or could not surmount the anti-Arab sentiment which was already spreading across the continent, or maybe it had been there all along.

We would get to a Holiday Inn in Texas and find that there weren't enough rooms for the large cast of dancers, singers, and musicians. And then find that the hall would not be available for rehearsal, only for one hour before the performance.

Fayrouz and her staff were beside themselves. The stage manager of the show knew nothing about America or Canada or Mexico. Being a lawyer I often stepped in. I had no accent, and my card stated "American" Video Institute. More often than not I solved the problem.

On the third stop on the tour, in Montreal, I was called into Fayrouz's suite and plied with gourmet vegetarian finger food and wine. I got to see the goddess's wrinkles close up. I was asked to take over the stage manager's job. I was hired to direct the video recording, and now, managing the stage meant learning enough Arabic to cue the sequence of acts and the effects in between. My crew thought I was crazy to accept. I [Ti] was challenged and so I[Wa] did it, and each night, apparently to her satisfaction. Every morning after the show she handed me a brown paper bag filled with paper money, part of the harvest of "kudo cash" thrown onto the stage.

This needs some explanation. Apparently it is a long standing Arab tradition to throw money at performers. If you didn't like them, you threw coins; if you liked them, you threw a few dollars.... etc; in Fayrouz's case it was an insult to throw less than a ten-dollar bill, folded into a square. In some of the shows Saudi princes threw hundred-dollar bills.

Everywhere we went the tickets were sold out, purchased mainly by Arabs who may have traveled hundreds of miles to get there. There was no media advertising; just a schedule in the local newspapers, and posters on the concert hall. Somehow, Saudi princes showed up, along with Palestinian rebels, Shiite Sheiks, Sunni Muftahs, Arab shop keepers and cab drivers. Fayrouz brought them all together. The Western audiences she was supposed to reach never showed.

In San Francisco Palestinians jumped onto the stage with their flag and Fayrouz sang some song that made them happy, with only part of the orchestra playing.

One of the concert halls where we performed in Houston also refused to let us in beforehand for a rehearsal, despite my cajoling and threats. We barely had enough time to get the orchestra into their seats on stage before the opening number. It was a large orchestra and some of the players in the orchestra were to be singled out for solos during the overture. One large bass-like string instrument was played beautifully by a guy who looked like he just climbed down from a camel and his name was something like Cahmel.

This was a brand new theater with state of the art lighting, automated curtains, and an orchestra pit that could be elevated to stage level. I decided to take advantage of these new toys despite the short time we

had for planning. Fayrouz loved what I did with the off-stage wind machine and dry ice in Los Angeles. There was just the right amount of ripple in her soft gossamer cape and the blue light, diffused by the mist, lent gravitas to the sad song she sang about coming home again, “Zuruni”.

So, I was encouraged to get fancy here in Houston. At the opening curtain I had the orchestra pit already up at stage level for all to see, and I had a pin spot finding each of the solo instruments during the opening overture. As the overture neared completion, before the opening dance number, I brought down the lights and began lowering the orchestra back down into the pit. Now these musicians had never seen a stage sink into an orchestra pit. It did not occur to me that it might be misunderstood as something other than stage craft. That night before a full house, I was standing in the wing cuing the union stage hands through my head set. As the fore stage platform slipped slowly down, I heard the overture slipping, sour notes, perforated with bangs and crashes. Cahmel was the first to abandon ship. He was trying to get his big base over the railing before he sunk into some hole in the earth. The instrument fell into the audience and he clambered over the rail and jumped as though he were abandoning ship. Seeing this, others began throwing their instruments out and scrambling to get off the sinking platform. The stage hands either didn't hear me calling to stop the descent or they continued on purpose for the fun of it. By the time the platform was down in the orchestra pit, the escapees looked at each other with silly grins, dusted off their instruments and climbed down into the orchestra pit, with help from their colleagues who went down with the ship.

When we got to Boston's Symphony Hall, the union decided that they would boycott the unloading of the trucks for this Arab show. And there were some tough looking Irishmen standing around the trucks. Ah, but I happened to know some tough looking Italians in that town. My brother and lots of cousins and nephews came to unload the trucks without incident.

Fayrouz was very pleased with my work and offered me more money if I would continue the tour around the rest of the world, including the Middle East. Lebanon was next and Palestine. AAL showed me the armored car I would be traveling in, and assured me we could avoid the roadside bombs. I [Wo] might have been talked out of my personal safety concerns, but I [Ti] was getting bored with making the very same video

recording over and over and wanted to get back to the marriage of video and the new computer which was now almost small enough to carry.

Ellen

I believe I already told you that Ellen Burstyn gave us money to create alternative “Great Teacher” videos. But at the risk of appearing totally insane, I must jump back and tell you a sub-story about Ellen Burstyn, which occurred long before her association with AVI. This is another coincidence so bizarre that I must risk losing you by telling the whole truth. I have no suggestion as to why or how this happened. I only know it happened.

Back in the 60’s after I left Synanon, I ran a kind of group session modeled after Synanon which included some Hollywood folks. I told you about Anton Leader, who seemed to think I had talent and referred me to his agent, Sam Adams. I believe we already talked about his directing a TV series called *The Virginian*, and I may have already mentioned that one day, on the set of *The Virginian*, I spent some time between takes chatting with a starlet. Her stage name, at the time, was Ellen McRae. (Her real name was Gilhouly). Later, after her marriage, she came to be known as Ellen Burstyn. I was very attracted to her but nothing more than a long chat happened between us that day. She went on to become an Academy Award winner, and I continued to fantasize about her through the years.

Now, here is the unbelievable part - as accurately as I can, I will recount most of the pertinent details. I was living near Columbia, at 50 Morningside Drive in a co-op I purchased from a deceased spinster’s estate for pennies on the dollar during the New York City financial crisis. I was alone in my apartment, more than alone, I was desolate. In those moments I was more susceptible to sexual fantasies. One such fantasy involved Ellen Burstyn, now a big star.

Unbeknownst to me, my friends, the Mastersons, knew Ellen well enough to recommend me to help her with a domestic problem she was having. Ellen was being plagued and molested by her ex-husband, Neil Burstyn (actor and writer of the TV show “The Monkeys”), and could not get police help because at the time ex-husband was a free ticket out of jail for

anything short of murder. No matter what you did to your ex-wife, it was considered a domestic squabble. Being a star, she could not do much more with authorities without affecting her public image. The Mastersons told her to come see me. Whether it was because I was a street fighter or because I was a criminal lawyer, I'm not sure. Anyway, they gave her my address, and God knows why, she decided to drop in without calling.

In the middle of my sex fantasy about Ellen Burstyn, I mean exactly in the middle, my buzzer rang. I went to the speaker and asked gruffly "Who is it?" The voice came back. "It's Ellen Burstyn." Of course, my first thought was that I was hallucinating and that, as the nuns warned, my sexual obsession had finally led me to insanity. Before declaring myself insane, I had to ask again, and again the voice came back convincing me that there was a woman out there. It occurred to me that some holy roller had announced herself and that my aberration made "Ellen Burstyn" out of whatever she said. I [Wo] also thought, desperately, that maybe the holy roller will go along with an unholy roll and play Ellen for me. Anyway, I buzzed the caller in, still feeling sexy. I heard the footsteps in the hall; I opened the door and there before my eyes in my upper Westside ground floor apartment, was Ellen Burstyn, live and beautiful as ever. The shock and confusion completely extinguished the residue of my sexual arousal. She had to ask if she could come in before I came to my senses. She apologized for not calling.

When I reminded her of our first meeting years ago, she pretended to remember, but I knew she did not remember me at all. She was desperate, at her wit's end, telling me about the extreme harassment which now seemed inescapable. "Johnny on the Spot" took off his glasses and donned his cape. I [Wa] was ready to do whatever it took to help. At this point her helplessness had turned to a fierce, steely "Lady McBeth" anger. She wanted her ex-husband killed, but was easily moved to settle for a restraining order which I would make sure was enforced. I got the restraining order and that still didn't stop him.

I became a close friend and constant companion of Ellen's, and at one point she announced to the press that we were engaged, just so Neil would stop bothering her. Once he showed at a Chekov play. While Ellen was on stage, he shouted, from the audience, obscene parodies of the dialogue in the play. I dragged him out, slapped him around and threatened to kill him. He just giggled and suggested we have a three-way with Ellen. Another time he climbed into her window, kidnapped

Ellen's son and brought him to 42nd St. where he was introduced him to drugs and homosexuality.

Whatever else I did, I remained active in my role as defense counsel on the Criminal Justice Act Panel of the US District Court for the Southern District of New York. Through my criminal court connections, I finally got Neil Burstyn locked up in a Suffolk County jail where he hung himself in his cell.

I could never figure out where I stood with Ellen, respected colleague for sure, friend for sure - lover? I thought not. We remained friends anyway, and as I said, she funded much of my work with the new American Video Institute.

I'm sure I have begun to sound like Casanova. Either we can say that I was drawn to the female form by a more powerful urge than was normal, or you could say that I was weaker in controlling the ordinary effects of male testosterone. Whatever the root cause of the internal energy, the external sociological offset which normally inhibits was not operating as it should. Also in my defense, I should like to point out that the social mores encouraged male aggression. Everywhere in Manhattan there was more sex and less marriage.

Feminism would eventually question the hunt which made objects of subjects, but that feminist gale was just a mild breeze at the time, scarcely enough to put out the scented candle on my one night bed stand. I [Th] knew one night stands were not enough to end my loneliness; so I would engage in one month stands, sometimes a couple of months, but none of that would work.

At one of the AVI events I met Sheila Johnson McNeil and we had a live-in relationship for a time. She moved into my apartment on Morningside Drive in Manhattan, but kept her house in Princeton for a time, and eventually sold it. Sheila came from old money and like CD her family also had ties to Yale. You can see how a Harvard reject might have eyes for things connected with Yale. Sheila's folks had lovely homes in New Jersey and Martha's Vineyard. Like CD, her maternal grandparents could not only speak English, but published it in famous magazines like *Time*. Her father and his brothers were a famous quartet at Yale, part of the Wiffenpoofs. At one of the family parties where they sang I recorded them, and unbeknownst to them made a bunch of audio cassettes with a

great cover picture. At Christmas I gave them out as presents along with a new Sony Walkman. I really ingratiated myself in the family; no one cared that I was of the same background as their Italo-American servants on the Short Hills Estate. Yes, the old New York money still had Italo-American serfs, whose parents and grandparents worked for the same families.

Interactive Video

While Sheila and her son and daughter were living with me. I continued to bounce from one distinguished venue to another with the brand new laser disc technology, demonstrating what these new computers can do when combined with the new electronic images, and sometimes predicting a network of computers that would change the world. Yes, I am the real father of the internet not Al Gore (just kidding). Actually my high-placed friends at Digital Equipment Corp did provide me with money and a preview of the internet, since they were already involved with ARPANET (the Defense Advanced Research Projects Network). Jack McCready of DEC was a fan of AVI and supported us even after we moved to Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT).

While I had no formal scientific training, I did learn enough to talk about the new technology and identify where it might be applied. I was the “carney barker” for this “not yet ready for prime time” digital circus.

At this stage of the technology you never knew what might happen in a demo. Fragile hardware and green software made it a 50/50 proposition that everything would go as planned. A few memorable AVI demos deserve a little more space here.

One of the “Big 8” accounting firms was looking into interactive machine learning. They were particularly impressed with a laser disc computer program for law students we made and tested at Harvard Law School. It was sponsored by a law publisher - Lawyers Coop.

The senior partner responsible for their training division invited us to present at the firms national meeting at their campus across the bridge in New Jersey. AVI would demonstrate how video could supplant actual experience in training corporate executives.

The machine we were using would later become DEC IVIS a large under-the-desk computer interfaced with a 12” laser disc player by Phillips (this is before Mac and before Microsoft). At this point it worked sometimes and sometimes it didn't. It might have been the interface, the disc player, the brand new piezo electric touch screen; lots of sand traps around this green.

I knew that we had to get to the venue the day before to make sure everything worked. We were provided access to the conference space the day before, and the plan was to get it working, drive home and then come back in the morning ready to present. Instead Jim Robinson, Will and I worked all day and all night before we got the demo working. It was about 4 a.m. when we set up the system in the conference hall. By the time we got back to Manhattan it was time to drive back to New Jersey. Before leaving the office on 112th and Broadway, I noticed that Will had on a pinstriped suit and sandals with no socks. I loaned him a pair of socks and a pair of black shoes.

We made it back to the venue as the welcome breakfast was about to end. I grabbed some rolls for the guys and we scooted over to the auditorium to make sure the system was still ok. We gobbled the rolls and performed a last pre-flight check. While Jim was prettying up the demo table, I went to the nearby men's room to freshen up. The hall was still empty and so was the men's room. So, I could undress and take a sponge bath, which I had learned to do in less than three minutes while on the road in Europe. All of the stalls were empty except the one under which I could see Will's pinstriped pants drooped over the black shoes. While I sponged my genitals and arm pits, I felt I had to explain to nerdy Will some “salesman” facts of life that might not have occurred to him.

“Whatever you do. Don't tell anyone we were here all night trying to make this fucking thing work.” I shouted back to the closed stall door. There was no reply. “We have to make this look easy” I added. “You got that...”. The stall door opened and out stepped the senior partner who had invited us, in pinstriped pants and black shoes catching me with my pants down figuratively and literally. I turned away inadvertently ‘mooning’ him. I couldn't think of a thing to say.

Another time that same interface bug made us late for an international convention of property assessors at the Sheraton Hotel on Sixth Avenue.

By the time we got things working, it was too late to pack our truck and then park in midtown; instead we called a cab which could drop us right in front of the hotel. The cabby let us fill up his trunk and back seat with our electronic circus with the promise of a big tip. Jim Robinson sat in the front with the reluctant driver and I took another cab and led the way to the hotel. When we arrived, we got a bellhop and a cart and rushed into the lobby, instructing the bellhop to lead us to the convention in the main ball room, which he did.

On entering the room I was too focused to notice that the audience was all seated at tables instead of rows. As Jim scrambled to the nearest outlet with our extension chord, I turned and made my apologies to the audience for the late start, blaming traffic. As I spoke, I was struck by the fact that the audience were all women, seated at tables and staring blankly at us.

“What’s this about?” A voice from the audience politely asked. Jim saw that my brain was frozen and so took over explaining this game changing technology. “What does this have to do with bridge?” Came another voice.

At that time in Manhattan there were two Sheraton Hotels, both on Sixth Avenue a dozen blocks apart. Either I did not know that, or I had forgotten, and apparently the cab driver didn’t know or didn’t care. Yes, we had our property assessor demo all set up and ready to go at the International Lady’s Bridge Convention.

By the time we broke down, re-packed, and got two more cabs and made it to the other Sheraton Hotel on Sixth Ave, it was too late to fill our planned slot on the agenda and so we set up in the hall outside the main ballroom.

This series of fiascos would, you think, tarnish one’s self respect. And for a time when I saw these as failures rather than bold experiments, I did indulge in a measure of self doubt. But I would think of that definition of success I heard somewhere (I think it was Churchill), where success was defined as a series of failures which does not dampen enthusiasm.

The first sign of success came by accident. The New York State Board of Equalization and Assessment, which I had never heard of, happened to be at one of the presentations. They funded me and another professor

who wanted to replace paper maps with a computer graphic system. We each received the same amount of money, around \$10,000 as I recall. He offered to collaborate. I refused. It seemed to me my project had much more glitter and he was trying to share my sizzle. His name was Jack Dangerman, and his project was Geographic Information Systems, GIS . Well, you know the punchline - Jack's ESRI became a multi-billion dollar global industry.

According to my grant from the NY State Board of Equalization Assessment, I was to use the storage capacity of the new laser disc to store all the houses and buildings of Guilderland, a suburb of Albany, New York on a twelve inch laser disc, which would be attached to a computer. MIT had already figured out some geo-referencing field capture methods using film and an interferometer on a bicycle wheel. The project was called "Movie Map," shot in Aspen, Colorado. You will recall I had the sense to put Nicholas Negroponete on the board of AVI, and so I had access to his state of the art lab and staff.

I have to digress here for a moment. There are phrases that somehow stick in your brain like mantras, and keep you getting up off the mat, like the Churchill one I just mentioned. There is another one which is much simpler and which has picked me up and dusted me off a thousand times and still does today. This one came from the lips of one of Negroponete's MIT key staff. Andy Lippman held my hand all through this first 'Landisc' project. We worked at MIT's, Architecture Machine Group in Cambridge and also at AVI in Manhattan. He was a quiet, modest, gifted engineer. He had family reasons for visiting New York, but would work all night if we had to. My attempts at geo-coding rolling video by dead reckoning calculated from the tire's circumference and axle angles was stolen lock stock and barrel from the Aspen project. Or I could say it was donated generously by MIT. The idea of writing it in the vertical blanking interval of the NTSC video signal was mine, or at least borrowed from somewhere other than Andy.

Back to the life saver utterance - Andy Lippman was a sucker for Jewish deli, and I was plying his weakness after the all night session at our office. We were at the all night diner just over the 59th St Bridge in Queens. Miles of video from the AVI van was not properly georeferenced by our software. I was crestfallen. "How could this happen?" I was moaning. Andy looked over his glasses and with a raspy faint New York accent,

uttered these unadorned words, “There is always and only one **real** question - Where do we go from here?”

Columbian Catholicism

All the while I was running AVI I was still taking Federal criminal trials. The Universal settlement was all but gone. I had no law office and the meager government fees barely kept me fed.

I was living on the upper west side on and off with Jane Reid. You may recall, I was assigned to represent criminal defendants who could not afford a lawyer in cases that were too complicated for the Legal Aid Society, or where there might be a conflict of interest with a co-defendant already represented by the Legal Aid Society. One of my appointments involved a complicated legal issue regarding the “seal of the Catholic confessional” and a Columbian priest.

Despite the fact that droves of Federal crimes had been committed by these thirteen Columbians, charges were brought in the New York Court. Prosecutors preferred the New York statutes (the Rockefeller Laws) because they were draconian in the allowed sentences compared to the Federal Laws.

The case was so huge it had a special prosecutor, a man named Herman, who looked and acted like a stand-up comic. All of the other defendants were represented by the Who’s Who of the criminal bar. Criminal lawyers came from New York, California, Massachusetts; it was a real criminal law circus. All were being paid a king’s ransom, which amounts were still undisclosed since they were protected by the attorney client privilege. (Eventually the drug cases would erode that privilege and criminal attorneys nourished by the fruit of the poison tree were forced to disclose what they had been paid; this case did not deal with that issue). My client was an impecunious Catholic priest, and I was the only one of the defense attorneys paid by the court, an hourly rate set by an old pay scale based on the cost of living in the 20’s. In all those weeks of the trial I earned less than the janitor who kept the marble floors shining.

The press called this the biggest drug bust in history. A dozen federal and state law enforcement agencies were involved, not to mention Interpol and the Canadian Mounted Police.

Drugs and drug lords were the boogey men politicians used to advance their carriers, and many judges had been swept up in the hysteria of this witch hunt, which trumped the Constitution. At the arraignment, most of my co-counsel, celebrity lawyers, were too busy dealing with reporters to engage in motion practice in the State Court. I had prepared a motion which raised a federal question about search and seizure which, if granted, would make the mountain of evidence inadmissible, a shot in the dark. I knew it was hopeless, but why not have it on the record, maybe an appellate court might see the light.

Hearing the motion was an Upstate New York judge who was sent to the city to relieve local judges who could not handle such a case because of the time required or maybe because of the monetary temptations.

I nearly fell over when he granted the motion to suppress all the evidence. Herman did double takes and flummox faces that would have provoked hysterical laughter, if such a thing were allowed. All of a sudden the biggest case in history was dismissed and the 13 Columbian king pins were released, but not for long. They were rearrested on the steps of the State Court and brought across the street to the Federal Detention Center where Federal charges were filed.

At that arraignment before a Republican appointed African-American US District Judge named Carter, the Court was filled with press from all over the world. When I stood up to make a motion to dismiss on the grounds of double jeopardy and to remake my State Court motion to suppress, I got my ears pinned back. This political hack was not interested in any constitutional hog wash. These “dangerous” invaders of our country were going to be punished, and I should be ashamed of myself for using tax payer money to try to get them off on a loophole. Holy shit, he had already convicted them. I protested the judge’s remarks on the record and moved for a mistrial. My illustrious co-counsels were looking at each other as if to say “Who the hell is this kid?” Carter went on to decry the State Court’s foolish decision and refused to hear my motion regarding the seal of the confessional and the privilege of priest and confessor.

“He’s not even American, how can he be a priest?” he shouted. I think he meant to say that foreigners were not entitled to constitutional protections. I wondered if he had taken high school civics. I was sure he never went to any law school.

“Well, your Honor, the head of the Catholic Church isn’t even American. Am I to understand that they do not qualify for this privilege?” The rumble in the Court room and the press scribbling in their pads must have given him pause. “I reserve decision” he said. “Now sit down.”

At lunch break one of the co-counsels invited me to the best restaurant in Chinatown which was right behind the US District Court in Foley Square. When he started ordering, I felt compelled to tell him I couldn’t afford the appetizers, let alone the drinks and poo platter, whereupon he explained that he owned the restaurant. These guys had so much drug money, they bought restaurants and hotels and....

After lunch on my way back into the courtroom, I was pulled aside by a tall man wearing a Roman collar. The Roman collar told me he was a Catholic priest, the purple bib told me he was at least a Monsignor. He was charming and I was sure he wanted to thank me for defending the sacrament of confession and his fellow priest.

“You are Italian, no?” I nodded. “Must be Catholic, no?” I nodded more slowly. “I must tell you that the cardinal worries about the church being tarnished by this. You have a duty not to embarrass mother church, right?” And I think he said, or at least implied, that I had a duty to obey the cardinal on matters of faith. I looked around for advice or at least a witness. The afternoon session had not begun. He led me to a bench in the back of the empty court room.

“I have a duty to represent my client and defend his rights”- I emphasized the word “his”. He argued that my spiritual duties trumped my legal ethical duties. When I figured out that Herman brought him into the picture, I warned him that his unsolicited moral advice may also be viewed as interfering with my client’s right to counsel. At this point he disclosed that he was also a lawyer for the Diocese and shared with me the bigger plot behind the scenes.

If I could have made this one of the episodes of the *Law*, it would have won another Emmy. It had dramatic conflict, moral dilemmas, topical issues of the church and state, socialism, drugs cartels etc. Ironically the privileged communication which was at the heart of the story would keep me from telling it, until now.

It turns out the radical Columbian bishops and clergy in the 1970's had become a political force and my client's boss was a high ranking "Robin hood" Bishop, who accepted donations from the cartels which were used to build housing, schools, hospitals and food kitchens for the poor. The US Government had reached out to the Vatican, through back channels, to punish this left leaning Catholic clergy. These left leaning clerics were flying in the face of not only the drug laws but also capitalism and Catholicism. Maybe not Catholicism in the truest sense - I pointed out to the Monsignor that Jesus was also "left leaning." Rather than dissuading me, the story made me bolder. In the end I was told that if I persisted in my motion, the Church would file an 'amicus curiae' brief, showing that my client was not a priest because his boss had been defrocked.

I left assuring him that I would do what was right "for my client," and he could do whatever he thought was right for his client. I [Wa] was amazed at myself [Th]. I had never had a moral question confront me so clearly and to have the Church on the wrong side.

I did my homework and I discovered that my client was never defrocked per se, and could not be considered defrocked by proxy. Not only that, he had attended a prestigious program in Rome which was like the "West Point" of the Catholic Church for training leaders. So, for me, he was still a priest and what the drug lords told him was still privileged within the meaning of 501 of Uniform Rules of Evidence, which I read about in a Cornell Law School Law Journal (my alma mater). The reasoning seemed to be that if the person making the confession thought he was protected. That was key to the invocation of the privilege and not the clerical status of the confessor. Imagine trying to make this subtle constitutional point to Judge Clark.

My West End Ave apartment was furnished intentionally, and exclusively with cast offs. I actually made it a point to furnish the apartment with recycled goods, which made some sort of hippie philosophical point about middle class consumerism. The bed and the freezer were full of carnation frozen fish and pearl onions were salvaged from an dead man's apartment in the village brownstone where Bela Abzug lived. The couch was put in the trash right in front of my building, the end tables were fruit crates and the lamps were made from wine bottles whose shades were inverted Kentucky Fried Chicken buckets of different sizes, which gave a lovely glow and an appetizing smell once the oil stains were heated by the bulbs. I also earned \$100 every weekend playing the guitar at a large

Puerto Rican night club in the Bronx, which was just enough for the Manhattan rent. The meager legal fees to be paid by the Federal Court had not arrived and hopefully would come before the frozen fish and pearl onions ran out.

Anyway, that night while sitting at a large cable spool table eating another sumptuous meal of carnation frozen fish and pearl onions with Jane Reid, there came a knock at the door, which was very strange given the fact that there was no buzz from the street door. Somehow someone had made their way up to the sixth floor and was at my door. I opened the door to find two Columbian men, one holding a small gym bag. They greeted me in Spanish. Jane was behind me and grabbed the back of my belt as if to pull me back inside and slam the door. I figured if the bag had a weapon in it, it would have been out and aimed at me by now. They sensed Jane's apprehension and offered assurances in Spanish, which she did not understand.

They told me they had a message from El Mono. I let them in and they sat on two smaller spools around the large cable spool table. They told me El Mono was very impressed with my performance and wanted me to represent him. They unzipped the bag and slid it toward me. It was full of \$20 bills: there had to be at least 700 to a 1000 bills wrapped in what appeared stacks of 50. Without giving it a second thought, my newly discovered moral self [Th] slid it back. Can you imagine that? I [Wa] can't believe it myself, broke as I was, but I did it; I slid it back.

I explained that if I took it, it would be worse for El Mono because I would not be allowed to represent the priest any more, and El Mono's lawyer would have me disbarred. He would not give up a paying client without a fight. I would lose that fight because I'm not supposed to come between a lawyer and his client. I promised that I would share anything that would help El Mono with his lawyer as long as long as it did not hurt my client. They made it very clear that my client was not important, not as important as El Mono. I assured them that what I did for my client would only help and not hurt El Mono. When they left, I felt like a character in a biblical tale, tested twice by Satan in the same day, once appearing in the form of a Monsignor and once as drug thugs. Jane glowed with satisfaction at my choices. She was a practicing idealist.

Twin

That club I mentioned, where I earned \$100 a week, was in the Bronx, at the border of upper Manhattan. It was called Beau's. It catered to a Puerto Rican audience which somehow found the means to afford the overpriced meals and drinks. I opened for the big bands on Saturday nights and played by myself on Fridays.

I met Beau at a big U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency party for Hispanic undercover agents, which he catered at DEA headquarters. I had become friends with a Puerto Rican US Attorney who worked for Giuliani and a trumpet player/DEA Chief, Aceveto who 'jammed' with me a couple of times. They paid me to play at this DEA event where Beau hired me on the spot to play at his club. I had been working there several months before the Columbian trial began.

One Friday evening, after an afternoon of cross examining DEA agents, I ran home changed into my ruffled shirt, flamenco boots and tight pants, and headed north to Beau's in time to have a free meal before I took the stand.

By now my repertoire had all the vitality of a music box. The classical portion included works by Bach, Albenez, and Tarrega, namely the "Cello Suite", "Joy of Men's Desiring", "Romance Di Amor", "Requerdos del Alahambra", and then, a pause, and no matter where he was in the restaurant, the owner would beg me to sing "En Mi Viejo San Juan." Some nights when I thought I saw some non-hispanics, I played two jazz arrangements of Bossa Nova tunes Joe Pass taught me: "One Note Samba", and Jerome Kern's "Yesterdays" (not to be confused with the Beatles hit "Yesterday").

I'm sure this set represented the largest batch of disconnected motor tasks possible for human recall. Drill and practice every day still wasn't enough. Fortunately the audience was busy eating and talking and never noticed missed notes, or even measures.

I talked Beau into buying a spot light which I could control with a pedal by my foot. One particular Friday night just before I turned on my bluish spot light, I saw the DEA agents I had been cross examining sitting with Beau at a front table. I thought he might be "comping" them, and then I was sure of it when I saw what they ordered. I kept my head down and

chugged on down the track. When there was a loud flourish they would look up, but mostly they were into the women that Beau brought over.

At one point they began to stare. “Oh Shit,” I thought I had been ‘made.’ Now, as I said, I had on a ruffled shirt, tight torero pants, flamenco boots, and I had gel in my hair. Outside by the entrance to the club was a photo of me in this “Valentino” get-up on a tripod, holding my guitar with the subtext, “On stage now Ciampa and the Many Faces of the Guitar.” On the other side of the double door was another tripod with the main act “Tito Puente” Saturday night.”

Toward the end of my set, one of the DEA agents came to the edge of the small stage. Now for sure I thought I had been ‘made’. Instead he asked: “Wow man, you got a brother who”s a lawyer?”

They could not fathom that I could be the very same lawyer in the grey suit and tie who was cross examining them all afternoon. “Yes I do.” I answered without hesitation trying to disguise my voice with a pitch change. “Wow man, You look just like him.”

Rochester

One of the laser disc applications we created with the NY State grant, called Guilderland, was a kind of virtual site visit. The user keyed in the address and was suddenly at the curb of the house. How this technology could become a useful tool for these property professionals was the subject of my presentation at the Lincoln Land Institute in Harvard Square, where a large audience of urban planners and assessors was gathered. Right there on the spot, the city fathers of Rochester, NY gave me a contract to put the entire city of Rochester on a laser disc. That kind of bold stroke almost never happens with local government.

My friend, Michael Putnam, had been a visiting professor of photography at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), and introduced me to some of his former colleagues. Soon I had a place to work, and eventually a full time job.

Sheila was still living with her children in my apartment at Morningside Drive. She did not want to leave Manhattan. She remained in the apartment for some time after I moved to Rochester, thinking I might come back, I guess. Eventually, it was clear I was not coming back. I sold the condo and said goodbye to Sheila.

By the time I got to RIT, Jack Dangerman's project had become the ESRI empire. Personal computers and mini computers were available through the Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC). DEC continued to support AVI as part of RIT, which made RIT one of the early universities to get bitnet, mini computers and IVIS.

AVI was now a department of RIT, and I had a free hand in selecting the research/development projects, as well as the courses we offered, which were usually built around actual projects. When you're doing something brand new, superiors don't know enough to set your agenda and have to leave you alone.

AVI had a suite of first class space in what later came to be called the College of Imaging Science. We had some of the first desktop computers in the country dedicated to imaging and interactive visual learning, the IVIS from DEC and later Macs from Apple. Before we arrived, no one saw the need to connect the world class imaging departments and the nascent computer science department. AVI did just that - not so amazing when you think this was the obvious match. Bringing these tools together in Rochester with Kodak and Xerox next door turned out to be the right move. My association with MIT Media Lab, formerly Architecture Machine Group, gave me credibility in the new aspiring Rochester hi-tech arena. At first this was a walk in the park, but the park had its dark spots. There were philistines trying to protect the old ways from progress and greedy luddites trying to pocket the harvest before it was ready, but I [Wa] was able to deal with them.

I [Th] must confess here, that many mistakes and much waste would have been avoided if I [Ti] had focused on the task instead of the tools.

On some level I knew that I was trying to represent space with photographs instead of graphics. Or you could say, I was trying to nestle geometry into geography.

Just as I was making progress with an aerial film camera and a post production animation stand, digital imaging was becoming a reality and GPS was being made available to select civilian users. So we started all over again.

Melding image capture and locational data was accomplished, but with loose accuracy. There was an intentional error called “selective availability” put there as a cold war protection from guided missiles, which made predicting ground coordinates by satellite fixes problematic. Eventually the US Coast Guard built a box for marine navigation, which corrected the US Air Force’s intentional error, and they sold the box to us. We could only make use of the satellite at certain times to obtain a fix for our aerial camera. This left us with a good size margin of error - 15 feet and later 5 feet. Locating the camera was only part of the story. You also had to know where the camera was looking. For this we had to learn about IMU (inertial motion sensors) which measured all the angles.

Eventually, we could locate a point in the image within a few feet, using corrected GPS satellite data. I had no formal training in cartography, geography, photography or computer science, but down the hall from AVI at RIT was John Schott, and Carl Salvaggio and other photo scientists who could and did explain whatever I needed to know. They were an unwitting, “just in time,” suite of private tutors, and last but not least, this eccentric undergraduate student, Steve Schultz put it all together in the code and added amazing general scientific and computational intelligence. Was it luck or destiny that all of us could come together in the same hallway at the right time? Our proprietary error correction method injected ground truth, and correctly distributed the corrected coordinates to all of the pixels according to their position in the image. I called this Electronic Field Study (EFS). The corrected metrics lent credibility to the “...metry” in “Pictometry”.

Sue

One of the first women I met in Rochester was Sue Stewart, who was the attorney for RIT and was handling the absorption of the American Video Institute, a 501C-3 organization, by another 501C-3 organization, RIT. There are IRS rules and laws to follow, one of which is that the host institution had to honor the charitable purpose for which the guest institution was granted its 501C-3 exemption, i.e. “development and

dissemination of life enhancing technology.” This will become important to the story down the road.

Sue, literally and figuratively wrote the book on non-profit organizational laws (CCH Volumes), and she shared my vision and was very helpful and friendly in getting me established in my new life; in fact, since we’re telling the truth here, she was more than friendly. At one of our negotiations, all of us in business suits around a conference table in her fancy office, Sue had her shoes off seated next to me, and suddenly her foot was finding its way up my pant leg without missing a beat in the legal chatter. This touched off an affair and eventually a marriage.

When I first got to Rochester, I was a bachelor, and so chose a cheap apartment near the action on East Ave. As it turned out “action” was a different phenomenon in Rochester than it was on planet Manhattan. The only action on East Ave was great Jazz events and classical concerts, provided by the Eastman school of music. There were no single women anywhere; the residential women were all married to corporate executives. Dating Sue, who lived in the burbs was enough. I spent a lot of time in her lovely old house.

Pretty soon a client of Sue’s (daughter of the founder of Xerox) was selling her home. It was a Victorian train station she had moved from its abandoned tracks onto a hill in the middle of a 60 acre forest, intact, platforms and all. The platforms were converted to lovely porches and the rooms were made over into a home with unusual charm. It was probably the most unique dwelling this side of the Mississippi, so unique she could not find a buyer in the small pool of corporate executives who had to move to Rochester. The site was a half hour from town, toward the finger lakes. The money I had from the sale of my closet size condo in Manhattan was more than enough to own this baronial estate. So without much ado, I “bought the farm” as they say.

I [Wo] wasn’t sure that I [Th] could become Thoreau all of sudden, but these things are best jumped into rather than crawled into. I [Th] had to promise myself [Wo] that we would make frequent use of the cheap flights back to Manhattan and stay with Jane and other friends down there. As it turned out, I never did find any need to go back to Manhattan. It tickled me, every night, making my bed in a lovely loft above the waiting room, now living room. I could have my breakfast in a wainscoted rotunda and

look out at the deer and wild turkeys through the window that once sold tickets to come and go Victorian passengers.

Sue and her children spent a lot of time in my train station and eventually moved in when Sue and I got married. Sue had two children, Mark, 7 and Anne, 9. Sue was very effective at inspiring confidence and soon became a managing partner of a large corporate firm, and on the board of every major institution for miles around. She was so busy that I found myself raising her kids.

We were married on the grassy apron in front of the dense Oak forest. The string quartet from the Eastman School played Beethoven string quartets in a forest cut out, raised above the lawn so that it looked like a stage in the woods. It was a big outdoor wedding. The bride was the big draw, not me. Everyone who was anybody for miles around was invited. I was marrying a local celebrity. My brother Joe came to be best man, Ma and Pidge were there as well; the rest were the hundred or so friends of Sue.

I moved my little sail boat from City Island to Lake Canandaigua. I built a baseball field on the property. "Build it and they will come", and they did. RIT hard ball teams played Sue's law firm. I discovered a heretofore unknown skill as a batter. Later, I bought an old logging machine (skidder) and harvested ice storm casualties for a lumber mill I was planning to build. I became a pretty good skier and sailor, as well. I never for a moment missed whatever I was doing in Manhattan.

The property (60 acres) had a separate, idyllic studio over an outlying garage/carriage building which had its own kitchen and bath, etc. I wrote my book "Communication the Living End" there. I learned to play the sax there. It was also a guest house for my Russian visitors. Once Ellen Burstyn stayed there. I need to step out of the story timeline for just a bit here.

I had been in touch with Ellen about the PBS, *American Masters* series, wanting permission to use the Strasberg video we made together, and I'm sure I told her that I was married, which somehow never registered with Ellen. I had no idea she was coming to Rochester for anything other than work and to wow all the film maker students at RIT. She was stunned to meet Sue and find out that she was staying in the guest studio; one of the great ironies of my life. Ever since I met Ellen in the 60's, I had the hots

for her. Then, all through helping her with her insane abusive husband, I got mixed messages. You will recall that once she announced to the press that we were a couple, but then told me she did that just to keep her crazy ex-husband away. I unmixed the messages, and, in my mind, we were business associates and/or fellow futurists. Alas, she was coming to the boonies not only for business. I learned this from one watery eyed sentence, walking to the studio. “I wish you had told me you were married,” is all she said.

But Ellen was a trooper and we made a documentary to go with a video we had never finished about Lee Strasberg, which aired on PBS *American Masters* hosted by Joanne Woodward. I never got paid, but then I didn't care; the “Method”, Ellen and Lee were an important part of my life.

In those woods south of Rochester, I discovered the philosopher in me [Th]. This is not self aggrandizing. We all have a philosopher in us, waiting to be discovered. And we dig for it everyday without knowing it. To the extent that we find it, everyday suffering is diminished and the word “sublime” finds embodiment. I can think of at least ten crises which would have turned me to drugs, crime and rock and roll, were it not for my inner philosopher.

1986-1996 COLD WARMTH

I [Ti] partially subscribed to the hippy “share” morality which was at the basis of the new information age. I [Wa] decided to own my application of this technology connecting imagery and data, and was awarded a very early seminal patent in 1987, which claimed a very broad method and numerous devices for connecting stored imagery and data. I learned later that the patent was early enough and broad enough that I could have made a career of licensing subsequent infringing inventions for the next decade. Every new patent application which cited my patent as “prior art,” and there were 250 or more of them, were licensee candidates. So, why build a toll booth if I wasn’t collecting the toll? Either I [Wo] was too dumb, or I [Th] was joining the give-it-away spirit of my mentors and colleagues. I’m not sure which, but I will take credit for high mindedness instead of stupidity. I have other patents and never bothered to enforce those either. I see them as scout badges.

You already have seen that the computer and the laser disc got me invited to lots of scientific conferences and tech shows. One such event was in Buffalo at the International Earthquake Center. One of the reasons I chose to participate in this conference had to do with my longstanding curiosity about the Soviet Union. Both my undergraduate and graduate studies created political, philosophical, literary and historical curiosity in this enormous World War II friend that was now our cold war enemy. High ranking officials of the USSR for the first time were attending this US sponsored conference. The iron curtain was just beginning to open, and the McCarthy era xenophobia had just begun to wane.

Bear Hug

I can’t say that I was a Marxist, but I did have some socialist leanings. Any follower of Christ, I believe, would have curiosity about a political philosophy where everyone shared everything.

The Russian delegation at the Buffalo conference consisted of a minister, Alexander Sergeyevich Krivov, and an assistant who was a Russian/Jewish Geologist. The agency Krivov ran what was called

Goscomachitectura, which was responsible for all the land and buildings in the Soviet Union - residences, palaces, everything. There was no private property, remember.

I did some research on Krivov and learned that in the sixties he was on the Russian Olympic Team for track and field events, and that he was sent to Siberia because of his excessive interest in American culture, and then brought back by Gorbachev who opened the doors to the West.

At the welcome cocktail hour, I sidled up to the two Russians and introduced myself. There were free hors d'oeuvres at the cash bar. I offered to buy them a drink. The geologist accepted, the minister declined. I offered them American cigarettes. The geologist accepted, the minister declined. After a few futile attempts to start a conversation, I moved on. He seemed like he wanted nothing to do with me or any of the other attendees.

Later that night, in the same hotel, there came a knock at my door. It was the geologist telling me that Mr. Krivov would like to see me in his room. I could tell from his demeanor that there was no danger afoot. I accompanied him down the hall to their room. Suddenly Krivov was all smiles and welcoming and produced a jar of caviar and two bottles of vodka from his antique suitcase. He apologized for not speaking earlier because he was embarrassed by his English, which I assured him was quite understandable. He was also embarrassed at not being able to pay for drinks at the cash bar when it would be his turn. The Soviet Union had no experience with sending folks to Western conferences, but you will be as shocked as I was to learn how little they knew about travel in the US. The state bureaucrats figured out that rubbles would probably not work, so they made sure their minister and his aide would have all the money they needed to get from New York City to Buffalo, also in New York state; surely \$70 American dollars would be enough. Fortunately, the geologist had a relative in Brooklyn who loaned them the money to fly to Buffalo where their \$70 was gone the first day in cab fares. Food was not complimentary, and they would have starved but for the happy hour hors d'oeuvres which were luxurious by their standards. Krivov jokingly blamed, Georgy, the geologist, for this faulty intelligence on US land mass; who replied "I geologist, not geographer." We could laugh about it now in his complementary luxury suite.

We drank and talked all night. He knew all about American literature - F. Scott Fitzgerald and Hemingway, and he knew all about American architects. I was surprised he knew so much about American culture. He was surprised that I knew so much about Russia. We became fast friends during the conference and I learned of his bitter disappointment at coming all this way to New York and never seeing Manhattan.

I took them to my train station home where we stayed for a night or two, and Sue's firm arranged for a visit to Manhattan and a stay at the University Club just off Fifth Ave.

We walked and drank and ate all over Manhattan. They felt like they had died and gone to heaven. They marveled at the choices of products in all the shops and restaurants, and nearly fainted when they watched me put a plastic card in a slit in the wall in the middle of the night and have American dollars come shooting out into my hand. They had no idea how far capitalism and consumerism had gone.

Late that night, we sat on the concrete steps across from the Wall Street Stock Exchange, while Sasha ("Alexander" became Sasha once we were friends, which we were now) explained the architectural significance of the buildings we were looking at. Just then, a pan handler interrupted and told Sasha his sad story. Sasha listened to his story attentively and treated him as an equal, never suspecting that the point of the sad story was a handout. When the panhandler held his hand out and asked if Sasha had any spare change, Sasha jumped to his feet, both hands in his pockets: "Of course" was Sasha's eager reply as he handed over a fist full of Kopeks. There in the shadow of the Wall Street Stock Exchange, the image of the two hands, the open palm of the capitalist beggar and the donating fist of the communist provider is emblazoned on the ceiling of my brain, like the Michelangelo hands of the Sistine Chapel.

It was hard to tell from the expression on Sasha's face whether he was forgetting, for the moment, the currency disparity, or whether he was enjoying the irony. The pan handler looked as though he had suddenly been lifted into the "Twilight Zone." He walked away, looking down at the kopeks and shaking himself, like a wet dog coming out of a lake.

Sasha and I kept in touch. Following the Armenian earthquake, at Sasha's suggestion, the USSR paid their long overdue dues to UNESCO

and a humanitarian aid delegation was to be sent to USSR right through the Iron Curtain, a first. I had to be part of that delegation or no deal.

Before I knew what it was about, I was briefed by a US State Department team who came to the RIT campus. Maybe they were CIA; they always pretended to be from State. They told me that I must go. It didn't take much persuasion; I was dying to go, no matter what. This was a UNESCO mission but somehow before I left, another so called US Commerce official wanted me to explore their use of computer hardware. We did not know where they were in terms of computers and the information age. There might be new markets over there. Kodak and Pepsi and MacDonalds were already sending envoys without fully understanding what "Glaznos and Peristroika" meant.

I flew Delta first class to Berlin, and then spent the night on an unyielding contoured plastic chair in the airport, where I saw on East German TV the breaking down of the Berlin Wall. Early in the morning I took my seat on Aeroflot to Moscow, not like Delta First Class at all. I knew that the Russians beat us to outer space and that they had aviation skills and that kept me [Wo] from panicking when I saw that not everyone had seats, and there were no seat belts and my seat arm was about to fall off. I [Ti] figured, no I hoped, that they must have spent their money on the things that count, like landing gear.

All the way over, I had Sony Walkman cassettes and, by ear was learning Russian faster than I ever could by reading. By the time we landed in Moscow, I sounded just like the voice on the tape. As you know, part of being an imposter is being a good mimic. The two most important phrases in any language are 'Very sorry', which is much more useful than 'excuse me,' and 'very nice to meet you.' In Russian that is 'ochin zhall,' and 'ochin priatna paznakomitza'. You could leave out the 'paznakomitza' and just say 'ochin priatna.'

The Moscow airport was bigger than I thought. Armed, military personnel were patrolling everywhere. Two uniforms with braided epaulets led me off, with two other uniforms carrying Kalashnikovs, stepping along behind us. We were let into a VIP lounge where I could sit and drink tea from a glass, while waiting for my papers to be checked and bags to be delivered. It was the middle of the night and I didn't expect to see anyone I knew in Moscow, but here was Sasha headed my way with some big shots in tow, all wearing fur hats. As I jumped up to meet his

boss, the number two man in the Party, the two phrases of my newly acquired Russian vocabulary fell over each other in my sleepy brain. I pumped his hand, I said with a perfect Moscovite accent “ I am very sorry to meet you” = “Ochin Zhall Pasnakomitza” and it didn’t look like a foreigner making a mistake because of the pronunciation. A little knowledge is dangerous thing. The big shot and Sasha looked back and forth at each other, and I realized what I had said. I explained in English that in my zeal to surprise them with some Russian, I created a diplomatic incident. They thought that was hilarious. The blunder became my calling card; thereafter I was greeted by that phrase by all of Sasha’s associates.

I was pleasantly surprised to learn how much power my new friend had in his country. It is hard for an American to imagine a property manager for all the land and buildings in the Soviet Union, anything from a flat in Kazakhstan to all the chapels in the Kremlin and everything in between. That was what Goscomacktiketura did under the tutelage of ‘min droug’, ‘min brat’ my friend, my brother, Sasha Krivov, who couldn’t do enough for me.

When I suggested that we put all the art and architecture of the Kremlin on a laser disc, there were no forms to fill out, no grant applications, it was a done deal that instant. The next day we were at the Fine Art Photographers and Film Makers Guild, a mini castle, which had belonged to some count before the revolution, and I was assigned a team for the shoot. Not only did I meet some great new friends and talented photographers and film makers, but I got to eat. I should explain. Somehow the “guns for butter” of the cold war years left USSR on the brink of starvation. This was a well guarded secret; so was the black market supply stream and its tributaries. The black market GNP was probably as big, or maybe bigger than that of the official food network, but the only accepted currency was dollars or Marlboro Cigarettes. Marlboro was the preferred token of exchange for some reason. Maybe it was the Marlboro Cowboy that appealed to the secret Russian longing for the West. Of course, for the few plutocrats who actually smoked the Marlboros instead of the readily available, Belomorkanal, which Russians said were made from street sweepings, it was the taste. Everyone smoked and drank vodka all the time, even in the morning.

Don’t ask me how, but the guild houses offered free communal dining for members and guests, and better food than any restaurant. Thank God I was welcome there, because I could not play the Marlboro game,

even though I had them and smoked them occasionally, because, as an American official guest, I could not take official notice of the food shortages. There were times in my travel where I would not eat for a couple of days because no one wanted rubles, especially from an American who they knew must have Marlboros. The guild was the only place where I ever saw meat.

The rank and file were trained from childhood to abhor capitalism and its by-product, consumerism; somehow all that brain washing had the opposite effect. They were like rock fans for Americana, ogling blue jeans and baseball caps, hanging on every word, every gesture. I was invited to scientific conferences all over the soviet union, just because I was American; it didn't matter what I said. I would babble and bullshit about the information age, but in the end they wanted to know about how many bedrooms there were in my house. I went on with it because I enjoyed meeting them and because it helped Sasha's image to have sponsored an American inventor, professor. The flood gates had opened and now that curiosity about America was no longer a crime, it flooded the streets.

There were two notable American sites in Moscow. Several evenings I stood in the cold, in a line a quarter mile long along Gorky Boulevard, waiting for a McDonald's Big Mac. The same was true of the Baskin and Robbins store which had lines for ice cream in the freezing winter. I was more interested in the lines than the burgers, but I could not get photos without pissing off my hosts. I am positive at this point in history that we could have annexed the entire Soviet Union for a one boat load of blue jeans, Campbell soup and Marlboros. I'm not kidding. We really missed the boat back in those days, literally and figuratively. Significant portions of the rank and file, as well as the intellectual class, were open to the American dream. Either we didn't know or didn't want to know because of what Eisenhower called the "military industrial complex." Anyway, that ship has sailed now, or I should say, did not sail.

Before my grand tour I was on scene the day after the tragic Armenian earthquake. It looked to be the most fatal earthquake in the history of USSR, more than 35,000 dead. One of the buildings which collapsed was a school. While we sat with officials in dissected buildings, wagons and carts streamed by with the mangled body parts of children.

Disaster notwithstanding, a half collapsed restaurant arranged a Thanksgiving dinner for the Americans, just and an earthquake scientist

from Berkley and me, no KGB, no translators. They knew about the recently passed American holiday and some found time to roast the leg of a large fowl. We toasted with the Armenian officials (who reported to my friend Sasha) in a second story room which had become an open balcony now that the outer wall was gone. We were moved to tears.

The next day I was in a helicopter trying to geo-reference land imagery around the fault, so that reconstruction would be in a safer place.

Other foreigners were let in by Sasha (with Gorbachev's approval) from Japan and Italy, mostly working on rescue and reconstruction. The Italians provided small trailers for the homeless. For the first time helping hands reached through the Iron Curtain. Also for the first time the propaganda ministry was not controlling the news. This was the 'glaznos' which had begun during Chernobyl, where, thanks to Sasha and his friends, for the first time USSR told the truth to the West, and actually behaved in neighborly fashion as though we were all part of a global community.

There were still lots of secrets, however. The one secret at hand was the Caucasus war, where Azerbaijan forces were currently attacking anyone who was trying to help their enemy, the Armenians. There were constant wars between Soviet subcultures which no one in the West knew about. The Azerbaijan and Armenian war was one of the best kept secrets, and so I had no idea why my chopper was ordered down and I was rushed to a bunker somewhere in the Caucasus mountains between the two countries. A bunker dug into the side of a hill with steel doors was the accommodation for a few Russian scientists and me for a couple of days. We were kept there without explanation and with very little food. We had only Moldovan sausage, apples and saltwater pickles to eat (I really like the pickles, called "agurtsoi").

One night in the cave a KGB guy was raping the female scientist from Moscow. "Johnny on the Spot" interceded and pulled him off of her. It occurred to me that he could probably break my neck before I got my dukes up, but it never came to that. In my garbled Russian I mentioned Sasha and Eddy Trutnev, who was not with me at the time, but his name worked just as well. I'm not sure what he knew about Eddy and me. As he retreated, he looked back at me with a mixed contempt, as the enemy who had suddenly become a foreign dignitary.

After the ruckus the damsel in distress came over and asked if she could share my narrow cot. She had no English and I pieced together from her Russian that it was very important for her well being that she have sex with me right away. I was flummoxed. In a few minutes the cot collapsed and that was the only sex, if you could call it that, I ever had in the Soviet Union. There was no casual sex that I could find anywhere in the Soviet Union, which may have been not so much for the morality but because of the dire medical consequences. If a woman got VD or got pregnant there was only a 50% chance she would survive the hospitalization.

Whenever I found a piano anywhere in my Soviet travels, I would take a few minutes and bang out the few tunes I knew, so as not to forget. My KGB guide, Eddy Trutnev, adopted the American nickname, Eddy in my honor; Yevgeny was his real first name. Eddy would wait nearby for however long it took for me to finish my piano practice.

At the end of one particular conference in a large concert hall, in what was now called St Petersburg (formerly Leningrad), one of the scientists who had given a paper was also an accomplished pianist and his colleague's demanded that he play the grand piano which happened to be on the stage. To everyone's surprise he sat down and started to play a Rachmaninov piece, which captured the attention of the first few rows. The rest of the audience had their backs to the stage and were too busy chatting and finding their way out. At one point he said into the microphone which was still live, "In honor of our US guest", and he began to play an Ellington tune, "A train".

I should share an amazing, little known fact here. Jazz was officially condemned in the Soviet Union along with all the decadent culture of the West. But like everything else, the repression created more interest. I had already been to a few of the secret network of underground jazz clubs, especially in St Petersburg, where thousands of fans slipped past the gendarme, looking the other way, to hear American music performed by sax players imitating Bird, singers imitating Ella, trios, all world class musicians who were not supposed to be there. No one knew this and everyone knew this. It blew my mind.

Back to the conference, where the scientist/pianist was now playing an entire Ellington medley. He went from a Rachmaninov style rendition of "Solitude" and back to an up tempo "Take the A Train." At this point Eddy ran up and hopped onto the stage with "special forces" alacrity. I

thought surely he was about to snap the neck of the pianist. Instead he whispered something into his ear; the pianist stopped the music abruptly, and waived to the person hosting the conference. The three huddled for a few seconds and then the host held up his arms as he stood by the microphone, and announced in Russian, from what I could make out “We have one more presentation which is a collaboration between USA/ USSR....”, and then the one part I understood clearly, which triggered thunderous applause and stopped the mass exiting back rows in their tracks was “...the new U2 duo.”

Meanwhile, Eddy is dragging me by the arm to the stage, as stage hands wheeled out another grand piano. Hundreds of USSR scientists who were trying to shove their way out of the hall were now fighting their way back to the empty seats.

The only Ellington tune I knew was “Satin Doll” and I could get through changes for 12 bar blues in F, and that’s it. How do you make an international concert out of that, for this sophisticated audience, without rehearsal? Any normal person would have run away or fainted. I[Wa] once again converted terror into relaxed courage, and again apprehension became comprehension. After Satin Doll, another musician with a guitar joined us. I have no idea where he came from. Thanks to a magical element in jazz which I believe I discovered at that moment in of all places, the Soviet Union, we were thinking as one. Iron curtain and language barriers notwithstanding, without any words between us, this melded mind blended the strengths and weaknesses of its component minds. Somehow my hands knew when to play softly on the couple of notes which fit, and when I felt more secure with some chord progression or lick. The pros knew just what to do to make it sound good. Whenever and whatever I played, everyone would applaud. The final applause was thunderous and seemed to go on forever. We all knew this was about the political, as well as, the musical harmony.

Between these junkets, I always returned to Moscow, where I spent days crawling around the chapels and buildings in the Kremlin. The days looked like nights at that time of year in Moscow. It was winter and everywhere I went I wore a hooded down parka with an American Flag embroidered on the left shoulder.

One day/night as I was leaving the Kremlin gate, a van chased me across Red Square and caught me in front of Gum’s department store, which

was as empty as it was large. The words “Are You American?” slipped out through the slit in the darkened passenger window. I immediately recognized the voice of a famous US TV anchor.

They asked me how it was that I was going in and out of the Kremlin. I told them. They asked me if I thought an American TV crew could be let in. I called Sasha and the American TV public got a rare tour of the inside of the Kremlin and a live interview with Gorbachev. Neither I nor Sasha got any screen credit for raising the iron curtain for American TV, but that’s ok because it wanted to happen on its own.

Eddie Trutnyev, my protector, traveled with me locally and across the country everywhere I went; and also with us was a lovely married translator woman, Marina, who kept her distance. I thought she might be drawn to me, if for no other reason than my Marlboros and my blue jeans. I [Wo] would have welcomed some intimacy on the cold and lonely road even though we were both married. She traveled everywhere with us but never joined Eddie and me for drinks after work. She would appear just on time at the meetings where she was to translate. I [Wa] knew there was too much at stake to violate her space. Maybe she wanted to get closer but knew she would be in trouble with the KGB, or maybe she just wasn’t attracted to me, or didn’t really like Americans. Maybe she got tired of my little joke, which opened every one of my presentations.

I would greet the audience in Russian with a good Moscow accent with the Russian words for: “I am deeply honored to be here with you today. This talk will be partly in Russian and partly in English.” I would then pause for the inevitable astonished reaction, chatter and amazed looks flashing back and forth across the audience, and then I would drop the punch line on the silent awe in English. “That was the Russian part and now for the English.” Marina would wait for the laughs to subside and then would begin to translate. The rest of the Russian came from Marina, and so fast, I had no idea what she was saying.

As I said, Marina kept her distance from Eddy and me, but she would take time in a car or plane to answer Eddy’s questions about English. Eddy was learning proper English from Marina, and American slang from me. Marina was not interested in learning American slang, and appeared to be less interested in teaching me Russian. I was learning Russian from my phrase book, Russian TV, and Eddy.

I would write down things I didn't understand from the TV news, and at breakfast, Eddy would explain. Likewise, he would have questions from his photo novela, comic books. He might ask me when to use "fuck off" and when "fuck you". "Fuck they" is OK"? He was cursing the authorities who complicated my family's visa process. No, no. best not use "fuck" with any officials.

As Christmas approached, I was still on tour with Marina and Eddy. We were just outside Moscow, still going from one institute to the other, never knowing if it would be a few people in an office with vodka or an auditorium with a full house.

The hardest thing for Russians is learning English and its pronouns, especially with verbs. They change the verb without a pronoun; we use the same verb and change the pronoun.

The first subject at every breakfast, no matter where we were, was an update on my family's visas. Even Eddy was put out as Christmas was upon us and there was still no news of their trip. Finally, we had heard that the visa was granted and they were on their way. We knew they were flying Aeroflot but not from or to where.

That morning, I waited for Eddy in a small breakfast room of a small hotel. Eddy entered almost hopping and shaking his head incredulously. Even before he reached the table his urgent message burst from his lips. "They have shot Ceausescu and your wife!!"

My first thought was what was my wife doing with the Rumanian Prime Minister, even before I processed the fact that she had been shot. In the next instant, when I put it all together, I jumped up knocking my chair over. My reaction stopped Eddy in his tracks. He realized that what he intended to communicate and my response did not match, and that his message might need editing: "no, no sorry not "your" wife....they shot Ceausescu and his wife... sorry sorry!"

A few days later Sue, Mark, Anne and I celebrated Christmas at Sasha's modest flat in Moscow. Sasha was more religious than most Soviets and had a lot to do with restoring the churches which had been converted to swimming pools and gymnasiums under the old regime.

Jet lag and all that Sue and the kids had been through did not dampen their excitement about their first Christmas in this new world. They sat around the candle lit table staring at the large, white, shimmering cube of “Sill,” pure chalk white fat rendered from Reindeer, and a giant tongue from the same beast. The kids understood that they were ambassadors and had somehow to appear to enjoy this authentic slavonic Christmas meal. They were adept little magicians causing things to disappear as though they had been eaten. We exchanged presents and eventually got to a giant tourist complex on the other side of town, where we spent the night. The rest of the holidays we traveled with Sasha and friends and their families to rustic Russian villages, rode the Troika through snowy forests and sampled peasant cooking. I loved the “belmini” a Siberian ravioli, and unwittingly coined a phrase which became my second calling card. All my associates continued to repeat it every time they saw me. “Ni cagda, ni zaboodu, vasha belmini,” It tickled everyone for some reason. Roughly translated all it said was “I will never forget you and your ravioli.”

After Sue and the kids went back to the States, I continued traveling all over the USSR evaluating their technology and sharing with them what I had been authorized to share by our State Department. I and a powerless few in the US Commerce Department saw that it might be both commercially and politically wise if we share some of our video technology with the Soviets.

When I got back to Moscow, my host, another Georgy, who now called himself George in my honor was fast becoming a good friend. He was the task force leader from Fine Art Photography and Film Makers Guild. He and his colleagues worked with me on the “Art of the Kremlin” project. Like Sasha, George was an eccentric and was in and out of trouble all his life because of his fascination with the West, which was not as bad now.

George’s access to the Guild dining room and bar made life in Moscow bearable. George’s apartment right near the Kremlin was ten times the size of Sasha’s who was the landlord for the entire Soviet Union. Why?

First of all Sasha was so honest he would never use his influence to get any more than the official allotment. Housing was allotted by a set of rules from the Stalin era and World War II. George’s wife was the daughter of a famous World War II general, and so, by official allotment, as long as she was alive, they lived in that townhouse, which must have

belonged to some prince in Czarist times. Every room looked like an abandoned set from the War and Peace movie; maybe the Rostovs lived there before the revolution. The rooms had huge windows and dusty velvet drapes from before the revolution. I slept on an antique couch in what might have been a study with a great view. I was there for weeks at a time and enjoyed everything but the brown water from the gilded faucets.

As the Crow Flies

One of the strangest stories in my Russian saga began in George's Moscow home. The spring weather finally allowed for the large window in the dining room to be opened.

At the dining table, because of George's limited English and my primitive Russian, we did a lot of gesturing and hand signals. As the food made its way to the table and the guests assembled, George turned the chair nearest the open window so that the chair back was against the table. I could tell from the reaction of all around me that something special was about to happen.

I must side step the chain of events here with a little background. There is a bird which struts around the streets of Moscow with a cigarette butt in its beak. So common a street scene is this for Moscovites, that nobody notices it anymore. It fascinated me. I had never seen a large crow like this. It had a sleek black tuxedo coat offset by a light grey bib. The waddle walk and the ever-present cigarette butt called to mind a "Gatsby" character finding his way home after a night on the town. They call the bird, Varona.

Back to George's table - as the food was laid out, there was a flutter in the open window; suddenly all eyes are on this Varona, smaller than an eagle, larger than a seagull. George greets him by name, as the bird hops from the large flat stone, outer window sill into the inner sill and then wrapping his talons onto the back of the chair. He looks around knowingly at all the guests around the table. George's young son put some crumbs in front of the bird, who was clearly not there for the food. Nothing on the table interests the bird as much as what is around the table, the people. George knew that if he told me about the Varona, I

would not have believed him, so he showed me one day, without a word of introduction. I was dumbstruck.

Another break in the time line is required here. Let's jump ahead a few months to Victor, NY and my Victorian train station. When I got back from Russia with the Varona story, Mark and Anne told me that there had been a large crow that spent a lot of time perched on the roof of our garage/studio. Sue thought this was a harmless tall tale of mine from the Russian visit which would amuse the children. Mark and Anne were more curious about this crow behavior and left a trail of cracker crumbs from the garage/studio out building along the platform/porch to the door of our kitchen and into the dinning alcove. Sue just about dropped her tea cup when the bird descended and followed them into the kitchen, showing no interest in the crumbs. Once in our home, this large crow flew to each window, giving each pane a test peck, as if to check on how this new world could be entered and exited. We turned the chair around like George had done. And the Crow perched, just like the varona had, and stared at us as we ate dinner, not interested in any food offerings. After that first dinner invitation, he then went to the door and was let out. This was the beginning of a long relationship. The bird visited several times, sometimes making his way down a spiral staircase to our basement media room where he would watch us watching TV. When he wished to leave, he would make his way on the wing and on foot to the kitchen door.

This story is always greeted with raised eyebrows. It is too much to believe. Decades later, once again, my shirt pocket librarian bore me out. I'm sure you must have doubts too, and so you should, but go online and search Crow. You will see studies that will blow your mind and also convince you that crows are able to communicate across continents, across generations, and are able to let other crows know who is naughty and who is nice. If you got this far in the story, then there must be some trust. So trust me, get a look at the scientific facts about crow communication and it will change how you see space and time and the universe, and hopefully, you will see that it is not too far fetched to connect the crow mystery to new quantum physics mysteries, where space/time seems to be bypassed as seen in quantum entanglement", "position tunneling" and other mysterious physics discussed later on in the Epilogue essays. For now, let me just point out that science has shown that sub-atomic particles instantaneously transcend space/time in a new field faster than the speed of light; and it has now been shown that

Robins have these entangled, subatomic particles in their eye structures which allow them to connect with the earth's magnetic flux for navigation. With all this proof I am suggesting that some biological subatomic particles in the crow will one day explain this otherwise unexplained, transcendent communication that seems to defy the rules of space/time.

Cold Warriors Last Stand

You remember the legal phrase "life enhancing" injected in the merger of AVI and RIT. We are about to see a demonstration of the importance of words in legal drafting.

When I got back from the Soviet Union, detente' was in the air, but not so much at my university. Gorbachev looked as if he might become an ally of the United States, and there were those on both sides who could imagine that happening, and there were those, on both sides, who had a vested interest in this not happening.

My early explorations and connections put me in a position to help with a new bridge to the Soviet Union for scientists, journalists, women's health professionals and photographic artists. Naturally this brought us lots of national media exposure which I thought would be welcomed by my employer, RIT. I was surprised to learn this was just what top university officials didn't want. But their opposition could not be overt for several reasons.

RIT had a substantial, undisclosed, cold war cash flow from the CIA to researchers and a group of administrators including the University President, a former Marine Corps General, who was also an official in the CIA.

The imagery I collected at the Kremlin included everything from wall tapestries to door knobs, chamber pots from Ivan the Terrible, primitive heating systems, not to mention architectural photography of all of the buildings, all on film, sorted and stored in my AVI lab at RIT, waiting to be transferred to laser disc along with Soviet and American Scholarly commentary. This would begin right after my well- earned summer vacation and sailing trip with Sue and the kids.

While I was on vacation, my enemies took advantage of my absence. The President fired my Dean who supported everything I did. With one bold stroke he put in his place someone he could control and who also would satisfy at least two factions of the new political correctness. She was black and a woman, and she did have a PhD from somewhere, which just happened to be in dance. That qualified her to run the state of the art College of Imaging Science, a division of RIT. The President, Richard M. Rose, also brought in Bud McFarlane, the Watergate villain (apparently they were close in the Marine Corps) and put him on the faculty, despite his disgrace in the Nixon and Reagan administrations. (A short time later McFarlane took his own life on campus, or died mysteriously.)

The new Dean, Dorothy, was a good looking air head. She dressed like a fashion model, and did not appear to be educated. For whatever reason she was very compliant. She was told that my lab was abandoned and that they needed the space and the refrigerators for a student activity lounge, and that the new place for the Russian art was the dumpster, which had already been emptied by the time I got back. Tens of thousand of sorted images were gone. She did not have the presence of mind to check with anyone, knowing that it was summer and I was on vacation. When I got back, she told me she had no idea what was in the dumpster.

I sued RIT for violating the initial agreement with AVI arranged by their attorney, now my wife, Sue. Sue's job was to defend the University, not the President. The trustees, Rochester business people and old money all trusted Sue. They took a closer look at President Rose's CIA activities. While this was going on, an academic war broke out between those on the CIA tilt and the newer faculty. Suddenly I was joined by whistle blowers who came out of the woodwork exposing the secret CIA research on campus, all of which contravened the educational purposes in the RIT charter, and the "life enhancing" charitable purposes in the AVI charter. Thanks to pressure from the media, including a *NY Times* story, the Marine Corps, CIA President who fired my Dean was now on the highway.

The wording in the agreement "life enhancing" became very important in the well publicized conflict, which changed the Cold War research preoccupation to the peacetime "information age" pursuits. The conflict also resulted in a clean sweep of the front office; cold warrior cronies were replaced by a new administration drawn from the faculty. That new

administration was deeply sympathetic and let me write my own ticket in return for dropping my lawsuit for damages.

The interactive visual database on “The Art of the Kremlin” was lost forever, but I was given all the rights to my invention “Landisc” and my invention “Pictometry” and a free hand at establishing any kind of academic program I wanted. I was encouraged to invite Soviet journalists and scientists to campus, which I did under the auspices of a large non-profit we founded, called Intermedia, decorated with my friends from Hollywood and other prominent media personalities and universities.

Intermedia was embraced on the Russian side as well. Intermedia brought to the attention of the world press the horrible abortion crisis in Russia where women were dying in droves, along with their unwanted offspring because of primitive hospital facilities.

There were numerous other trips to Russia, one sponsored by the Kellogg Foundation, which brought medical experts to exchange ideas and supplies. Marc Tucker and Kathy Bonk brought in dignitaries and money.

I met Marc Tucker and Kathy Bonk through Sue. Marc was an international authority on education and wrote books and founded a non-profit institution addressing the much needed changes in our education system. Marc was Sue’s client and we became close friends. Marc and I had sail boats; eventually mine grew. We had good times cruising around the Chesapeake. Every once in a while, you meet someone you think is really intelligent and they think you are really intelligent; such was the mutual admiration society between Marc and me. He had more credentials than me; but he never let that get in the way of our ongoing dialogue.

Another Russian trip was sponsored by Family Planning which resulted in the creation of a Women’s Health Ministry in the Gorbachev government. Alexandra Momjan, the minister was a beautiful, no, let’s say, gorgeous, (there I go again, but it’s true) Russian woman and we became friends. Actually we kind of fell in love, but both of us had other primary relationships, and bounced in and out of each other’s arms for several months. Russians I met through George and Sasha were hosted in Rochester. Some stayed in my studio, some stayed with Marc and Kathy.

Bill Clinton

I met Bill and Hillary Clinton at Marc and Kathy's house just outside Rochester, New York in the early 90's.

Marc's theories on educational reform had been adopted by this Governor of Arkansas who was a Rhodes Scholar. One day, shortly after he threw his hat in the ring, Bill and Hillary Clinton were visiting their Rochester donors at Marc's house. I was amazed at Bill's charm and perspicacity. I had bounced around politicians, as you know, but I had never seen eloquence like this. Sue and I did give a check for \$500, none of which can explain the phenomenon I am about to disclose.

I honestly thought my donation would help only to bring Bill Clinton to the attention of the national press. I never imagined that he would get the nomination, and never dreamed that he would get elected, but he did.

More than a year after we met the Clintons that one time, Marc and Kathy and Sue and I were invited to the Inaugural Ball in DC. I'm sure Sue and I were only invited because of Marc and Kathy who had gotten much more involved with the Clintons.

At the National Building Museum in DC, I was in a tuxedo that didn't quite fit and was hurrying to the door to find the men's room. There was too much to drink at this point and no provisions for pit stops. When I got to the door, two dark suits with ear phones prevented my egress. When I told them I might wet my pants, they were unmoved. "You will stay in this room, sir, until the President arrives."

When my bladder heard that, my wrist watch became Big Ben. Every second took an hour to pass. The delightful novelty of hearing the words President and Clinton put together hardly registered over the internal flooding which had reached all the way to my ears. Because I thought I would burst at any minute, I stood by the same door, next to the secret service men, away from my friends. In case I did wet my pants, I wanted only the secret service men as witnesses and maybe get their feet wet with their new job.

Finally, my attention was called away from my bladder when more secret service men pushed me down to the middle of a long receiving line.

The doors few open and in came the new President and his entourage. I was close enough to hear what he was saying as he shook every hand. He called each of these hundreds of people by their first names without stopping to think. I had heard that James Michael Curly could do this, and I thought there must be a small ear phone receiving staff prompts as he approached each person. Even so, it would be amazing that the staff could get all the names right in time for each hand shake. No, there was nothing in either of Bill's ears, and there was no one close enough to whisper in his ear as he approached, shook my hand and said "Hey John, thanks so much for coming and all you did for us in Rochester."

How could he possibly remember all that with the thousands of hands he had shaken just that day. The human mind is always more than you think.

Kathy was a pioneer of the feminist movement. She had an organization in DC which influenced legislation and Supreme Court rulings. Having them along for the ride in the USSR made it easy. Kathy looked to me on how to proceed with USSR. I looked to her for guidance on how to proceed with women's issues. Because they were so prominent and busy all over the world, I [Wo] just assumed they would eventually move on to more important friends, but they never dropped me, to this day.

Marc had been married before and eventually decided to marry Kathy. He asked me to be best man. I was surprised and honored. My wedding present was the band. I brought a group I had been playing with in Rochester to provide the music for the wedding, which like ours, was outdoors. I was now playing the alto sax (you have figured by now that I bounced around a lot with instruments as well as other things). The wedding was a large event at which I met Marc's only brother, Roger.

Roger was brilliant but had a screw loose. He was arrested in Morocco for transporting cannabis. He could not hold a job. I gave him a job in AVI's Washington office where we were developing computer and imaging systems for storage and retrieval of all US Graphic Designs for the National Endowment of the Arts. Roger Tucker helped a bit but had major people problems constantly.

I had spent much more time with Marc than with Roger, and I knew his whole history. He grew up in Newton, Mass, and went to fine prep schools and colleges etc.. His mother was a graduate of Radcliffe and

father graduated from Harvard. Marc knew nothing about his Jewish roots. He liked bagpipes, plaid ties, and smoked a pipe, the archetypical gentile.

When I did my Bluewater sail (which you will hear more about later), Roger came with me, and became my watch mate. Crossing the ocean we had six hour watches with Roger and me on one and Ernie and Bill Sampson (a student of mine from RIT) on the other. I became more impressed with Roger's brilliance. He could master things like 'set and drift' navigation problems in seconds. One long night on watch in the middle of the Atlantic, he told me how he and Marc spent their youth in foster homes.

What? I was incredulous. It took the rest of our watch for Roger to convince me that he wasn't hallucinating. Apparently, their brilliant mother took her own life after the brilliant father had completely abandoned the family. Marc was 13, Roger was 11. The boys were put in one foster home after another until they were old enough to go away to school. I assumed that I had never heard about this because Marc did not want to talk about it.

One night over drinks by Marc's fireplace in Rochester, I told him what Roger told me. I was waiting to hear Marc tell me Roger was crazy. Instead, Marc just about dropped his glass. He froze and looked off into space as though a holographic scene was unfolding out on the lawn. "My God" he said, "I had completely forgotten about that."

It turns out this was a case of total repression. This brilliant man had completely erased those years, and this simple reminder brought it all crashing back.

A few months later Alexander Krivov (Sasha) came to Washington and stayed with me, and at Marc and Kathie's DC townhouse while they were off somewhere. He told me he had a serious heart problem and I arranged for him to see some American cardiologists. We planned his surgery here in the US. At the last minute, he decided it was important for him to have the surgery in Russia. After the surgery Sasha's daughter stayed at my house while attending RIT and later the University of Virginia.

Years later we learned that she became an important AID official and was found murdered in a Moscow alley. Sasha suddenly left government and his wife, and joined a Russian Orthodox monastery.

Little Nick, who worked for Sasha in St. Petersburg moved his family in with Marc and Kathy and stayed for years. Big Nick ran things for Sasha in the Ukraine and was our guest for a short time.

Whatever else I was doing, I remained a full Professor at RIT. As you might imagine, my tenure and all of my off-campus activity was resented by some of my colleagues. There was a bevy of old photography professors that I shared a building with. First of all, they were threatened by digital imaging which was not hatched in the dark room. They also resented the space I commanded and that I was fast tracked to full Professor. They never said this to my face, but truth to tell, I was not one of them. I never attended faculty meetings or social functions. I was traveling everywhere, and they never went anywhere, except for the colleagues who used to have CIA grants and they would never get over the changes in their cash flow I had caused. So I suppose they had every right to resent me, but I could care less. I published books and articles, my projects and inventions were in the local and national press, and I brought fame to RIT; so, I really didn't need their good wishes and was impervious to their back stabbing.

Rumors about me included the fact that I had a major business on the side; that I was a Russian agent. The first rumor was true. I had begun to commercialize one of my patented technologies (technically the University owned half of the intellectual property but released it to me as part of settlement in the Kremlin case, but these guys didn't know any of that), and I had a condo in downtown DC and an office from which I dealt with Federal agencies.

Placido Domingo

On one of my many trips to DC, I was having dinner at a nearby restaurant which I frequented. That night the proprietor, a genial Peruvian gentleman, came to my usual table and begged me to move and have my dinner at the bar on him. The newly formed Washington Opera was taking the whole room, and they had let me start my dinner there by

mistake. He was apologizing over and over, and while I was getting up to move, Placido Domingo came over to me and said,

“Oh my God! Are we throwing you out of your table? That’s terrible. Thank you, thank you”. To which I replied: “That’s the least I can do for a world class tenor I discovered.” His stance and expression were ready for the explanation. I told him the story of how I was ejected from his debut at the Vienna Opera house because I was so thrilled I whistled.

“Oh, my God that’s a wonderful ... that’s such a great story. ... What is your name?” “John Ciampa” I said. “John Ciampa, thank you for discovering me and thank you for giving up your table.”

The whole scene took just a few seconds. I moved to the bar in a nearby room, had my free dinner with a free bottle of wine sent over by Placido, which I finished in my apartment across the street.

Two or three days later I was at the airport waiting for my flight back to Rochester when I bumped into one of the pesky faculty colleagues. He was one of those pseudo friends who would game your confidence to get something he could use against you. (It might come as a surprise to you that academia can be so petty). The undisclosed mission of this professor was to find out what I was doing in DC, which would become his gossip to be shared by his grateful colleagues. He must have known the DC patter pattern, which led him to pretending that he already knew what he was trying to find out. So he sat next to me, uninvited and chatted about DC endlessly, establishing how well he knew the city.

“So did you take the bus from the Pentagon?” he asked. I shook my head and winced as if to say “What would I be doing at the Pentagon?” Following an awkward silence, he went on, “ You know sometimes it’s easier to get to Langley from Dulles.” My stare was such that it could have meant anything - “none of your business” or “ how did you guess I was at Langley?” Before he could try his next ploy, Placido Domingo in an open coat and flowing silk scarf zoomed over to us, grabbed and pumped my hand while patting my shoulder. “ Hey John, thanks again for the other night; you were great; Where you going?” I told him and he apologized for not stopping to chat, because he was late for his flight.

“That was Placido Domingo!” My busy body buddy said dropping his jaw almost to his chest. “How are you involved with him?” I never answered.

For months I toyed with the colleagues who had heard the rumor that I was in the Washington opera with Placid Domingo. “Are you doing set design?” “You’re not singing” “Is it lighting, video?” I let them stew in their own rumors until I left Rochester.

Recycled Love

Before I tell you about reuniting with CD , I must re-establish some background facts. You will recall at the end of our relationship back in the 50’s, I thought she was pregnant with my child. I dropped everyone and everything and made plans to marry her. More than morals, I was drawn by a powerful mix of physical chemistry and social altitude. Paul Mok, a Cambridge friend, had eloped to Maryland and he helped with the plans.

When I went to pick her up, she announced that before we left to get married, she had two confessions to make. One was that she had just had goodbye sex with another suitor, and two, she actually was not pregnant.

I was so devastated. I turned down a scholarship at Harvard’s Littauer Graduate School (Now Kennedy School). My life long dream was to be at Harvard. I let it go, and took the scholarship to the University of Michigan, Horace Rackham School of graduate studies, where I met Carol, got drafted, and then got into Cornell Law School, got un-drafted, got married, got a law job in NY trying cases for Liberty Mutual Insurance company, and, and... you know the rest.

What you don’t know is that one day, back in the sixties, as I was coming out of a court room in Brooklyn, I bumped into CD. Nearly a decade had gone by, but she looked the same as when I last saw her. She was married to a Yale brain surgeon who converted to Orthodox Judaism after a near death experience. They had three sons, but she was not happy in New Haven. She would love to see me some time. I took her phone number.

Twenty years had passed since that chance meeting in Brooklyn, but I still knew where to find that phone number. Once when I was driving to DC from upstate New York, I was at a rest stop having a snack and something possessed me to go to the bank of pay phones (cell phones

were still not available). I called her and we had a chat which left me thinking she might be available. Months later, a letter from her found me somehow in Rochester, New York while I was still with Sue.

My marriage to Sue was falling apart. CD, by now, was divorced from the brain surgeon, and also divorced from a second husband, an amateur orchestra conductor. My extra curricular work brought me to DC often, and Marc Tucker and Kathy had given me the keys to their townhouse in Foggy Bottom. I arranged to meet CD in DC at Union Station.

I found a restaurant in Union Station where I could sit and wait for her train to arrive from New Haven. I marveled at the architecture in Union Station and all over DC for that matter. It brought back memories of the fifties when I was here as a WS intern and madly in love with CD. It made me feel important that I had some of my own private history in this historic place.

While I [Wa] sat waiting with bated breath, it occurred to me [Wo] that we had doubled our ages since last we embraced. She might look totally different. I was reminded of a similar situation where an old flame had put on a hundred pounds between union and reunion.

How much had CD changed in 30 years, I wondered as I sat in the Union Station bistro. Would I even recognize her? Just then a fat woman ambled toward me. “Oh my god, could that.... “ She walked past me and greeted another woman seated at a table behind me. Then an older woman ambled toward me on a walkerand no, she wasn't looking for me. And another and another. CD's train from New Haven was delayed enough for me to process a dozen or so mis-encounters. There was no way to reach her; so my choices were to leave or keep waiting. Finally she arrived. She still had her great shape and pretty face, beautiful mouth, and, yes, we had a passionate reunion; so passionate in fact that it eclipsed any joy provided by my marriage with Sue.

The marriage with Sue ended without the least bit of rancor. My step children were now in college and Sue was so busy, I don't think she noticed that I was gone. Both of us are lawyers so in less than an hour we drafted and signed a separation agreement on a yellow legal pad one Saturday morning, under the terms of which she got the house and land and I got the 51-foot sailboat, Century. I also owned everything in my library which had grown a bit from several hundred volumes I collected

while I lived in Manhattan. Some were rare books still in my library today. The contents of the library included a secret panel behind the Scholar's Edition of the *Brittanica* which slid open and held a case with Gold coins purchased by us after the economic collapse, probably worth a small fortune. I had totally forgotten these. Years later when I came back to transport my library to my house in Florida, again the hidden treasure slipped my mind. They are hers now; I should drop Sue a note incase she also forgot they are there. She still lives in the train station and has been through two more marriages.

Right after I left, or maybe before I left, she took up with Steve, a former partner and activist politician with whom she had an affair while she was married to Arthur, her first husband. By accident, once I had a date with Steve's ex- wife who told me that Steve and Sue were back together. They were very happy together living in the train station in the woods. I visited them from time to time and they were my advisors on what to do about Pictometry when I was bought out. This may have been Sue's happiest marriage until suddenly Steve came down with brain cancer and eventually died. I visited Sue a couple of times after that and she carried on dating, and now is married to another man, who I understand is a good guy who makes her happy. Sue continues to treat me and Chris, my son, and Craig, my grandson as family to this day.

My generation's culture supported friendly divorces, unlike in my parent's generation where the divorces were fewer and much more poisonous. Ex's hated each other back then. Not in every case, but in most, you will find cordial relations between ex's and their families from my generation.

Back to CD - not long into the new relationship with CD, she was in the hospital for surgery, a hysterectomy, after which we received some grim biopsy results. I lived in her room at the Yale New Haven hospital the whole time, watching the extensive coverage of the OJ Simpson case on the hospital TV, mounted near the ceiling, from the chase all the way through the trial, before she recovered enough to go home.

In that time they thought they had found what looked to be other cancers in the lungs and heart, and we were waiting with bated breath for final test results to be delivered from one floor to another. It seemed clear, it was a death sentence. At one point, appalled by the hospital's incompetence and insensitivity, I went to the department holding the test results and demanded that I bring them to the next floor instead of

waiting for 'Miss Ding Dong' to come back from her leave. I did and it was then discovered - I'm not making this up - that the heart imagery and tests were from another patient and the things they saw in her lungs were pneumonia scars, not tumors. So, we had a course change from hospice to home, oops.

I did talk CD into moving into the mansion her grandparents left her in Stratford which we used to visit when we were in college. It was ramshackled now, and I enjoyed becoming a one man construction crew and putting it back almost to the way it was in the colonial days. I also reunited CD with her sister Dee, who turned out to be quite an interesting, albeit strange, woman living alone with dogs, as she always did.

Not long after the reunion, we took her into the mansion for her last days. Her cancer was no mistake. We held her hands as she bravely left this life.

Pictometry

The Landisc which brought me to RIT was eventually sold to Day and Zimmerman, a large Philadelphia firm after which I created Skydisc later named Pictometry. The patent covering that Pictometry technology was issued to me in 1993.

As you know, I was a tenured full professor and so I had some freedom in my comings and goings. I spent long hours on the road by myself listening to books on tape, driving from DC to New Haven, to Rochester, back to DC. The classes I created at RIT included Media Theory, Man/ Machine Design and whatever else turned me on. Every class involved actual projects and students who would work for hourly wages and academic credit. This unsanctioned co-op program is how Pictometry began.

In the next phase of Pictometry, we did move off campus to downtown Rochester. A dilapidated victorian townhouse on Alexander Street, across from the prestigious Genesee Valley Club, and next door to Ye Old Toad Pub became Pictometry headquarters and home for some of us. On the first floor of our leased building, we had a bank of computers and

Mike Neary's office. There was a desk for Steve Schultz, but he worked late at night, mostly at home and used this desk when he needed to show me something. And finally a desk surrounded by file cabinets for Kim Mitchell, aide-de camp, who, as part of her pay, had a rent free apartment behind her office on the first floor. My office and living space were upstairs.

Most meetings were held in the Pub over lunch or dinner or a pitcher of beer. The owner of the Pub was an RIT official who ran the book store and welcomed our use of the pub. If we needed a fancy meeting place, I still had access to the Club across the street where I had been a member because I was married to Sue.

Rather than bore you with business details, let me just say, I think that business knowledge is pretty much the same as life knowledge. I also think knowledge is important but not as important as luck or destiny, call it what you will.

As luck would have it, I met Mike Neary, who could count more carefully and understood business conventions, and then, just as my Landisc money was running out, I met Steve MacDonald through a friend at Kodak. Steve lived in the DC area and had invested in tech ventures and now was selling the new digital cameras from Japan. Steve put in a few thousand and lots of sweat equity. He served as full time Marketing and Sales VP, and also helped raise capitol. He brought in Ken Robertson, who was scheduled to put in \$250,000 after some legal work was completed.

Fees for that legal work on both sides were pretty much eating up his investment, and so I was eagerly looking for another 'angel' funding source in the Rochester area where I had the credibility of having been Sue Stewart's husband. The town was small enough and her reputation large enough that this would save a fortune in "due diligence" expenses. This happened in the middle of the Robertson due diligence.

Besides the "rags to riches" interest, the Pictometry story might also serve as a demonstration of an interesting socio-psychological phenomenon. I am referring to the fox hole bonding effect, where the greater the risk, the greater the bonding effect.

The challenges and adversity of a new tech startup can erase all psychological barriers and create a fascinating group think. Individuals who would not have stopped to talk to each other, had they met under other circumstances, become a team, in every sense of the word.

A police captain - wannabe photographer; a black female veteran of the Iraq war; a drop out undergraduate nerd who lived on Twinkie's with his German Shepherd, an out-of- work accountant and students who should have been focused on their school work, all suddenly and magically grab an oar and stroke to the rhythm of the self appointed coxswain. I [Wa] realize, only now, telling you this story, that it was that magic that drew me to these adventures more than any monetary rewards.

The police captain, Scott Hill, was moonlighting from the Rochester PD; he was also very well connected socially through his wife. He brought in a plastic surgeon investor, Dr. Bob Loss, who had a summer home on Canandaigua, the closest finger lake to Rochester, and he, Bob, then introduced us to his neighbor on the lake, Bill Ryan, a successful developer, who only had time to see us that next morning before he left town.

At this point it was possible to fly an area and have the reconciled, geo-referenced oblique video on a lap top within a day. The emphasis here being on "oblique". Up to now, if an aerial image was to represent land and buildings, it had to be "orthogonal" looking (straight down, called photogrammetry), which took several weeks to be coordinated with geographic coordinates. The photogrammetry depicted every building without sides, basically what you saw of a building was the plane geometry of the roof. With our oblique image you could see the solid geometry nested in with the geography: the height of the building and every story of its facade were visible, which told you its use and its condition, a whole new layer of meaning, which might be of interest to we weren't sure yet.

It was early spring and Bill Ryan had already opened the lake house where we were to meet. We thought we would be meeting in his city home and so we had just flown that upscale Rochester neighborhood and had prepared a demo that centered on Bill's Pittsford townhouse. The oblique image had sufficient angle and detail to identify the make and model of his Cadillac sedan in the driveway. This sounds ho hum now, but at that time, that much resolution was amazing. There was no time to

go into the field and get “ground truth” measurements and coordinates so I “reconciled” the image with data from the GM parts book which showed the length of that model Cadillac to be 19 feet. In other words, I made sure that when the user set the measuring line, by mouse clicks, between bumpers in the screen image, the answer bar would read “19 feet”. Call it a “cold deck,” but all the players won much more than the dealer in the end.

I had commissioned Steve Schultz to invent a software that would accept ground truth from the field (I called it Electronic Field Study, EFS) and reconcile the geo-location with the photo-location of the pixels. This was also more amazing in its day than it sounds now. I do believe I coined the term “geo-reference”, and, of course, I did invent the word “Pictometry” blending two word routes from Picture and Metrics.

When we got to Ryan’s lake house, I could see he was amazed with the detail and the currency (one day old) of the image. “How much are you looking for?” Bill asked bluntly.

“Two million,” Steve MacDonald blurted out before I could speak. Steve was as bold as he was bald. Steve was one of the first men I met who shaved his head. Nowadays it’s hard to find anyone with premature partial baldness who doesn’t shave his head, but then it was still bold to be bald.

I [Th] overruled my [Wa] greed and decided to tell Bill the truth - that Ken Robertson had already signed a deal for the same stock and that his price was \$250,000. But I felt sure we would probably have no problem getting him to keep the stock he had already paid for and allow us to resell this batch at the higher price which was now justified in light of recent breakthroughs. Bill understood that stock values change by the minute in this kind of tech deal.

I noticed the same Cadillac in the driveway of the lake house and had the presence of mind to guess that he would suggest that we measure it in the image, and I had the street sense to wait and let him suggest it; a little bit of planning that counted on a little bit of luck.

Bob, the plastic surgeon, Steve Mac Donald, Scott Hill, Mike Neary, and Steve Schultz all stood in front of the picture windows framing the beautiful slope down to Lake Canandaigua. As luck would have it, Bill

Ryan looked up after examining the detail in the image and said, “Go ahead and click on that Caddy, if the number comes anywhere near 19, you got your two million.” Bill already knew the length of his car.

We did, it did, and Ken Robertson did agree to settle for the stock he already had as long as he could join our Board of Directors chaired by Bill Ryan. The Pictometry story and what happened after I sold it can be found on Wikipedia.

Das Boat

In our one page separation agreement, Sue got the house and I got the boat. “Century” was a 51 foot sloop made in France by Jeanneau. We bought her new in Annapolis and learned how to sail and dock the big boat on day cruises all around the Chesapeake and one longer trip to Cape Cod. Prior to that we had a Hunter 34’ sloop, which we sailed on the Great Lakes. Since sailing was a huge chunk of my [Ti] life, I should explain how I got from crashing little boats to managing blue water crossings.

My first sailing experience was decidedly negative and reinforced the general disaffection with boating acquired in my first power boat experiences with Eddy Abrams.

When I crossed paths with Steve Colgate, while pedaling “interactive” computer aided learning for AVI, I was not thrilled at the prospect of having to learn how to sail. That was the pre-requisite to his funding an interactive video/computer “sailboat simulator” program, which I would design. Steve Colgate was an America’s Cup winner and founder of the Off Shore Sailing School. With his name recognition and his aggressive wife, he was able to open sailing schools around the world in lovely vacation spots. The school I was compelled to attend was not so lovely; it was on City Island, a part of New York City. City Island was an unexpected small fishing village nestled in the metropolis inhabited by Italians and hippies and a community of poorer boaters. The school dock was part of a marina in the elbow of the treacherous East River which flowed out into the busy port of New York. I [Ti] found navigation especially challenging what with my dyslexia, and boat handling was not

one of my instincts, but the science of the ocean and the weather really fascinated me. For the actual sailing I had a horrible instructor to go along with the treacherous location. The traffic and currents of the East River made it the worst possible place to learn to sail. I left the school thinking I would never sail a boat if I didn't have to. As luck would have it, I never designed the sailing simulator, either.

Nevertheless, the "Van Man" in me knew that I needed to get out of the house. I had already learned that living in a vehicle was more efficient and more freeing than living in a house. A vessel powered by wind, instead of a vehicle would free its occupant from the cost of moving and the cost of stopping as well. Also there were a lot more places to park for a lot longer in a boat, and a sailboat added the prospect of much more room for creature comforts. Of course, there was a much steeper learning curve for the sailboat than the van, but now I had the basics from the Off Shore Sailing School.

Cousin Richie Alexander was the son of Auntie Ella who led the charge out of the ghetto. She changed surnames and moved to the West End where Richie grew up with Leonard Nimoy, of *Star Trek*. The Alexanders showed us that America had a lot more to offer than the North End, like college, white collar jobs, non-Italian wives, and other amenities, including boats. Four of the five sons were in World War II and the fifth, Richie, was one of the Airborne "Band of Brothers" in Korea.

Richie, a corporate executive now, had purchased a build-it-yourself, 21-foot Southwind sloop which he never finished nor sailed. The half-finished hull served as a container for snow and ice in Richie's Belmont back yard for several winters. Nevertheless, not knowing any better, I bought the half-built boat and put her on the lawn of my brother's new home in Monument Beach at the top of Cape Cod. My nephew Joe, my brother and I and anyone else we could find, glassed and glued it all together and launched it and re-launched it, re-glued it, re-launched it. We were never able to completely seal the hull opening where the dagger board keel could be raised and lowered. Not having any bilge pump we would be knee deep in bilge water in a couple of hours, if it weren't for the required, incessant baling with coffee cans. She was called *Andante* (slow moving). I brought *Andante* up to the Finger Lakes when I moved up there and continued to sail and bale in Lake Canandaigua. Eventually I traded it for another boat, and another, each time a little bigger, moving from the Long Island Sound to the Finger Lakes, to the Great Lakes, to

the Chesapeake, to the Atlantic, and then the Caribbean and Baltic seas. Here are all the boats I have owned:

Andante 21 ft Southwind sloop- Cape Cod; Finger Lakes, NY

Allegro 23 ft O'Day sloop-Finger Lakes, NY

Luna 34 ft Hunter sloop-Great Lakes, Chesapeake

Century 51 ft Jeanneau sloop-Chesapeake; Virgin Islands; Eastern Sea Coast

Avance 40 ft Custom sloop-Finland; Baltic Sea

TopCat 36 ft power catamaran-South Florida; Bahamas

Delfino 36 ft Azimut power yacht-South Florida; Bahamas

Delfina-54 ft Fairline power yacht-South Florida; Bahamas

Delfino 2-44ft Tiara motor yacht-South Florida; Bahamas

There were boring days, terrifying hours and some nights when you looked up at the stars and experienced inexplicable joy. There were different crews and different first mates and different waters. There were honeymoons with wives and finance's.

The blue water trek I would like to share with you happened right after I divorced Sue and was about to reunite with CD. I [Th] thought this would be a good time to be off shore, far away from it all and figure out what life was all about, and what I was supposed to be doing. I [Ti] was also intrigued by all that had to be learned to cross the ocean on my own, a bit scared [Wo] and mightily challenged [Wa].

I already had sailed Century, the 51' Jeanneau sloop in the Chesapeake and up to New England.

I learned as much as I could in Annapolis from the guys who sold me the boat, and I enlisted as my crew, Roger Tucker, Marc's brother, Bill Sampson, an RIT student, and Ernie, a recent graduate from Mass Maritime Academy.

We provisioned the boat, and learned about hiring weather consultants who would fax us weather warnings en-route. The one we chose was a homebound paraplegic in Cape Cod. We paid him \$80 to call and fax us weather information and best routes wherever we could make contact.

We set sail out of Annapolis in early November heading south down the Chesapeake to Richmond, where we were held for several days by our weather consultant. He was tracking a tropical storm in the Southeast Atlantic, and he wanted us to wait a day or two, and then head due east for Bermuda, rather than go south. We would be sailing over the top of the storm, and if we left Bermuda right away and made good time, we might miss the storm altogether. Knowing what I know today, with that prognosis, I would have aborted the mission, but back then I could not turn back.

Century had two huge helm wheels in the stern which provided leverage and good rudder control. The cockpit could be covered with a "bimini" (a collapsible nautical awning) but if there was any wind, the bimini became an impediment, so we travelled with the cockpit open, wearing waterproof ski suits, ski goggles and masks to keep our faces warm. The wind chill made it more like skiing than sailing all the way from Richmond on a course almost due east.

When we entered the gulf stream, all of sudden summer dropped in. The winter gear was stowed and we were all in shorts and T shirts. A pod of whales decided to follow as we approached Bermuda, sometimes right under the hull. I wondered whether they could tip the boat by accident or on purpose. It never happened. The whales were just curious I guess. Once we got into the pinball machine of submerged peaks around Bermuda, the whales disappeared.

A fax was waiting for us in Bermuda, advising us not to tarry; get fuel, water and head due South ASAP until further notice, not East. The system had moved North and was about to intersect with our Eastbound course.

We had lunch in Bermuda just to get off the boat, which might have been a mistake. Some of the crew were not too eager to get back on the boat with the weather report we had, but they did and I [Wa] tried my best to reward their loyalty and assure them that we could handle whatever was in store for us, if we worked as a team. We waited in line, afloat for diesel and fresh water. I was shocked to find out that the water cost more than the fuel, which was already marked up 100%. There were no options, Bermuda is in the middle of the Atlantic, and you were too busy wondering how anything got there at all, and so you paid whatever they asked.

While we were in line for the fuel dock, a small sailboat came up along side and the skipper asked if he could hang on to us so he could turn off his engine which was almost out of gas. He was an 79-year-old guy who looked and sounded like Walter Houston. He single-handed his 20 foot sailboat from Maine. He said it was like being in a washer-dryer for a week. He was trying get to the Virgin Islands, his life-long dream. His wife would not join him, and he decided to go alone. He looked really beat up and tired. He asked if he could sail with us, which was impossible because his boat was much slower, and we were in a hurry to get out in front of the storm. I shared our weather report and begged him to stay in Bermuda. We had enough time waiting for the fuel dock that I [Wa] could convince him to call his wife and invite her to come sail around Bermuda and if she refused, he should fly home, leave the boat here and maybe come back in better weather. He really did need someone to think for him and I [Wa] convinced him that leaving Bermuda to single hand this boat in what might lay ahead might be the last thing he ever did. This undermined the assurances I had made to my own crew, but they would not get off the boat now. He tied up to the fuel dock and helped us fuel up. He wished us luck as he cast us off.

It wasn't long before we were in 30-foot, long, sloping waves which persisted for four or five days non-stop. That meant no auto pilot; the boat had to be hand steered, and carefully. You had to re-set the jib and crab down the wave slope the first 50% and then for the last half of the descent, re-set the sails for speed so there was enough momentum to get out of the trough and up the slope of the next wave. If you didn't go fast enough in the trough, the the top of the mast would not make it up into the wind and the boat would back slide back into the trough and possibly broach, not fatal. If you screwed up you could use the engine sparingly to get you back up the hill, but not too often; you couldn't find a fuel dock out there, and that diesel also ran all the electric on the boat.

If you went too fast coming down into the trough you might bury the bow, the boat would then 'pitch-pole' (ass over teakettle), fatal error. There was no way to recover from that.

It made for nerve racking intense concentration hour after hour. It was more like mountain skiing than sailing except there was no rhythm to the changing mountains of water. To this day I don't know how we were able to stay focused that long. It meant no cooking, being tied to jack lines

even when we had to pee; no sleeping in beds. Off watch, two men stayed tied to the jack line and tried to sleep in a crouch position in the companion way, so that when the helmsman banged his foot, they were up on the sail trimming stations.

Naturally the lack of sleep affected our consciousness. There were waking dreams where I was at the helm and the waves actually became mountains and I was skiing, edging my skis to slow down, while in fact I was edging my keel.

On their watch one day, Bill and Ernie were spooked by the Bermuda Triangle stories and power failures that were actually caused by the main battery switch being turned to off. “Who did that? I didn’t - nobody did?” “Relax guys...” We managed to keep each other sane.

So that being said, what I am about to relate is a coincidence of such rarity and timing that it makes more sense to call it a miracle, which makes it a religious experience, which calls my credibility into question. Nevertheless I must tell you what I believe occurred. Yes, I have priors when it comes to hallucination, but I am sure that even when I was on acid, I kept one foot in the real world. I was not on acid. I was on a very real boat in a very real ocean when an hour or so past my six hour watch, I decided to stay the helm. Skeptics are free to think what they like, and will no doubt explain what I am about to report meteorologically or psychologically, but I assure you it did happen and, now you will be the judge of how and why it happened.

My watch partner Roger had hurt his back the day before, and was strapped into a bunk in one of the state rooms just under the cockpit deck seat. Ernie and Bill were finally sound asleep, curled up in the companion way, so soundly asleep that they did not respond to my change of watch signal. I decided it would be better for all of us to let them really sleep for a couple of hours more.

Every night I had maintained our course by keeping a particular constellation in the triangle formed by the shrouds (cables that support the mast) and the spreader (a horizontal arm that holds the shrouds out from the mast). I didn’t need to look at the compass. (By the way there was no GPS available). This night, there were no stars I could see; in fact it was hard to tell the black sky from the black sea. We had already reefed the sails (make them smaller for storm force winds), as we did every

night. It meant that we went slower at night, and also that we didn't have to work on deck in the dark should the weather blow up.

It must have been an hour or so before dawn when I observed a squall line off the port bow. As I got closer it looked like the squall from hell was crossing my path. I eased the sails myself and fell off to starboard from a "close haul," all the way to a broad reach (around 120 degrees off the wind). I came back up wind and tacked myself without waking the guys and on the way down wind on the port tack, the sky looked like angry black mountains all around me. I was surrounded by nebulous volcanoes. There was no compass course through or around this black ring. I gave up trying to maintain a course heading. I lost interest in the horizontal and was trying to find the route that would keep us vertical and all aboard. I knew that we had left the trail ride and were headed for the rodeo, or maybe the last round up. Un-mixing my metaphors, I mean to say, that the challenge was keeping the boat upright, and out here way beyond the range of any rescue helicopter, and way beyond radio range, I knew that if anything happened to the boat, that would be the unseen end of me and my crew.

Epiphany

When I knew we were facing death, there would be no point waking the crew. I thought about God as master of the universe and said a silent prayer which ended with thanking him for the ride, if this was the last stop. Just at that point, a strange peace descended on me like a warm coat. I felt ready to die. At that point all of the fear left my body. I could feel my shoulders relax, and my brain suddenly became much sharper. Something told me to look for a crack in the black wall of doom. I turned myself full circle and then just off the starboard beam, due East, there it was a crack of light, like a line of orange fluorescent chalk on a blackboard. It looked too narrow to pass my hand through, let alone the 15 foot beam of my boat, but I headed for it without changing the sail set. As I got closer, the scene became more biblical. Of course the crack grew wider as we approached. In an hour or so it became a canyon, wide enough to sail through. It was as though the seas parted for us. On

each side of the boat there were water spouts holding back 20 plus foot waves. I cannot explain how or why they rolled back against themselves on each side of us. There was some magical pressure between the two storms that also flattened the water. You must believe me when I tell you, it looked like a mountain pass. The vortex also put the wind behind me now, so I eased both sails, whereupon, the main boom flew out to starboard, with the jib blown out to port like a giant bubble. I was “running,” wing on wing, something you should never do with storm conditions; the slightest change in wind direction could bring the boom around with such force to knock over everyone and everything, including the boat. But, wing on wing worked to keep us sailing smoothly along the flat carpet of water, which before long became a red carpet, colored by a rising sun peeking over the horizon as in a Disney cartoon. I never woke the guys, and I never told them about it. In fact I never told anyone for the longest time, because it was a moment either too incredible or too special to share.

When they got up, all they saw was that the storm was over, which was enough cause to rejoice. We cooked a meal, and took showers. I was able to sleep in the bed for the first time in four days.

The scientist in me [Ti] is looking for a rational answer, at least something internally consistent, something which doesn't contradict itself. Let me step out of the story here for a moment and philosophize.

It is true that things happen and that these things may cause me joy or suffering. I know it is speculation, maybe even hubris, to suggest that my personal journey could be a part of the complex plan that moves the universe. The same event can be a blessing for one and a curse for another; how would anyone work that out for the billions of winners and losers. The faithful would answer “God isn't just anyone.” Eastern wisdom bids us abandon the winner/loser paradigm. I know all that and yet a couple of these accidents/coincidences were so well timed and otherwise unexplainable that there does seem to be a “fate”, a “destiny.” “Coincidence,” the atheist answer, is really a question masquerading as an answer. “Coincidence,” “chance” “accident” all mean that the phenomenon cannot be explained. There are things I believe which I cannot explain. Enough for now - I will save the philosophical refutation of skepticism for the essay at the end.

Spanish Virgins

We kissed the new concrete dock at Marina Del Rey on the east coast of Puerto Rico. A Connecticut entrepreneur was hoping this brand new marina resort would become a stepping stone to the Islands he named “Spanish Virgin Islands” - Vieques and Culebra. There were already plenty of boats headed for the American Virgin Islands, St. Thomas and the British Virgin Islands, but not too many knew about what Dan Shelly called the Spanish Virgin Islands. He gave out free charts with depths and distances. Most sailors and boaters flew down and chartered boats in BVI or St. Thomas, whose charters specifically prohibited any passage to Culebra and Vieques. The waters were not marked and there were some dangerous rocks just below the surface. You had to own your own boat and have “local knowledge” to be found around these islands, which was ok with me. It meant you only ran into Puerto Ricans with power boats and blue water sailors.

It was around Thanksgiving and we were invited to dinner by the owner of the new Marina Del Rey, Dan Shelley, who knew all about Puerto Rico and could discuss Joyce’s *Ulysses* with me. For the next few months I lived on the boat cruising the British, US and Spanish Virgin Islands. When you have a 51-foot sailboat with three state rooms, it’s easy to find volunteer crew, some local, some coming down from the North. Of course, everything was post card beautiful, and it took many months before I was bored with discovering new anchorages, snorkeling, sailing, navigating.

Week days when I wasn’t cruising the islands, Century was in its slip in Marina Del Re on the East coast or in its slip in San Juan by the yacht club and all the nearby elegance of Condado.

One lovely day with a stout breeze I was sailing with some friends past the island of Vieques off the South coast of Puerto Rico and US secret service men on launches pulled up right next to me at the helm and shouted, “Pull over and stop.” I tried to explain over the noise of their launches that with full sails on the 72-foot mast there was no way to put on the breaks. I did luff the sails and slowed down best I could, and another boat went by me towing a para-sailer who was up at least a hundred feet.

Later that same day back at Arturo's, Marina Del Rey bar, a formidable group approached my table, headed by George H. Bush. It was he who was parasailing. He shook my hand and apologized for interrupting my "beam reach".

For months Century served as my home/office in Puerto Rico. I would fly back and forth to Rochester, moving between snow drifts and coral reefs in the same day. I found time to learn to scuba dive from Scott Hill, who was a PADI instructor, as well as a Police Captain. The Rochester team did not mind coming to the boat to work. Pictometry also had a small plane in Puerto Rico which belonged to Bill Ryan.

Angel Investor

You will recall Bill Ryan was my first major investor, and my business coach and mentor. I met with Bill nearly every morning for breakfast when I was in Rochester, downtown near the office, or sometimes at his Pittsford home. I learned that Bill was a paratrooper at the end of World War II and jumped in the campaign to liberate Auschwitz. He was a private pilot and owned several planes which we used in Pictometry. In the large photo on the stand by the bar at his lake house, the portrait of Bill and his Canadian wife looked like a movie star poster. Either of them could have made it on looks alone. Bill's father was a semi-pro baseball pitcher who came to Rochester when even the Irish were excluded from the Genesee Valley Club. Bill also had a 'rags to riches' story, but was never one to brag about his medical philanthropy and his visionary high tech ventures. I [Wa] had never met a person who made a ton of money and was so wise, kind and principled. I don't think there are too many like that. As an angel investor, he was just that, an angel, patient, tolerant, inspiring. Bill died before Pictometry became a billion dollar company, so did Doctor Bob and so did Mike Neary, but their families, Steve MacDonald, Steve Schultz, and all my shareholders large and small all took home 24 times more than I did.

I kept the DC apartment thinking this would be my way back to the hustle-bustle if the easy living got too boring. I had friends in DC, some powerful and some not, but all close to the kitchen which was brewing the next millennium. DC was also a place where single females abound. On the ground level of my fancy building was a club that was eventually bought by Abramoff and became a place where he could unofficially bribe

officials by letting them wine and dine for free. His “public official” network went all the way to the White House, where apparently there were other emoluments, which eventually put only the donor Abramoff in jail and not any of the donees. For me it was a hoot; If I walked in there in my best blue suit, I could order the most expensive dinners and drinks for myself and whoever I was with. They would never take the chance of offending anyone, and so would always present me with a check marked “compliments of the house”.

Across the Navy Plaza and fountain was a twin building on Pennsylvania Avenue where Club 701 was on the ground floor. This was another DC ‘power bar’, only here you had to pay. I spent a lot on their gourmet food when I was introducing Pictometry to the feds; I also spent a lot at the bar meeting women, who in some instances would come to my place after a swim in our roof top pool. None of this provided long term satisfaction, but it was hard to see that when I was alone in DC.

1996-2006 MILLENNIUM CRISIS

I have made it clear that Pictometry was more of a boon for my investors than it was for me. In fact, I sold most of my Pictometry stock for \$6 a share, which left me with enough money to sail off into the sunset; the new owners sold my \$6 stock for closer to \$600... oops! Actually the folks who bought Pictometry sold it for 700 million dollars. It still exists as of this writing, now called EagleView, and is now well past the billion dollar mark. I couldn't believe anything I was involved in could be so important. I felt guilty about the amount I received. I might have been suffering from the Groucho Marx syndrome ("I wouldn't want to join a club that would let me in"). Or maybe I wasn't greedy. I had enough to begin a whole new kind of life.

The lure of change always involves major geographic moves and painful partner changes, and in many cases new careers. This time I knew I would be somewhere tropical; I knew I would be with a woman and I thought my new life would involve sailing and scuba.

CD and I sailed Century around the Spanish Virgin Islands and had some idyllic times, but the CD relationship ended when I realized that she was unable to see me as a subject. As with other relationships, I was the man in her life, an object. This became obvious at my mother's wake, where she failed to notice that I might be grieving. She could not get her mind off how she was being mistreated by my family, who were distracted and, admittedly, less than cordial. That did it. Also, she was jealous of every association I had with anyone else. The next trip we took to Puerto Rico, we separated abruptly one night after a concert in San Juan. She left for the airport in a cab.

Before the sheets were cold, I took up with CB, had a glorious time sailing around the Spanish Virgin Islands but again, the long term relationship did not work out because of her dependency relationship with her adult children. Nevertheless, we remain friends to this day.

As the millennium approached, the IT world had us all worried that the sky was falling because all the software in the world did not anticipate a

time that was not 19..something, and that this flaw would bring down banks and credit and defense systems and medical and, utilities and.....

As I said earlier, I still had the apartment in DC and had not been there for months. When I was CEO of Pictometry in the late nineties I was there more than anywhere else. Steve Mac Donald lived near by and I had friends and clients and casual relationships with several women all centered around Club 701, where I spent a lot of my time and a lot of Pctometry's money. The bartender there was an Iraqi who called himself Persian because he was ashamed of Saddam Husain. He spoke English without an accent and had a photographic memory. If you were in that bar more that once, he knew everything you told him about yourself, and what you drank. It wasn't just about tips. I always left Mo a tip, but I also took the time to ask him about himself on quiet nights when he was the only one to talk to. Some nights he would alert me to to that fact that a single woman at the bar had asked him about me, and would send her a drink from me, without asking.

Every town has a spirit all its own. Boston has a combination blue stocking, egg head and sports fan spirit. Manhattan is a Gatsby town. LA is about your relationship to whoever works at whatever in the movies. DC, of course, is about how close you are to kitchen heat. Because your status depends on your connections, (who you know), it is imperative that you never let on that you don't know someone. This has led to an amazing and unique DC social patter pattern, especially in first encounters. In DC encounters with strangers, you never ask and you will never be asked directly about position in the power structure. You must learn to deduce from silent observations. At the other end of the game, the skill is retroverted, in that you must learn to give an impression by not trying to impress. The skilled can see through your pin striped suit or the pin in your lapel or the names you drop. In fact trying to impress is a dead give away that you are no one. I am telling you all this because it will help you to understand what happened that November night in Club 701.

I had not seen Mo for many months, maybe a year, or more. One night when I was in town staying at my apartment by myself, I went down to the club for a drink and some company. It was mobbed. Unbeknownst to me, GW Bush's victory celebration was in full swing. I would never have gotten past the suits at the front door, if Mo had not waved exuberantly and shouted my first name. The suits parted like a show curtain and I made my grand entrance. The first drunk nearest the door

bowed and stepped out of my way. That was a cue for each person after him, all of whom reverentially stepped out of my path to the bar, pretending to know who I was by raising a glass or giving me a thumbs up. When I got to the bar, one guy actually made a young man get up and give me his seat. Mo had my drink in front of me in seconds. Hundreds of eyes were trying not to stare.

Karl Rove saw this out of the corner of his eye, and on some unconscious level, realizing that he could not let everyone else think that he was the only one who didn't know who I was, he slid in next to me and put his hand on my shoulder.

Rove was in charge of payback, and there was actually a book going around with the trays of Jumbo shrimp, with all the proposed White House appointees in all branches of government. This was supposed to be a secret blue book, but everyone at this exclusive party was allowed a preview. The open collar, laid back atmosphere was camouflage for the underlying tension in the dozens of opportunistic hearts.

You now understand why Rove could not ask who I was or what I had done. I was there and he had to guess from my responses just how important I was. Remember I happen to have some skill at being someone I'm not.

"Hey Karl," I said, in a matter of fact tone, after he put his hand on my shoulder, barely taking my eyes off my drink.

"Are they taking care of you," was his opening remark, as he signaled Mo to bring me another drink. "More than I deserve," I smiled and turned to him with a very low key expression which said, 'you don't have to bother with me' which caused him to move the pat on the back to more of a hug. The fifty or sixty sets of eyes, trying not to stare, knew who he was for sure, and they just saw that I was someone he had to hug. Muttering nods all around me fell to a hush as my buddy Karl left me. Then suddenly there was a struggle to get to the space he left by my left elbow. From my right elbow came: "How's Texas?" I shook my head dismissively "Your from Illinois, right?", came the voice which found its way to my left elbow. There were muffled guffaws from the fake cognoscenti further down the bar, which embarrassed the questioner enough for him to give up the space. I shook my head as if to say "They let anyone in these days."

Mo brought a third drink and pointed to a bejeweled, intoxicated middle aged woman. She waved and I nodded my thanks. Eventually we sat next to each other, and eventually I took her back to my apartment and learned that she was on the short list for Assistant Secretary of Education, before she passed out. The next morning we went for breakfast at the deli on the ground floor next to Abramoff's fancy restaurant. She was too drunk the night before to remember what happened and to chic, the next morning to be embarrassed. A silent pact of mutual discretion was agreed to with nods and smiles. She told me she was married and I told her I wasn't even a Republican. We never saw each other again.

I kept the apartment for another year or more and Judy and I enjoyed coming down for the unique DC culture: plays, concerts and especially the string quartet at the National Museum across the street, which also served an elegant Sunday brunch. Occasionally I spent time with Marc and Kathy and my lawyer friend, David Johnson. But I had no business in DC any more and eventually sold the apartment, leaving more time for my Florida hobbies: sailing to the Bahamas, scuba, etc..

You would think that a person old enough for a pension would have completed his self discovery; not me. I didn't know yet that I [Th] could never stop wondering, whistling and writing; that I [Ti] would never stop inventing; that I [Wa] would never stop struggling, rescuing, and that I [Wo] would never stop worrying. The best I could hope for was controlling the worst impulses.

It would take me another decade to learn that it doesn't matter whether anyone reads what I [Th] write or listens to what I play; and it doesn't matter if no one uses what I [Ti] invent, or salutes my [Wa] leadership or appreciates my rescues. I have to do what I do.

For all of us, almost every work day is peppered with visions of the deserted tropical beach, or a cruise ship, or scuba diving from your own yacht. These daydreams are all brainwashing from the "retirement industrial complex," which, like Eisenhower's "military industrial complex," has enough gravity to change reality. Millions everywhere stay on the merry-go-round and keep reaching for the "gold ring."

You know that I retired to a van in my early thirties and bummed around the western US, central America and Europe, but that was not the "gold

ring.” That was more like jumping off the merry-go-round. It was after the Pictometry invention pay off that I grabbed the “gold ring.” Now I was not bumming in a van; I was yachting in the Atlantic, Baltic, Virgin Islands, and other places too numerous to mention. This might be the only place you can hear from some one who did grab the gold ring, and had the opportunity to assay it. I’ll cut to the chase; It’s not real gold.

Judy

It wasn’t long after we moored the big boat in Fort Lauderdale that I met Judy. As I mentioned, I was still bouncing back and forth from the boat/home to DC apartment, to Rochester room. While the boat was still in Puerto Rico, I had a last meeting in DC with our clients and collaborators at USGS. Their legal counsel Julia and I had become friends. She was Italian and a lawyer who was doing more than practicing law; so was I. When Julia heard that my boat life would be moving to Florida she insisted that I call her friend, Judith Hudson, who was attractive, intelligent and played piano.

Just after I found a mooring for my 51 foot sloop, Century, near the bridge at Las Olas and a place to park my rental car, I called Judy and was turned off by the tone of voice on her answering machine. She had what sounded like a Texas accent and that was a plus, but there seemed to be a “don’t bother me” tone in the message. I knew enough to look past that, and eventually we made a date to meet at Mango’s, on Las Olas, not far from where the boat was moored. That day I had a lunch meeting with the Argentine couple Danny and Lilly, who were my live aboard crew, and then another lunch with Bill Ryan’s son who lived in Florida and wanted a job, and finally a third lunch with Judy. I was instantly attracted to her cleavage which I noticed first, and then her lovely smile, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Living on the boat was not an option for my new first mate Judy. So, instead, I bought a house on the New River.

The house on the New River was a small house with a huge deck and boat dock. The dock was 60 feet and I kept Century there, behind the house, in a narrow canal off the New River. The canal was so narrow that it was impossible to turn the boat around, so I had to back this huge

single prop boat down a half mile winding canal without bumping into the boats on both sides. Once she was tied up to my dock, we had to wait for high tide to get her out. There wasn't enough water for a boat that size. We also had a tiny power boat, a bit larger than a jet ski, which we used to go down the New River to downtown Fort Lauderdale, for movies, grocery shopping etc..

Once I committed to a Florida home and the Bahamas, the sailboat had to be replaced. There is not enough water for the draft of a large sailboat. In fact, the name Bahama, from the Spanish "Baja Mar," means "low water."

I sold Century for a song and bought a power catamaran, "Top Cat." which I later discovered had major engineering defects. It was ok for local dive trips but challenged all my nautical and mechanical skills on the longer cruises to the Bahamas. On one such adventure in the Bahamas, one of the engines caught fire and then a storm forced us on to a very far northern Bahama Island where we were stranded for sometime before we could get the boat repaired. Some details of this voyage from hell might be of interest.

Top Cat, a 38 foot catamaran, had two large gas engines, one in each hull, powerful enough to move her at 36 knots once she was on plane. It was my friend Marcos who discovered the hidden design defect, long after the voyage from hell and just before I obtained a pointless judgement against the bankrupt manufacturer. The air intakes for the engine compartments were backwards; they were supposed be looking back toward the stern so that opening would let air in from the rear vortex flow. Instead the opening faced forward, letting in the salty spindrift from the bow wave. When we were going 35 knots on a flat day everything was perfect, but if we went any slower, which we had to do with seas over 2 or 3 feet, one or both of engine compartments would flood with sea water and have to be manually pumped out, and the salt cleaned off the engine heads. As obvious as it seems now, I could not figure how the water was coming in.

The voyage from hell began well. We made it from Fort Lauderdale half way to Freeport, Bahama in record time. When the weather changed I had to slow down. Suddenly we had pelting rain and a fire in the starboard engine compartment. The salt had shorted an electrical connection near the fuel line and we had a gasoline fire. I knew from my

captain training, not to use water. I smothered the fire instead. Even with the fire out, I shut the starboard engine down.

Like most catamarans, Top Cat's aspect ratio, its beam (width) to LOA (length) was such that running on one engine meant I could not turn to port. With a hard port rudder I could go straight ahead, which was not always the direction of choice. For any course adjustment to port, I had to circle around to starboard and come back up on course. This was more problematic as the waves on our beam (side) grew large enough to capsize us. I knew that once a catamaran capsizes there is no way to right her. So, I kept the 180 degree turns to a minimum. I held that course which was North North East (13 degrees), and began "mayday" distress radio calls. We were too far away to reach the US Coast Guard, and the Bahamian Coast Guard was not into rescues; they were mainly for parades and receiving US aid.

Judy, who was not a seasoned sailor, managed to remain calm enough to help wherever she could. At one point on our default course, with the fire out, I let her take the helm. She had her hands on the steering wheel and I put my arm around her to comfort her. My reassurances were interrupted by the almost comical catapult of the only windshield wiper. It shot off the arm out over the rail and into the sea. Now we could not turn to port and we could not see through the windshield what lay ahead, except for the few minutes after Judy would clamber out on to the foredeck and wipe the rain and spindrift off the windshield.

Finally a voice responded to my 'mayday'. It was a yacht captain who was tied up somewhere in the Bahamas. I had no time to navigate or even look at a chart. I had to keep the boat upright and try to see through the opaque windshield. The radio voice captain took my location, course, steering range, and then plotted the wind direction and speed. In a few minutes he came back on the radio with the best option for us; we could fall off to the east, and the wind would help us get to an inlet between the Grand Bahama island and then take this shallow inland canal up to the northern most island in the chain.

We made it into the cut. The rain stopped and with the one engine we were able to get half way through the channel without having to make a left turn, until we came across a fallen tree which was laid across our path. I could only turn to starboard to get around the obstruction and there I ran hard aground. We were stuck on a sand bar. I could stand in

the water next to the boat, which I did, and then dove under the boat between the hulls to have a look. When I came back out, Judy was practically screaming waving her arms. I soon found out why. Greenies found us. These are flies whose bites can actually draw blood. They attacked mercilessly. I told Judy to jump in the water. We had to duck under the water and hold our breath several times until we could get back on board, and hide in the cabin. I realized that nothing I could do on my own would get us off the sand bar. I played Atlas, from every angle, with every line and every trick I knew, but TopCat never budged an inch.

All the while Judy was trying to raise anyone on the radio. Finally a voice came back with an offer to rescue us for a price. The rescuer had an inflatable bladder that would be powerful enough to lift us off the sand bar and he would then follow and/or tow us to the closest marina which happened to be that northern-most private island. I agreed on the price and then he informed me that he was four or five hours away. We killed the greenies in the cabin and waited there until the swarm left.

At dusk, coming toward us, I saw a strange flat raft with a hippy sitting in an office chair, controlling an outboard motor with a homemade system of pulleys. The designer of this vessel had the good sense to remove the wheels from the office chair, but it still looked like a cartoon. He hailed us, and I stopped him before he could leave the channel. He jumped into the water and swam over to our boat. He went under the boat for a look, and then went back to his raft. He came back to us, dragging the huge deflated bladder. He positioned it under both hulls and then popped up at our stern with an air hose in his hand. "Can you connect this to your compressor please?" He asked.

I explained that I didn't have a compressor. He stood in the water up to his chest, holding the air hose in one hand, and scratching his head with the other hand like Stan in the Laurel and Hardy movies.

"Don't you have a compressor?" I asked, hiding my vexation.

"I did but it is broken, so I didn't bring it.... Don't worry ..." he said standing in the middle of nowhere with his deflated solution. I realized that I was dealing with an idiot. I got back on the radio to no avail. Just then a twelve foot dinghy came up the canal with two guys in it. My rescuer waived his arms frantically. They stopped.

“Do you have a compressor I can borrow,” he shouted. I couldn’t believe his naiveté. Before I could comment on his idiotic request, a loud “Yes” came back from the dinghy. How can I expect you to believe that the little dinghy, which just happened to appear in the middle of nowhere, just happened to have a large enough compressor to fill a leaky bladder enough to lift a 38 foot catamaran? Only because it really did happen. I just confirmed it with Judy. I let her give me her recollection before I suggested any details.

“Stan Laurel” followed us to the private island, towing us wherever the canal turned to port. We could not have made the turns required to get into the marina; anyway, all the slips were full with an international tournament of fishing boats. We tied up to a sand barge at the edge of the marina and found a plank we could walk from the barge to a sandy spit of land. Judy flew back the next day and I stayed, working on the engines for more than a week: getting the salt water out of the engine oil, cleaning the salt off the electrical connections. I still had no idea how the water got in there. Eventually I got Top Cat back to Florida and traded it in for Delfino, a brand new Azimuth with twin diesel engines. It was like moving from a homeless shelter to the Ritz.

Judy had partially moved in with me by then, and Danny and Lilly were still in the house. For a time Judy kept her townhouse in Pembroke Pines, where she had a Steinway baby grand. We both became scuba divers, probably the only two piano playing divers on the east coast, and she one of the only pianist- divers in the world who wore an insulin pump.

During the scuba training, I developed an enormous respect for Judy’s courage. For some years, the insulin pump served as her pancreas, which did not work at all. If the pump put in too much, she went into a coma and if put it too little her life was shortened. Learning to live with that is challenge enough for most adults; learning to dive without it was unheard of. She did it, and as we learned about the effects of climate change on islets of coral, we also discovered the effects of hyperbaric pressure on the islets of Langerhans (just off the coast of the pancreas where insulin is made). There were no doctors or divers who knew anything about this. At first we figured it would be necessary to put in extra insulin in advance to compensate for the time she would be without the pump under water. She became hypoglycemic under water, vomiting and had to be brought back on board. We continued to lower the bolus (advance dose) of insulin, but it always was too much. That would have

done it for most humans; not Judy. She kept trying until finally we learned that for some strange reason her type 1 (rare form) diabetes did not need insulin at all under water. We are still not sure exactly why, but were happy that she could dive as much as she wanted without the insulin pump.

One of our favorite spots was a coral reef just off the coast of Fort Lauderdale, where every time we went down, we were greeted by an eagle manta ray, who seemed to recognize us and would swim with us wherever we went. We made trips to dive spots in the Keys and the Bahamas, where we searched for 'pieces of eight' from sunken pirate ships. I became a 'dive master' thinking that I might make a career of this fun sport, but making fun a business is harder than making business fun.

Around that time, I bought a baby grand piano. Without realizing it, some part of me [Th] was preparing for a much more rooted lifestyle.

The millennium came and went without the world ending. Danny and Lily were still living with us in a second bedroom and at one point Lily's sister came for a while from Italy, where she had been living. Danny helped with home build projects and Lily worked as a waitress in Fort Lauderdale.

It wasn't long before Judy and I were looking for a bigger place to put ourselves and, our two grand pianos, and, of course, my boat. I [Ti] used my new found database skills to store and match up all of the selection criteria with the real estate options. It was a buyer's market and the options were overwhelming. I actually made a little app that weighted the variables in the formula, each of which had to do with the lifestyle we thought would please us most. We looked at mansions and shacks from Boca Raton to Miami Beach; from the Keyes to the all the Bahama islands. Where we lived only mattered in terms of what it offered to our piano, cruising, diving, walking, and dinning aspirations. The valuation app took account of the interiors, as well and the environs in unique ways that aren't covered in real estate ads. How far on foot from the front door was the nearest point of interest (restaurant, theater, scenic spot); how far from tourism, marinas, and of course price per square foot, overhead. The app finally chose The Point, a new condo complex in Aventura, between Fort Lauderdale and Miami. We moved into the luxury condo just before 911. It had large balconies with sea views and pools and tennis courts, and spa, and gyms- all that you could expect in a luxury

resort was there for you to enjoy every day, including a deep water marina where I owned my own slip.

I think all of the 1200 condos at The Point came to be occupied by Jewish people from New York and South America, which was a plus for me. Judy and I were the only ones not from New York or South America and the only gentiles. Nevertheless, I felt quite comfortable as the “shabish goy.” I knew the culture, the cuisine, the humor and many quaint yiddish expressions, all of which endeared me to my fellow residents, so much so that they elected me President for several years.

After 911 my boat became a U.S. Coast Guard asset and I was back in uniform. Judy and I joined the US Coast Guard Auxiliary. I did not aspire to rank; rather I wanted to stay on my boat and teach, rescue, and patrol, which I did until that became less satisfying.

The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary has commanded more than its fare share of our time this past decade, so a few more words here seem appropriate.

Judy and I joined just after the 911 attack when there was an outreach to boat and aircraft owners. I was already licensed as a captain and Merchant Marine Master by the Coast Guard but that did not matter I had to spend grueling hours in mental and physical training to become a “Coxswain” which gave me the right to drive my own boat on official Coast Guard missions and command US Coast Guard crews of Auxiliarists or regular Coast Guard. We did search and rescue missions and safety patrols around vulnerable targets like cruise ships and bridges. We also taught safety classes and I became a TCT facilitator which meant I would work with regular Coast Guard crews to keep them thinking like a team. I found that branch of social psychology interesting and made some original contributions to the course materials. They sent me to California, Guantanamo, Cuba, and onto Cutters and small boat crews all around South Florida and the Keys. There was no pay as such, just expenses, fuel and repairs for my boat, and I got to wear the uniform with my rank on my epaulets.

Judy did the boat crew training but went into leadership instead of field operations and rose to the highest rank in the 7th District, i.e. Commodore, which put an Admiral star on her epaulets. Her responsibility included thousands of personnel and hundreds of vessels

and aircraft from North Carolina to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. She was one of the most effective leaders the District had ever seen. There was no question in anyone's mind she would have become the national leader, had it not been for her cancer, which you will hear about later on. It always amazed me how much people were willing to do for ribbons instead of dollars.

Lunch Bunch

The lunch bunch began in the cafe at the spa of the Point (Aventura). After exercising, I would sit at a table near the coffee bar for a chat with some retired doctor friends, and soon my table became a salon where hours were spent in thoughtful discussions on everything from living at The Point to the point of living. The group took on an informal set of rules which kept the discussion relevant and somehow gave the floor to the most well informed. A psychiatrist and I debated the basic philosophical value of psychotropic drugs. A friend running for mayor and I might discuss Plato's Republic. The minion was mostly retired doctors and a few lawyers and retired business leaders usually all men, occasionally joined by a woman or two.

Initially, the group tried to stay for lunch at the same table to support the food concession which wasn't doing well, for lots of reasons. After a string of failed concessionaires, the group would arrange to travel off campus to any number of restaurants as far away as South Beach to the South and Fort Lauderdale to the North often with my boat as the transport.

One quiet Thursday before noon one of the doctors killed himself. This suicide surprised all of us; he hung himself in his own coat closet. He was wealthy, in great health, extremely intelligent. This mystery haunts me to this day.

Another friend was ruined by Bernie Madoff, others died of this and that.

The fact that some of us no longer live at The Point in Aventura has only affected the frequency of the "lunch bunch" gatherings. The few who are left from the dozen or so, still meet occasionally.

2006-2016 Last Flight

At the beginning of this decade I was already bored with retirement. Lunch bunch, scuba diving, taking care of my boat more than using it, volunteering as President of the Condo, volunteering as Coast Guard Auxiliary instructor, left me unfulfilled.

Rather than risk averse, I [Wa] may be the opposite, a risk junky. I was not happy messing around with voluntary pursuits. I had to have some skin in some game. At the same time, the wannabe writer and musician were clamoring for attention.

I discovered the Frost School, which is the University of Miami music school, a truly remarkable place. I spent so much time there, listening and learning, that, eventually, I moved to Coral Gables near the school. But sitting and searching quietly for esthetic bliss was still not enough. I [Wa] had to be out there trying to make something work that I[Ti] invented. Could I do both?

I [Wa] founded the tech start-up, Altametry in the Spring of 2011. I [Ti] and the team I [Wa] put together invented and developed an **Autonomous Lighter Than Air (ALTA)** platform for imaging and remote sensing, and signal relay. I used all my own money, thinking that when the time came, it would be a snap to raise second level funding from all my old pals who got filthy rich on Pictometry. That still hasn't happened. I spent down my small Pictometry fortune. I hired scientists and engineers at RIT and the University of Miami, and FIU. The team became smaller and the market has continued to change just a bit faster than the six or seven prototypes we built.

With the arrival of drones, instead of folding, I doubled down. I bet on both horses, which forced me [Ti] into thinking about solutions where both technologies could be blended: one for the long strategic watchover (persistent surveillance) and the other for the targeted tactical response. The market has been encouraging but not yet rewarding. I [Wa] at times seem to have found the courage to "bet the farm," as it were, and then sometimes I [Wo] feel like I'm beating a dead horse.

Most recently I [Th] have backed off of running the company. Leadership is more hands off than I [Wa] ever imagined was possible. I [Wa] have micro-managed street gangs, start-ups, families, university faculties, condos, Coast Guard detachments, but suddenly, I have found a new trust in the crew, that leaves the captain free to play the piano and write. I [Wo] sometimes think I might be Marcus Aurelius who can pull together all my disparate selves and sometimes I [Wo] see myself as Nero, fiddling while Rome burns.

I should tell you a little bit about the crew. Five or six have come and gone but a core remains together. Despite long dry spells and many dry wells, the core team keeps digging. We have completely built, tested, marketed and scrapped a half dozen prototypes. Still, I see no signs of giving up. Lately the team has been joined by my son and my nephew, with help from my son-in-law, who runs a more successful business. This makes me feel like Giovanni de Medici. It would be a double blessing if these efforts turn out to be a financial and a family success. I have chosen to be completely honest with them in these dire times. When the well runs dry, I provide them with money for groceries and lodging and travel, the only other reward is sweat equity. You could say for us it's not the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow; it's the rainbow itself that keeps us chasing. I know from Buddha that craving success is the root of all suffering and I know that suffering can only be avoided if craving is controlled. I'm working on it.

I won't bore you here with technical details about Alta, there are corporate websites and lots of You Tube videos. If you're interested, the search word is Altametry. If you are interested in Pictometry the Wikipedia search term is Pictometry.

The Greeks on the island of Paros, where I stayed for a while with Jane, have a unique, prophetic answer to a standard greeting. When you greet someone with "*tichanis*", which means "how are you," the Parians answer "*mea chara que thio traumares*," which means "one joy for every two troubles". In this decade the 'traumares'/ 'chara' ratio seems to be holding true. One of my 'traumares' was the loss of life long friend.

Ken

Ken and I, you may recall, met in 1953 at Boston University. We lived through more than a half a century, some times close, sometimes at a distance, but always in touch. I think we were both amateur philosophers (everyone is really) and that is what connected us. Right up until the end, when we talked about his impending death on the phone, we were trying to figure out how to handle what comes next. Ken thought he might be leaving all there was; that took more courage than hoping for more.

By the time we were thirty or so, we knew so much about each other, that he was a voice in my head and I in his. Ken introduced me to bagels, sailing and classical music. He did not want to be Jewish; like many New England Jews, he behaved and dressed like a Harvard WASP, which, by the way, infected me for a time. The good part of that infection was my introduction to literature and classical music.

I was asked to speak at his memorial service in January of 2008, at the Harvard chapel. There was an irony at the funeral service, lost on everyone but me.

When Ken liked something, he adored it; when Ken admired something, he worshiped it. If it was funny to me, it was hysterical to Ken. He was tall and good looking even though his eyes seemed too large for their sockets, and when he was 'ga-ga' they almost fell out. Here's the irony, Ken was always 'ga-ga' about Harvard. You may recall some of my stories from the fifties, when we were at BU, and worked and partied at Harvard. All our friends were at Harvard, and we were there too, but not really. Now, Ken Lappin's funeral was an official Harvard function, at the chapel and the faculty club because of his wife's position on the Harvard staff. I know Ken would've been 'ga-ga', to the max about his funeral service, as he was at his wedding, at these same Harvard facilities. Not only had he found a beautiful Indian princess, but he got closer to Harvard as something other than an interloper. Niti, Ken's wife was not only lovely and brilliant but also kind and wise. I had also attended the wedding with Ma and my sister Pidg. Ma was gone now, Pidg attended the funeral service, as well.

Like me, and others of our generation, Ken was a serial monogamist; he went from one long term relationship to another. He had fewer than I, but more than the average for this generation. The first wife Claire

Bagenstose, the daughter of a psychiatrist, very WASPY was just what Ken wanted at the time. The second was ULLA from Sweden, which is how I met Bodil, my daughter's mother; then another, Claire (Tankel) was Bela Abzug's landlord in Greenwich Village, and one or two more before he met Niti. Niti and Ken adopted two unrelated baby girls from Indian orphanages and raised them to become preppy Cambridge young ladies.

Early Ken was an integral part of my Boston assimilation; later Ken had a lot to do with my fascination with Manhattan. Ken was also ga-ga about sailing which helped push me into the boating. Ken and family cruised with me on Century, which was memorable. Eventually Ken moved back to Boston, where he was transformed from wild man to mature husband and father. Oh, and this always tickled me, he being the craziest one of our group, became a lay psychoanalyst and had a clinical psychotherapy practice. He has been gone now for more than a decade and I can still hear his voice in my head.

Daughter

One of the "chara" joys of the decade appeared just after the 'traumare' sadness I just told you about. I had just come back to Florida from Ken's memorial and the coldest days I had ever seen anywhere. I was still reeling from the shock that someone so full of life could suddenly be gone. Death, which happens to absolutely everyone, is always a shocking surprise. Not long after I was back in Coral Gables, I received a call from Ken's widow, Niti. I told her to call if there was anything I could do to help her through this sad time. She called, and I assumed there was some legal advice she needed, or some consoling. "Are You sitting down?" She said. I sat; she continued. "I just received a call from a person who says she is your daughter. I did not give her your number, but promised to give you hers."

I called the number as soon as I hung up with Niti. After a few seconds on the phone, my daughter, Hildy, and I were finishing each other's sentences. I really felt instantly, almost magically, connected to her. There really is some truth to the genomic bond. The last time I saw her, she fit in my fore arm. Now she was married and mother of two grown children, my grand children, whom I had never seen. We arranged a meeting in Boston of all places, where it all began. She wanted to pick me up at the

airport. When I came out to the baggage claim, this exceptionally beautiful, well dressed woman was smiling at me. We instantly recognized each other without ever having seen each other before. She was so perfect, I waited for the other shoe to drop: addiction, insanity, neurosis. There was no other shoe. She is that one in a million who is beautiful, intelligent, kind and wise.

Moments like this come once in a lifetime, no, maybe once in a thousand lifetimes. What are the odds that you lose a child and find her again, and when you find her, there is still a place for you in her life. When the odds are that slim, it may be ok to call it miraculous. The miracle goes on until this day. We have been as close as a father and daughter can be for 12 + years as of this writing. None of the superlatives I use need to be toned down. I still find her beautiful, intelligent, kind and, most importantly, loving. And if that wasn't enough, I have an Irish son-in-law, and grand children and, most recently, great grand children who qualify equally for all of the superlatives. Hildy is not only beautiful and wise but also talented in putting things together. She is a successful interior designer and could be an award winning chef, if she wanted to.

Did I mention that everyone in that family happens to be intelligent, which is a delight. I am constantly learning from them. This goes for the entire cast of characters: Hildy, her husband Paul, PG her son, Elsa her daughter, Michael, Elsa's husband from Ireland; even the babies and the dogs are intelligent. What are the odds of all that happening just in time for me to appreciate it? If anything can be called a blessing, this is it.

I spend hours in philosophical discussions with my grandson PG. He and my son Chris, are the only living philosophers left in my life. Hildy happens to be philosophical as well but does not expound. Everyone in the blood line seems to think alike; it's eerie. I begin to think there might be some genetic philosophical predisposition.

We have spent time together on the Cape in the summer and I have visited Pittsburgh a dozen times, usually around Thanksgiving and never a rough patch. Now, since our joyful reunion, we each have had our share of troubles. Paul, my son in law, had to escape prostate cancer; he did. Judy enjoys their love, as well, while she has been struggling through her cancer. There have been financial ups and downs for all of us; love troubles and joys for both grandchildren. I tell you this so you understand that this is not love in la la land. We are in the real world with

real family love, and not in denial about the ‘traumares’ that come with the ‘chara’.

On Thanksgiving the family includes Richard and his family. Richard was adopted by the family that adopted Hildy, and I learned, after I was in my dotage, that he was the illegitimate child of a woman I dated when I was finishing high school. She was a friend of my sister-in-law Mary’s, and, as it turns out, the lawyer Mary worked for, Al Lerner did the adoption for Richard before Hildy was born, and when Hildy came along, the same family also adopted Hildy. For whatever reason, I was never told about Richard until some thirty years later, when the birth mother of Richard called me from a bowling alley and first apologized for being drunk, and then with pins and balls crackling in the background, she told me that she had my son who had now grown up with my daughter.

I called my sister-in-law who was pivotal in both adoptions and she, Mary, who was once best friends with Richard’s birth mother, assured me that Richard was not my son. By the time Hildy and I were reunited, Richard learned about the possibility that I might be his father, as well. He had met his birth mother. He sent me his DNA code and I went to have mine done at the local branch of the same organization and they could not find his. Richard has an entirely different mindset and a more than usual set of problems, which leaves him dependent on Hildy’s family. I stopped looking for proof of any biological connection, but Richard is still treated as Hildy’s brother on Thanksgiving.

I have spent my happiest hours with my children and grandchildren and great grandchildren. It took lots of internal dialogue to get over the guilt of giving her away and to get past the feeling that I [Wo] do not deserve the joy they bring.

I have finally learned that the troubles fade while the joy lasts. Or rather I should paraphrase an idea I got from David Brooks who said in his book, The Second Mountain, that suffering which is not transformed is transmitted. I put it this way: you either process your problems (‘traumares’) or you pass them on; if you pass them on, the problems multiply; if process them, you multiply. I don’t remember how to say that in Greek, but I do remember another greek aphorism that covers the matter with two words: “mathos pathos”- we learn from suffering.

Brother

The other reunion I am grateful for in this decade is the one with Joe. My brother and I fought a lot as kids. He was almost four years older, much bigger and much stronger. He had a natural bent for leadership and was the leader of his gang, his teams etc.. But then so did I, and, as you already know, from the very beginning, I resisted his dominion. I would use my wit to undermine him. I would make him lose his temper and chase me around, which would then embarrass him, because I was so much smaller.

I have already mentioned some of the bigger fights that made orthopedic history. And I believe I have already covered the political differences caused by the Vietnam War, (with him in the thick of it as a Lt. Colonel and me a Venice hippy with a theater that hosted the Peace and Freedom Party). Nevertheless I can tell you, in the end, blood is thicker than politics. When he visited me in Venice, I would not let my hippie friends demean what he was doing; and once when a fight broke out in the officer's club after a drunk lieutenant pulled my pony tail, he had my back.

He came to Manhattan when I bought my condo and brought all his tools including an entire table saw. We worked together day and night remodeling my condo and offices. I did the same for him when he built his five bedroom house on the Cape. But the real re-connect occurred when he became my client.

His homeowners' insurance company denied his claim for water damage on the house after a major storm. I sued the insurance company on the policy, and for the first time, a home owner's insurance policy was scrutinized as a legal contract and found to be flawed. This case, which started in a local court in Barnstable, was about to rock the entire insurance industry. I [Wa] was a single, pro bono attorney on one side, taking on several law firms on the other side. The moot Court champion of the Cornell Law School came back to life. In all modesty I must say that I wrote what should have been the most significant brief of the decade in Contract law; it went all the way back to basic common law of England and all the way up to the highest court of the Commonwealth, where we lost on a technicality.

I was allowed to represent my brother even though I was not admitted to the Massachusetts bar because I filed a reciprocity affidavit stating that I

was admitted to the New York and Federal Bars and “was a member of the bar in good standing.” When I was admitted to the bar, in 1961, there was nothing more to do; once a lawyer, always a lawyer until you were dead or dis-barred. I had been so far out of the law loop, I didn’t know that for years and years there had been continuing education requirements and fees in order to maintain your license, all of which I had missed.

So on the day of the oral argument of the final appeal, a document was handed to the highest court of Massachusetts by opposing counsel, showing that I was not “in good standing” in New York. So I could not appear for my brother. He could argue the case himself which he did, but could not use my brief, which he didn’t. You will recall my brother was not an orator, or a lawyer, so we lost. I was crushed beyond belief. I felt like the fool who came to court and forgot to put on his pants. I still cannot let this go. I blame myself for being such an idiot. If I could have whipped myself I would have.

My brother wanted to stop at Ye Olde Oyster House, right near the court house after the debacle. Joe was not one to wax philosophical. As I mentioned he was not what you would call eloquent. He was a much better athlete and soldier than orator. He ordered martini’s and raw “little neck” clams. He raised his glass and said, “You won brother, fuck the Court, you won in my book”

“What ?” I swallowed a clam whole.

“You hit a home run and a crooked fuckin’ ump called it foul”.

That was the first time I recall him using a metaphor. Once again, I had a warm feeling that my brother admired me, which was almost lost on me all these years. I thought he should have resented my ‘fuck up’ and all the costs and time he put into this through the trial and two appeals, and the fact that he declined a 25 thousand dollar settlement offer on my advice. Instead he was smiling. He said it was good to see me in action and fighting on the same side.

This new bonding had a lot to do with my decision to have a Cape Cod home of my own. Joe chose a large home on the water, walking distance from his house. He presented solid arguments for buying it, which have turned out to be correct. I bought it and continue to enjoy it. I am there less often, now that Joe is gone. Mary still lives down the road and the five nieces and nephews and the fifteen grand nieces and nephews and

the four great nieces and nephews all still gather at the house Joe built, every Sunday for Mary's pasta and meatballs.

I am grateful that Joe was on hand for my re-union with my daughter, and was as thrilled as I was with meeting his beautiful niece. "She 's a doll" was his frequent appraisal. (That's the nicest thing you could say about a woman in our North End dialect.)

In my house hunt Joe was showing signs that were worrisome, but I could not believe that any one as fit and strong as he was could ever fall. I was at the meeting when the doctors handed him his death sentence. I slipped out into the hall by myself. I have never burst into tears like that before that I recall. I pulled myself together and made myself into a comfort blanket for my nieces and nephews, who insisted that he would beat this. Every one pushed him to get other opinions and look for other treatments.

I tried to be there for him as much as I could, and I think it made a little difference for him. He confided once that he wasn't afraid to die, and that he had faced death before, but what was driving him crazy, was not knowing when. If I tried to get philosophical, he would change the subject. Joe had long since left Catholicism, and I'm not sure where that left him. We never had anything like a spiritual discussion.

When I was at the Cape, I would join him in the morning when he insisted on coming downstairs from his bed. Toward the end I found it remarkable that with death staring him in the face, and with all that pain, he would watch old movies, almost all day. I would sit with him and feign trivia arguments, like we used to have as kids, about some old favorite movie star.

I was out of town on the last day, February 7, 2012, and my nephew Joe called me on his cell phone and arranged a last chat- where for the first time both of us used the word "love."

2016- FINISHING SCHOOL

If I told you I spend a good portion of my waking consciousness in front of screens, you might assume that I had joined the ranks of the couch potatoes; that is, unless you knew about the part of Amazon that offers world class courses in everything from gardening to quantum mechanics. These are some of the best lectures I have ever heard anywhere. Some better than Harvard. After 40 or 50 hours of physics, I feel as if I have just completed another degree. I have also taken several complete courses in philosophy, music, microbiology, Chinese history, linguistics and religion. You will see evidence of these 'new tricks' in the 'old dog' later the Epilogue essays.

Rocking Chair Nightmares

I left them out of my internal inventory in the Prologue, but I must talk a bit about dreams. Whether you recall them or not, there is no getting around the effect they have on your waking consciousness. I have been wondering, like many, what was the Designer thinking when dreams were put into the system. Atheists would jump up here and protest: there is no intentional design. But I'm no longer a member of that party, so I have to believe that dreams may well be part of some grand plan, without knowing details of the plan. For reasons you will learn about in the Epilogue essays, I have concluded that God's goodness is not to be judged by mere mortals, and that includes the intention or effectiveness of any design. Bad dreams are bad because we make them bad. I take full responsibility for my nightmares, which also leaves me with the freedom to make something more of them.

There is some evidence that other mammals dream; so it may be that dreams are some kind of indigenous, post processing system for the operational mind, like a dress rehearsal, or a practice scrimmage before the game. Freud tried to make a science of this.

Earlier soothsayers looked at dreams as omens. Behaviorists (Skinner) believe that dreams are excrement, sewage and should be flushed away and forgotten. I don't buy this sewage view at all, and I don't subscribe to the idea that dreams are omens, not omens, but more prompts.

You may recall, I [Th] have put one of my elves, or I should say, selves, [Wo], in charge of the dream machine. This raw part of me by nature gets things twisted, cannot tell consistent stories, and has irrational fears. But those cries should not be ignored, should not be flushed away as sewage. I[Th] listen and try to mediate, mollify and on rare occasions modify.

On those rare occasions my dream has brought something to my attention that prompted a needed course change in my waking life. One example, is the night I dreamt I was in the company of some young colleagues at Alta, and I was trying to impress them with the fact that I was not ready to be put out to pasture. I was wearing some dapper tan slacks and Italian sun glasses, looking very continental. I wore no underwear, which is something I do. (Underwear and sox are often left out of my daily attire because it saves time and laundry and bending when I change my activity from walking, to swimming to gym workout.) In the dream, as I sat down facing my young associates, a stream of urine arced into the air, right through the crotch seam of my pants which were suddenly transformed from continental dapper to 'incontinental' diaper. My young associates were agog and I could see my image morph to senility in their eyes. Without consciously realizing that this was a prompt about bladder control changes that come with age, the next morning, I put on under pants as I dressed. I would never have thought about this if it weren't for my [Wo's] anxiety dream, and, yes, my [Th] having to tell you about it.

One of the hardest scenarios for me to change is the navigational nightmare. In almost every dream, there comes a scene where I am lost in what should be a familiar place. That is the backdrop against which most of my nightmares occur. (It just occurs to me, this may be the unconscious energy for all my geo-referencing inventions.)

In one recent dream, I am dressed in a fancy suit and driving my new big black Cadillac around Boston, Cambridge, (I did actually buy a new big black Cadillac which satisfies both the street kid and the tree hugger in me, since it is a hybrid electric car). Actually the location is a melange of several old haunts, thanks to the fluidity of [Wo's] sets. The running subtext, through all these scenes, is a disappointment with how I am received by others. Suddenly, I'm on a college campus, where no one

knows who I am, and that hurts. I don't like being anonymous. Who does?

There was a homecoming celebratory atmosphere all around me, and I was trying to impress the strangers. I was looking forward to a particular concert and yet, there was also meeting I needed to attend. Suddenly, I realized that I had lost my car. I can't remember where I parked. (This is a reflection of something that happens frequently in the waking world.) I realize that I have to let the car go and find the meeting on foot. I hate walking. I don't want anyone to know that I don't know where I'm going, so I don't ask for help. I am walking and walking and walking trying to find my way. I see familiar buildings, brown Gothic sandstone buildings. I think to myself, in the dream, I should write an essay about how inefficient the university is as a system for learning: moving brains to information instead of moving information to brains, which would be a billion times more efficient. The effort and expense of one of these 'cumberstone' universities would be enough to educate the whole world in a virtual classroom. I try to book mark this thought so I will remember it when I wake up.

Suddenly, I find myself inside one of the buildings in interminable hallways and flights of stairs. I'm going down across and up and then down and around narrow 'Escher' stair cases that seem to lead nowhere, not only lost, but I still have to pee. Bladder pressure and my anger at the wasteful use of space in all the pointless hallways leads me to a decision to piss on it all, figuratively and literally, right there in the hallway, which would afford both relief and revenge. As I reach for my fly zipper, I think about getting caught. Just my luck I will be standing with my dick in my hand and the president and board of regents will suddenly appear round the bend. That scares the piss out of me.

Jump cut to an outdoor scene where I find myself finally giving in, and asking a group of students for directions. They seem to be trying to help and at the same time have some fun hazing this senior freshman. I cannot recall the name of my destination and they are firing building names at me. "Do you remember was it Science or Arts?" They snicker.... Suddenly, I can't remember shit. I am racking my brain, I can't remember why I came, where I've been, where I'm going. This must have been a senility preview. But so real... very real. My mind wasn't there. All I could come up with was "Moriarity", which I blurted out, without knowing whether it had anything to do with anything. "For that you have

to take the boat, the Golden Ferry,” one of the students said. I knew now they were teasing, but they all had convincing straight faces, and feigned helpful smiles. I was embarrassed by the sudden loss of mind, so I stormed off in through the back door of an Italian deli in the North End. I rushed to the front of the store, suddenly losing all access to everything I know. I did not know who I was, where I was. I actually experienced amnesia. I was racking my brain for how I might get help. I knew I might have a sister, but I couldn’t think of her name. Now, this next scene, for some reason, is the third act curtain of lots of my dreams. Somehow I wind up in front of Snow Hill and I see the house and everything has changed and I’m not sure who lives there anymore. (Freud would say the house represents my own consciousness, from which apparently I have been dispossessed).

I make a wrong turn into an alley in the neighborhood, and there are several pre-teen boys all with strange haircuts: short hair with long tufts, slicked up almost vertically. I realize that I have \$600 cash in my pocket. They seem unsure about what to do with me. I feel weak but I can’t let them know that. I’m sure they have knives, and I wish I had my gun, but I know I don’t. I try to be genial. I ask their names hoping I might recognize a family name and make a connection. That doesn’t work. I try to act like a “gangster” so they might have second thoughts about rolling me. I feel helpless, and can’t think of what to do. I wake up trying to think of my sister’s name and could not for a few seconds, even after I had awakened.

So, if I was taken on a this virtual trip to dementia, why? Maybe so I would appreciate the mind I do have left; or maybe a portent of what is coming. Maybe I [Wo] was just playing out an inapplicable scenario so that I could be grateful that none of this really happened, and maybe that is the point. I [Th] assure myself [Wo] that it won’t ever happen, and I’ll do whatever it takes to keep thinking.

Another function of dreams is to pepper the sublime with the ridiculous. For example, one Salvador Dali dream I had fed me me a powerful realization wrapped in a laugh. I actually woke myself up howling with laughter. In the dream, as usual, I’m walking, not sure where I’m going: I am shocked and dismayed to find myself lost in my own town. I have turned a familiar corner to find an unfamiliar street. I had been rescuing my sister previously and am now perplexed about whether and how to help her. As I am running through possible courses of action of what to

do, I discover that I have also lost my cell phone (another scene borrowed from reality) and cannot call my sister for directions to her home. I suddenly remember that I have taken over the care of a dog (my sister has three dogs). I become aware of a dog leash in my hand and look down to see that the leash is attached to the dog's tail, and the scruffy little mutt has been dutifully scampering backwards all along to keep up with me; the dog looks up at me with loyal trusting eyes as if to say: I will follow wherever and however. This is artful caricature, a perfect satire; suggesting that I am "wrong way Corrigan," leading compliant subjects. Who is more compliant than a dog led by the tail. So ridiculous, it becomes sublime.

I am no longer haunted by my dreams and actually enjoy them on occasion. Whether or not I can credit the internal dialogue for this consciousness cohesion, is not important.

I will continue to talk to myself because I will always need to learn more, and always need to continue the powerful friendship between the selves that has finally begun. The French have a saying 'comfortable in your own skin,' which I find handy explaining this self recomposition. The French have another handy expression which roughly translates to "the more things change, the more they remain the same."

What remains *the same* with me is: I'm still in Coral Gables, still struggling to get Alta off the ground, (pun intended), still learning to be a husband, a caregiver, a brother, father; learning to be a musician, writer, scientist.

What has *changed* is that I'm not faking it anymore, not pretending, not suffering. I am really focused on where I am in the process of each journey. I [Th/Ti/Wa/Wo] keep taking the next step, no matter what, and will do so until my last breath no matter how far I get.

With the knowledge that there is no end to the struggle, comes the realization that there is no success. No success means nothing to crave. No craving means no suffering disappointments. No disappointments means more time for appointments with self and others.

I don't want to give you the impression that I am impervious to the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune." On the contrary I can still blow my cool, over a paper cut. I still lose my way and wind up in a ditch, regularly, but I get right back on the road in minutes, sometimes hours.

I have finally learned that the propensity to panic is stronger in me [Wo] than in most and that means the need and the opportunity for control is much greater.

With this new attitude, instead of disappointments, untoward events become surprises. I remain curious, rather than disappointed, about the endless unfolding of surprises. I have come to expect surprise. Expecting surprise seems like an oxymoron, but that is the balance point where I can relax, on one foot planted at the top of the steeple, and really enjoy the view.

This new ability to deal with surprises dispassionately has brought me more control, which has brought me more choices. The new balance also brings not only a re-ordered mind, but a brand new body. It may be hard for you to believe, but I tell you truthfully that comparing this decade to the two previous decades, I can do ten times more physically and mentally. Rather than fretting and hiding and faking, I figure out what, if anything can be done, what part of it, I can do, and I do it.

Caregiver

What follows is an example of some of the surprises of this decade and my responses, in my new role as action hero.

A lot of time was spent in hospitals this decade. I'm standing in a hospital corridor, not far from our home in Coral Gables. I find myself holding back tears as I text Judy's children, that she has lung cancer. I was with my brother when the doctor's lips turned down and the word "cancer" snaked out. Now it happens again and I find myself feeling much less helpless. Why? A mantra kept floating by in front of me, like an airplane banner at the beach- 'NOW YOU CAN CONTROL YOUR RESPONSE TO INEVITABLE SUFFERING'

Cancer, Diabetes, GI mystery disease, we took them on one at time, and tried to figure out what I could do. And there is always something I can do, however, small or large.

Recently, my common sense has been able to accomplish and complete tasks that I would never have attempted earlier, everything from plumbing, structural engineering, medicine, and aerodynamics, to name a few. In one case, we had to decide on whether to have surgery for Judy's cancer. The decision required a number of test scans, the last of which was a PET scan; Judy's kind of diabetes makes such a scan all but impossible. The experts had not figured that out. The insulin pump experts didn't know about the PET scan requirements, and the PET scan experts didn't know about the insulin pump. I'm telling you this not because I want to show how smart I am, but to show you that the absence of self abnegation creates a self trust which gives you the ability to evaluate inadequate expertise instead of deferring to it blindly.

There is no question that my common sense saved Judy from an abortive test or a hypoglycemic coma.

The testing experts required that Judy's insulin pump had to be removed for a minimum of five hours and that the blood sugar levels had to remain below 200 for the scan to work. I figured out that Judy's blood sugar will rise 35 points an hour without insulin, which meant in five hours she would rise 175 points. She would have had to remove the pump at a blood glucose level of 25, at which point she would be in hypoglycemic coma. The surgeon agreed to circumvent the test.

We had quality time together in the days leading up to the surgery. It's as though we realized how much we cared for each other suddenly when "death..." might "...do us part."

I learned about lung surgery from Wikipedia. I learned that the planned laparoscopic extraction of the affected portion of the right lung, (which has one more lobe than the left lung) should be quick and easy; so, no big openings and no long recovery, and there would be plenty of right lung left along with the left lung to supply the needed oxygen. On the day of the surgery, Judy was her usual trooper self. I held her hand until they wheeled her into the operating room.

I tried to read in the waiting room. When half the day was gone, I began to inquire at the reception desk, which was pointless. I knew something was wrong. This was taking much too long. We had arrived at 6 am. The surgeon didn't come out until 2:30 p.m. to tell me that he had to remove all three lobes of the right lung, instead of a part of one lobe, as originally

planned. He had to make that call to be sure that he got it all. He did this without knowing whether the two lobes of her one remaining lung were healthy enough to supply the oxygen she needed. He had to take that chance. The alternative would have been to schedule another surgery and that might have been too late. So I believe he made the right call.

Before the surgery I had the endocrinologist put in writing that Judy's insulin pump should not be removed during surgery. The anesthesiologist and the surgeon agreed. I repeated it to the team several times and showed each of them the written instructions, as they wheeled her into surgery.

After the surgery, in the waiting room, while the surgeon was explaining to me what additional surprises might be in store for us, a male nurse came rushing in asking me to take all Judy's pump supplies and follow him to a recovery bay just outside the operating room. When we got there, Judy was unconscious with tubes everywhere.

"Do you know how to put the insulin pump back on?" The nurse asked me.

"What? You took the pump off?" I swallowed the next sentence, which was: "You fucking idiot."

Here was a surprise for my tired, stressed brain to deal with. I did mention the written instructions, and the surgery nurse said it was an accident. There was no point proving that removing the pump could not have been done by accident. The move here was to correct the foolish error and not to punish the fool. I had to get the pump insulin back into her body.

I started unloading the infusion set and the needle and syringe. The nurse insisted that I would not be allowed to administer my own insulin; it had to come from their pharmacy. "What"!!! I said with some anger creeping into my voice, I admit it. My wife was without insulin under anesthetic. The thought crossed my mind to grab him by the shirt and slap him around, but that course of action was quickly dismissed. Instead I told him that he had to get the pharmacy insulin here quickly. He ran off with my insulin bottle as I set out all of the components on the bed.

With my cell phone on speaker, I called tech support of the pump manufacturer, and explained the situation. It would have been almost

impossible for me to figure out what to do from the few times I had witnessed Judy installing the pump's infusion set. She usually did it in private in the bathroom. The insulin from the hospital pharmacy arrived as I was talking to tech support.

The next surprise was a linguistic one. The tech support person could understand me but I could not understand most of the mangled English sentences she put together. Instead of panicking, I solved the communication problem by asking her not to try to make sentences but just to answer my questions with a simple yes or no at each step in the process. She understood and agreed.

“Do I need to drain the new cartridge of air“

“Yes” She answered

“Ok can I do that with the same syringe and needle?”“Yes” She answered

Just then a hand pulled the cartridge and syringe out of my hand. It was Judy, still mostly unconscious from the anesthetic. “You don't need to drain these cartridges” she muttered eyes closed. Tech support agreed: “Oh jas dat correck”

“I'll do it” Judy grabbed the syringe. I guided the needle, and slowly she inserted the canal into her body and replaced the cartridge in the pump, restarted the pump, connected it to the infusion set and then fell back into unconsciousness.

“Unbelievable” the nurse and I couldn't believe what we had just seen.

“Kinna hep you dannysingel today” said the cheery voice on the phone.

Judy recovered from the surgery and we dealt with the next surprise. The narrow margin of success for the prescribed chemo therapy was based on cures that may have occurred in spite of, rather than because of, the chemo. I pointed that out to the experts. That, and the fact that I was sure chemo would make her GI problems worse, led us to our decision refuse the chemo. Our own common sense was supported by a survey of opinions from a bevy of friends and family with medical and/or scientific knowledge, including, Judy's, ex-husband/doctor. Despite the mistrust for the chemo experts, we were convinced to go along with the radiation experts recommendation, namely proton radiation therapy. We would be destroying cancer cells with a 400 million dollar cyclotron which spins off

a proton beam from a hydrogen atom, which bombards individual lymph nodes where there might be cancer cells.

There was a black hole I could have fallen into around Christmas that year. Christmas is a magnifier of disappointment, especially with the 'Joe Bifstick' black clouds hanging over me: my wife's cancer, and the surprise heart attacks of my son Chris and Nephew Joe; not to mention the financial surprise that the Snow Hill condo sale was going to suck out legal fees, instead of bringing in revenue, and, as always, Alta was on the brink, as was Airborne Response, my drone venture, and, oh yes, the reverse mortgage extension which was a sure thing, surprisingly disappeared.

Bank balance is the biggest threat to my psychological balance. It takes all of the mind control I have for those numbers not to throw me off the steeple. It will surprise you, as it did me, that I went ahead with Christmas lights. Christmas spirit around us, abounded in friends, family, waiters, and hospital techs. I think that anything which causes all of us to focus on one thing simultaneously, be it a religious holiday or a natural disaster, pushes us to see that invisible link which connects us. So, wouldn't everyday be like Christmas if we could live next to that basic connection?

We had a proton radiation on Christmas eve 2018, and there was a mind boggling sense of good cheer everywhere at the Miami Cancer Institute, in all the patients and staff. You would of thought we were at a carnival instead of a cancer hospital. At midnight after we got home from the radiation therapy, we watched the Vatican midnight mass on TV and a serendipitous sermon. It was just what I needed. Carl Jung said that "synchronicity" is the result of the 'collective unconscious.' Whether you believe in the collective unconscious or not, you cannot deny these unexplained, just in time, coincidences; like Henry, back in Malibu, magically connecting to my inner most thoughts. This time it was Pope Francis on TV. His sermon was about the basic feeling of rejection being at the bottom of all suffering, and that it was controllable (a Buddhist sermon from the Vatican). Pope Francis equated the existential suffering to an original sin, a sense of basic unworthiness, which makes us feel left out of God's love. He said the baby Jesus was an unusual representation of the divine love because of its innocent, primordial, unconditional nature. Those words lit the way around the black hole. The same primordial joy can be found in every baby's silent stare. I believe there

would be no human love without that divine love. I thank baby Jesus often without thinking.

Thanks for Thanksgiving

The surprises around Thanksgiving, the following year, provide evidence of how inner positivity somehow links to outer positive energy. Someone said, “you can’t make good luck, but you have to recognize it when it comes”. I would add, “and be grateful”.

We had missed a couple of Thanksgivings with my daughter, one because of the birth of my great granddaughter and one because of Judy’s cancer surgery and recovery. We were delighted to be invited in 2019. Judy was still not able to walk across the room without being out of breath, but, rather than have me miss another Thanksgiving, she was willing to take a chance on airport wheelchairs and face masks to keep her one lung from infection (this is pre Corona).

Just before we were set to leave, a surprise memento came back to haunt me. Remember the spastic dental student and the root canal at University of Michigan? Well, after 60 or so years that memento had an abscess above one of the roots that caused horrific pain for days. I knew there was no root in the tooth and could not understand where the pain was coming from. The impersonal experts at the dental chain store where I have an account said the only solution was a major reconstruction which would take weeks and \$12,000. That meant no Thanksgiving.

Nevertheless, I did not cancel the airline tickets. On the last day, as if miraculously, I found another more honest, single-practicing Dentist who found an antibiotic which just happened to shrink the abscess and ease the pain just before it was time to board the flight and kept it away for the entire holiday week.

The next six days were a study in family love. I am not used to being respected as an elder, and I must say, it felt great to have ears for my stories and truly intelligent fresh points of view for my old philosophical quandaries.

We got home safely and Judy had enough energy to decorate the inside of the house for Christmas. I hung a few wreaths with blinking lights on the outside.

Judy was still suffering but, I believe, managing. She is without a right lung, but with a surprisingly clean scan, showing no sign of recurrence. She is without a functioning pancreas but with a surprisingly new insulin pump/sensor, technology, which makes every day easier and may just add years to her life. As luck would have it a Cape Cod neighbor, who is a retired endocrinologist, recommended a surprisingly simple prescription which solved her mysterious GI problem, one that had been as devastating as it was illusive, with more than five hospitalizations and as many different diagnoses.

I [Th] am happy to report that I [Wa/Ti] rose to the challenge of being her sole care giver, social secretary, tech support, chauffeur, ambulance driver, chef, and medical ombudsman. Were I to expect gratitude, I would inevitably be disappointed. The need for gratitude is based on the craving for acceptance. There is never enough gratitude; just as there is never enough acceptance. I have come to the point where I do not expect either, which keeps the relationship running. This is my longest relationship with one woman, more than 20 years. The more I have to give without any strings, and the happier I am with my self [Th].

Perfect Storm of Public Surprises

The first biggest historical surprise of this decade would have to be the election of Donald Trump. The second biggest historic surprise is that the country did not fall apart and somehow there was unprecedented economic prosperity until the pandemic, and we are all still alive.

“Trump,” is a character that has taken up more media space than any other name in the history of the species. And now he takes his place on the stage of my private history. It bothered me, at first, to cast him as a character in my story, since I have no personal history with him, but then I realized he has to be there, because he is a pandemic public surprise that I have to deal with, as does everyone else.

Nothing about Donald Trump attracts me. His manners, his sensitivity, his appearance, his intelligence, his attitudes are all reprehensible. He seems unable to see beyond his need for acceptance, which is never satisfied. He is the antithesis of Plato's guardian. Plato knew that it did not take much skill to exploit the ignorance of the masses, which is why he suggested aristocracy (leadership by the best few) over democracy (leadership by the ignorant many). The many could care less about participating in government as long as there is bread and circuses, and Trump had surprised us with the size of the audience for his circus of fake news, and his illusory bread. A certain intelligence level is required to wash away the droppings of the Trump circus. Only the enlightened few are sophisticated enough appreciate democracy; so, ironically, the only protection for democracy is an aristocracy.

The Trump circus has divided the country into a smaller no longer respected elite and a larger easily deluded mob, so deluded that an impeachment can be declared as a victory. The disappearance of an agreed upon standard for fact and fiction is a big surprise for me.

Add to that, the Corona virus invasion from inner space, and you have the perfect storm of surprises. There are things happening now that have never happened before. Never before have so many been asked to do so much at the same time. Never before has there been such an invasion from inner space that ignores walls and borders. Never before has private health become such a public concern. However the perfect storm ends, things will never be the same.

Crown of Thorns

Last week Corona (which you know, means crown) was a light beer I drank on occasion, with a raw lime. This week it is the new name for Armageddon. If the world is still here and you're reading this, you will no doubt have heard about the Corona Virus. This microscopic equal opportunity invader has on this day (the "Ides of March" 2020), waged World War III, and brought every nation to its knees, faster than Hitler and Alexander the Great.

This little bastard has turned our strength, togetherness, into our weakness. Little Bastard is an apt term for these invaders from 'inner space': "little" because they and their microscopic planet are too small for

us to grasp, and “bastards” because they have no natural parents; instead, they hi-jack living cells to procreate. It’s hard to keep from thinking that there must be some evil genius behind this attack. They have weaponized human contact. They use friends and family as their foot soldiers and the alarmist media as their war drums to create panic.

I [Wo] do worry about Judy, who with her diabetes, and one lung would be in big trouble if the little bastards found us. The worrying is not crippling; instead, it has led me to a brand new life style. I [Wa] am “ordering in” during the siege, trying to stay away from friends and family; I [Ti] read scientific papers, trying to connect quantum physics and virology, and nanotechnology. We shall remain self-quarantined, even though some areas are opening to the public. I will do everything I can to keep us safe from media hysteria and viral infection.

This event is so rare, so critical and so universal that it forces us to think about God or the absence thereof. The belief that there is no God supervising nature requires a much more disastrous leap of faith, which you will read about in the next chapter. I believe the pandemic could not have happened without a divine power knowing about it. If you think it preposterous that a supernatural power would be connected to a virus, think how preposterous the opposite view is. How could it not be connected? Gnosticism, Buddhism, Platonism and now modern physics all leads us to the realization that there is a universal plan, which we can never fully understand. The plan allows us, of our own free will, to create havoc, but also allows us to continue to learn and correct our mistakes.

I believe the pandemic is a wake up call. Like it or not, we have all suddenly been forced to think globally; and social distancing has forced us to rethink togetherness; without space/time buffers to communication, we are testing the limits of virtual togetherness. More than ever before we see now that we are all in the same boat, and we must work together to keep it afloat.

You might already know whether we made it to the end of the decade, 2026, when the human race will be 200,000 years old; I would be 90, if I’m still around. Whether ‘I’ am or not I’ll be with you on some level.

LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

The old pessimist joke goes: “I see the light at the end of the tunnel; and it’s a train”!!! The light at the end of the tunnel is supposed to be daylight, a happy end to the long dark tunnel, but instead it threatens to be annihilation.

We’re all in the tunnel, and, as the sage Woody Allen put it, “No one gets out alive.” Woody’s philosophy, cloaked in humor, has enriched many Allenites of my generation. Another example might be appropriate here.

In this scene Woody is visiting his working class Jewish parents in Brooklyn, and announces his conversion to Christianity. His mother is shocked; she nags at her husband to come out from the TV room to the kitchen and help straighten out his son. The father remains silent off camera. Woody confronts his mother’s outrage with a conundrum. Could she please explain how a Jewish God could bring the holocaust to his chosen people. At this point the nonplussed mother demurs, “Ask your father,” after which, she yells back at her husband, demanding an answer. From the back room comes this momentous Platonic irony disguised as humor: “You’re asking me? I don’t know how the can opener works.”

Woody Allen converted to Catholicism as a passport to the after-life. That ticket to the after-life, was the marketing edge which lured Jews to early Christianity. As an early Christian myself (Catholic school child), I was sold the same heaven, hell and purgatory, with exact instructions on how to get to each.

When we were kids, we made shit up to fill in what we don’t know. We couldn’t stand living with a mystery, so we made shit up. The shit hardens into myth after a while. How else can you explain the ridiculous cosmology of Gneiss. I am amazed that so many continue to cling to bible babble.

I became skeptical about getting through the pearly gates about the same time I figured out Santa could not fit in the chimney. That just meant I looked elsewhere for new beliefs. By the time I was in college, the new

dawn of science created long shadows of doubt. Skepticism was the new faith for intellectuals, especially Jewish intellectuals, who allowed me into their circle. I was instantly drawn to Jewish worldly wisdom, and deli food, not so much Jewish dogma. In a sense I offset the migration of Jews to Christianity. I am a “semi-semitophile.” You could say I became an intellectual, whatever that is. But I still don’t know what is at the end of the tunnel.

In my long life, I sat through eulogies for Jewish and Christian friends and family and even gave a few myself. The trans-denominational consolations, such as “the departed was looking down on us from a better place,” or “he lives on in the hearts of his loved ones,” raised more questions than answers for me.

What would it be like for me, in there, in the hearts of my loved ones; are they big enough; would it be a squeeze, like Santa in the chimney? Or if I was up there in the “better place,” would I recognize my private parts under the white sheet; if not, wouldn’t I miss myself terribly? And just who would be missing whom?

The old testament and the new testament and just about any testament, but the “now testament” of my intellectual Jewish friends, cloaks the perishable body in some kind of transcendent sheet, a soul, in the case of Christians.

The idea of the recyclable individual soul, while it does console, does not compute. If the soul is eternal, then it doesn’t end and it doesn’t begin; i.e. there is no factory making new souls, but there are new people; always more than before. So where do the new comers get their souls? There would have to be a pre-made stock pile of eternal souls somewhere, or bodies walking around without a soul. I have never seen unincorporated souls, but I do believe that I have seen bodies with a hole instead of a soul. I continue to try to fill my hole with something supernatural.

I believe with the skeptics that religious dogma is obsolete knowledge, ignorance, which is always knocked away as new knowledge rolls in, science. Science has conquered diseases with its continuous discoveries. Who’s to say they won’t some day conquer death? Then again, who’s to say they won’t some day destroy all life? I celebrate the fact that hard science was hard enough to knock out some of the rigid

superstition of the false prophets, like bocci balls, knocking the occluding ball out of the way, getting closer to the “pallino,” the tiny truth target. However, something is missing. Science can’t tell me what happens to my thoughts when I die.

The science skeptics tell me the myths of the afterlife are just metaphysical consolation, “whistling past the graveyard”. There is no god, no heaven, no soul, “no nothing.” The humanist skeptic message is: “there will be no more breath after your last one, so don’t waste it whistling; suck it up and save your breath.” So my choice is whether to be a “whistler” or a “sucker”.

I think I could find the courage to embrace the “suck it up” message, but I continue to wonder why the graveyard “whistling” has been part of every human culture from the beginning time. Even before monotheism, there was polytheism, Egyptian and Hindu reincarnation, atman, afterlife in every culture I know about, and in most philosophy before and after Plato; there has always been something there at the end of the tunnel.

We desperately need there to be something at the end of the tunnel, but I know that doesn’t mean that there is. The fact that you need to believe something doesn’t make it true? Or does it? What is truth? Oops now we are into philosophy, like it or not. And if you come to philosophy you can’t leave without Plato.

That’s where we will learn the difference between belief and truth. For now, let’s just say the hard and fast beliefs continuously knock each other out of play, like bocci balls. Empirical discoveries continuously supplant scientific truths; these are beliefs about the material universe. In Hegelian bocci, the newest scientific maxim always knocks the older truth out of the way. But that Hegelian rule itself is also a bocci ball and by its own reasoning gets knocked away. Where does that leave us?

Maybe my philosophical meandering would be more believable if I use scientific metaphors. Take quantum mechanics, we could say that scientific truths, for pure materialists, are thought to be Fermions which must obey the Pauli exclusion principle, (bocci balls) where no two can be in the same space at the same time. The latest must replace the former. And now, staying with the quantum metaphor, for the truth that replaces Hegelian bocci, we can picture the new uncertain truth as wave/particles

like boson bubbles that do not obey the Pauli exclusion principle, and can occupy the same space-time.

Truth is a belief; belief is a function of consciousness; consciousness is a super state a 'superposition' where boson bubbles do not follow the rules of bocci balls.

The order of materialist science has never been able to knock the chaos of 'free will' out of my head. I can believe in free will and at the same 'non-time,' I believe in scientific order and progress.

When Buddha rolled into my mind, there was no collision; physics did not bounce out like a bocci ball. They clustered and merged like a syncretic, double bubble in the same 'non-space', at the same 'non-time'.

By the way, I must inject a brief commercial here, sponsored by pragmatism, about the cleaning power of this new Christ/Buddha/Physics bubble. It erases that ring of scum, existential suffering, and makes life cleaner and happier.

If this sounds like trying to replace science with homespun philosophy, keep in mind that ancient science was philosophy until the 'lab coats' came with their bocci balls. But now the bubbles have shown themselves to be on another plane, untouched by the bocci balls. I mean to say that science, in my lifetime, has discovered that its hard and fast measurements are not hard enough and not fast enough for the soft, new pieces of the puzzle, which "entangle" and "tunnel" mysteriously in the underlying subatomic universe. Scientists have become philosophers again. You will soon meet them, Heisenberg, Einstein, Bohr and others.

As I was writing this and thinking about all those bubbles and balls, it occurred to me that I now had the power to bring all the players together to the new multidimensional bocci court, a yellow brick road, as it were. So I did.

"Off to See the Wizard." Thanks to my production assistants, Siri- Alexa- Wikipedia-Amazon Great Courses and my book shelves full of old words, everyone showed up ready to play. From the science department: Einstein, Bohr, Heisenberg, Schrodinger, Wigner, Higgs, Bose, and, of course, Feynman, who I had known personally; from the philosophy department: Plato, Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, Woody Allen, Deepak

Chopra, Ryle, Dawkins, Dennett, Chalmers, Penrose, Hammeroff, and others too numerous to mention. All appeared, ready to try their luck on the new fluid geometry of the yellow brick road.

I was surprised at how much Plato had to say, being so out of date and with that ancient Greek accent. At one point he broke into a discussion between Einstein and Bohr and amazed both of them, finding a common ground in their long standing dispute. Plato had his own principal of uncertainty long before Heisenberg. He said “Enough if we adduce probability as likely....for we must remember that... we are mortal men and we ought accept the tale which is probable and enquire no further”. (Timaeus)

It amazed me that Heisenberg, with all his expertise in modern physics, had time to make what seemed to be an exhaustive study of Western philosophy. He studied Anaximander, a pre-Socratic philosopher. He suggested some modernization of Kant’s “Critique of Pure Reason” having to do with spacetime knowledge no longer being “apriori.” Kant was ok with that; he accepted the critique of his pure reason. He could never have guessed that such small things could have such big effects.

Heisenberg did agree with Kant and Descartes that ...”it will never be possible by pure reason to arrive at absolute truth” (Physics Philosophy, Heisenberg p 92).

Now, that’s humbling. Get used to it; you will never know anything for sure.

Heisenberg asked Plato about being and becoming. Plato stood up smoothed his tunic with one hand and held up the other as if offering a benediction-

“...as being is to becoming so is truth to belief....”

“Being and Becoming” are as far apart as “truth and belief”. That is deep; that is double deep.

Heisenberg saw that this was like the chasm between the observer and the observed which almost insists on a separate reality, but he could not bring himself all the way to dualism. Like Penrose, he was focused on the bridge rather than the chasm so he would not have to put Physics on one side or the other. But if there is a bridge, there must be two ends to it; I’m

not mathematician, but one and one makes two, whether they are bridged or not.

Plato had no trouble with dualism; he had a lot more to say about the divine realm, the ideal realm, for which he credited his predecessor Anaxagoras (Cratylus). In this realm which is immortal, according to Plato, the individual soul will discover that it is connected to this perfect realm, only after the death of the body, with its aberrant vision. Heisenberg surprised everyone with these exact Platonic words: "...idealization is necessary for understanding" (Heisenberg, Physics and Philosophy, p108).

I'm not sure Plato heard that over the forced derisive guffaws triggered by Daniel Dennett's ad lib "It's all Greek to me."

At this point Descartes and Leibniz asked Plato about his connection to the Pythagoreans, trying to connect the ideal and the mathematical.

"All that doesn't add up because it's bullshit mixed in with the baby food." Dennett handed a cup to Plato. Plato fell silent, as though he was offered hemlock. He stared blankly at the cup without taking it; then stared at everyone's shoes and at his sandals, and then walked off the yellow brick road.

Einstein and Bohr went after him, arguing about that second realm without naming it: Einstein said "God doesn't play dice with the universe," insisting that there must be something more than probability and Bohr argued back "Stop telling God what to do."

That shout out to God got Plato back in the game. He pointed out that both their beliefs were in the same divine designer bubble. Bohr and Einstein believed there was a design they simply disagreed on the details of the design, and neither one of them could ever understand that completely.

"Yes they can never understand because it doesn't exist," the skeptics insisted. We don't understand god, the divine plan, the soul, heaven, and hell for the same reason.

Leibniz chimed in, "No right and wrong? No choice? No will? No consciousness? That doesn't add up!"

“No one has ever seen, let alone measured, soul or *will* or consciousness,” Dennett said. “There is no ghost in the machine, Ryle said, with his arm around the Tin-man.

“What about electricity?” I asked. “No one has ever seen that.” Dawkins answered condescendingly: “Electricity and gravity are invisible, but have effects which can be measured, and that makes them real. We have no experiment, no scale that can measure the effects of consciousness or will power.”

“What about photons?” I asked.

Penrose, rose, pen in hand. “I’m on your side”, He said. “Which side?” I asked. “Both”, he said, and then went on to explain: “I think the subatomic parts of the brain are indefinite enough to include a slack which would allow for free will.” Hammeroff agreed and went on to describe these “tubules” that entangle mysteriously across space and time.

Dawkins pointed out there is only one universe that matters, “matter.” The brain is matter; these ephemera are byproducts of the brain. Everything you can think of will be explained eventually by the 1000 firings every second of the 10 billion neurons in the brain. Only matter matters. Skeptics insisted that there is only one truth, scientific truth and only one way to come by it. Until such time as those phenomena can be measured, they do not exist on their own.

Heisenberg made the point that the tools of material science would never be fine enough for psychological phenomena. He made another crucial point: that we can never expect to measure the life force of brain cells or any other biological particles because the experiment itself would obliterate the very vital energy it was trying to measure.

At this point I brought up the thirty trillion other cells that make up my body which have changed completely more than eleven times; that’s three hundred thirty trillion cells that have come and gone; God knows how that works!!

“No god; don’t need one”, the skeptics answered. They admitted that there seems to be a continuation plan, which allows traits to pass on to

progeny, but they deny, dogmatically, that there is any design behind this plan: “memes” maybe, but no planner. I suggested that calling a design, coincidence, and calling a plan a “meme,” seemed to be a semantic side step into a new dogma.

A microbiologist, whose name I didn't catch, explained that there was some code in the genome which guided the replacement of the cells and the improvements brought about by mutations. They have begun exploring quantum mechanics for some explanation somewhere between matter and energy to find this conservation/ mutation code.

“So is it matter or energy that is conserved”? I asked

“E Equals M”. Einstein said. De Broglie added some new greek letters which I couldn't understand.

My [Ti] penchant for inventing new names could not be resisted “*mattergy*, then” I blurted.

“What's in a name,” came the line from a man in an Elizabethan frock, who was far behind us but still could be heard. He suggested that ideal perfection is real, even though it is beyond human understanding. He put it this way: “There is more in heaven and earth than is dreamed of in your philosophy....” .

I posed a question to Einstein, who was distracted by the Elizabethan: “If matter can neither be created nor destroyed...”

“Matter becomes energy”, de Broglie interrupted. “E=MC squared”. Einstein said still staring back down the road.

“Ok,...” I went on “... then can we say that *mattergy* can neither be created nor destroyed, and wouldn't it follow that that consciousness will also transcend the decompositional changes of the brain?”

I think I saw Dennett smile at my new word, ‘mattergy’, but frowned at the rest of the thought. Dennett reiterated that soul, will and consciousness are byproducts of the brain, figments of imagination, like my new word, not matter, not energy, not real, and do not qualify for the rule of conservation.

“How can you be so certain about that thought does not survive”? I asked.

“There will never be absolute certainty”, Heisenberg added.

Suddenly Tin-man spoke through a welded smile. “ Are you worried about the after-life? Have I got an answer for you! This new machine intelligence will mimic consciousness so completely as to be indistinguishable, and eliminate the need for the metaphysical consolation of the second bubble realm. This uploaded alter-consciousness will live on in the cloud or in a robot of your choice. Instead of memorializing your existence with a monument, you will have this replicated self walking around, talking to your progeny keeping you alive, for all to see.”

All except m; this reminded me of the “replicants” in the movie Blade Runner (1980’s Sci Fi), where robots were made to be physically indistinguishable from humans except for their super strength and their super intelligence, but they had no self consciousness and so no feelings and no free will, the perfect slaves. The plot thickens when it turns out that somehow the artificially imbued intelligence develops a self-consciousness and feelings, and of course the basic urge to survive. It’s as though, no matter what, inevitably, existence begets persistence: any thing that exists strives to persist. This makes the renegade replicants, mixed in with humans, hard to detect and formidable enemies. The job of the Blade Runner is to find them by penetrating their bogus emotional responses and then eliminate them. He falls in love with the last one and does not kill her.

Having my replicant survive me did not console me, at all. This and the ‘AI’ grave stone, like the waterproof coffin, appeals to the vanity that would immortalize the temporal, lone, unconnected self, which wants to perpetuate its selfish, solipsism.

Hammeroff, a physician, shared stories of NDE (Near Death Experiences). It turns out his patients who’s consciousness survived clinical death, reported “a light at the end of a tunnel”. (Keep this in mind when you read about Auntie Josie’s last smile in the Epilogue essay “Consciousness”).

Like Penrose, I thought the unexplained underworld of quantum mechanics might have room for consciousness. There it could float

around, ignoring spacetime with photons, positrons, neutrinos, bosons, gravitons, tachyons. That never-never land might be its own second realm. If that brings back dualism, so be it.

Dualism is humbling. I can't think of a better word: "humbling, which means being proud of all that you have learned, but not so proud that you're blind to all that you don't know, and, most importantly, the realization that there are things you may never know.

Plato, Descartes, Leibniz, Bohr, Heisenberg, Einstein, Bose, Higgs, all lowered their heads in unison. Great minds are all able to think beyond the experimental boxes of scientific truth. Because they believe there is a beyond, they embrace the mystery, which leaves the humble mind in awe. Awe is the reverent silence that allows the faint whisper of new ideas to be heard.

Whatever triggered it, the next thing I knew, these rational thinkers were insulting each other's vision. Monists charged that dualists "see double" because they're cockeyed. Dualists charged that "monists" are myopic, and cannot see the rules sliding off their anachronistic slide rule.

Suddenly the Scarecrow appeared singing: "if I only had a brain..."

"The brain is all there is and when it's gone that's the last straw". Dawson said.

"Nothing, that's the last straw. Nothing is all the skeptics have to offer at the end of the tunnel.

We were at the end of the yellow brick road. The wizard spoke to us from behind the curtain: "In the spirit of modern science, I propose a thought experiment: Try to imagine an end where *nothing* is all that is left. You can't imagine *nothing*? Neither can any one else. *Nothing* is something nobody knows anything about. What are the dimensions of "nothing" what is its mass, and velocity; which we will need to locate it in your single, scientific reality. "

Higgs pointed out that no matter how much he divided matter, bottom line, there was always something, no matter what, always something, 'something' mysterious, not nothing, which led to the Higgs Boson (God Particle). I thought he made a crucial point: the skeptics "*Nothing*"

hypothesis fails their own measuring test, and by their own algebra, no “*nothing*” equals something. Instead of “*nothing*” at the end, we have an unexplainable something which demands a second realm beyond the material realm. Even Chalmers, a modern thinker, had to admit that dualism was back but needed some adjustments.

Heisenberg, huddled with his mentors Bohr and Einstein, like they did at Solvay in the 20’s. Einstein mumbled something about “spooky action at a distance,” which took on new meaning now. Since Solvay, everything changed, as they knew it would. The ‘theory of everything’ had become a muddle and now it was time for a new assay of human knowledge. The muddle huddle also included Feynman and Wigner. Wigner put in that it might be consciousness itself which is the state differential. Schrodinger brought his cat which was both alive and dead at the same time thanks to Heisenberg. A single reality where observed reality and unobserved reality were different, was actually TWOfold. In the single reality with the ‘superposition’ state, the cat was both dead and alive. In the dual world he could be either dead or alive. Higgs was in the huddle. He came out of the huddle and handed a note, through the curtain, to the Wizard.

“So then...,” the Wizard chanted from behind the curtain, “...having failed to discover nothing, we decree there is no nothing and no absolute truth about particle entanglement, black holes, worm holes, dark matter, dark energy; all that we don’t know,...” here he deepened his tone and added a spooky echo as he coined the new term, “...**dark knowledge**, is 20 times greater than what we do know. Whereas, it is unlikely that our 5% candle power would ever elucidate the 95% dark knowledge, and because we don’t know **what** it is, but do know **that** it is; there must a greater mind to which, or for whom, the dark knowledge is not dark. And since it is your human minds discovered this greater universal mind, you must all be connected to it. I think you’ve earned the right to use the word scientific for this new spiritualism.”

“Wait stop. There’s no room for God in Science. God is beyond measurements.” Dennett said boldly.

“What is the difference between the skeptical scientific truth which says ‘there is no God beyond measuring,’ and the spiritual belief which says ‘there is no measuring God’? Whether God made man or man made God, there is no difference” Said the Wizard.

Descartes began to inscribe a single word in each of yellow bricks, as if they were Cartesian graph frames rising diagonally: 'cogito' and then 'ergo' and then 'sum', and then continued on up the diagonal course inscribing three more bricks with the words: 'includitur' - 'conscientia' - 'aeternam.' Thanks to my twelve years with the Franciscans, I could interpret the new maxim, which in English said

"I think therefore I am included in the eternal consciousness."

Dennett swiped at the curtain with his slide rule. As the curtain came down a bubble floated up. A leap of faith was required to catch it.

Should I leap to the bubble ride with 'scientific spiritualism' or fall into the black hole with the skeptics?

Woody Allen put the loaf of white bread and the crucifix back in his shopping bag: "The light at the end of the tunnel is a bubble?"

"You never know"

"Better believe it" came a faint echo from the tunnel.

Do you have time ?
or does it have you

You wait
the end is never late

What is going on
Is also going off

To think in words is your sentence
Period is a time with no sentence
Time is a sentence with no period
Endings make us blink
Even if we stop, we think

in the play
Is the last sentence already written
is there a last word you say
or do you sing it

Should you rehearse your death scene
or do you wing it

You still see the forest
With the trees gone
even if you're blind
the world is out of sight
but not out of mind

Tell me DESCARTES
If- I think therefore I am
How can I think I am not

If you think thought is gone,
that's a thought
and it is not
gone

Thought goes before
thought goes behind
why not beyond

Do you have thought
Or does it have you

EPILOGUE

Consciousness

There is no denying that consciousness exists. You would have to use it to deny it. And science cannot tell you where consciousness lives in the brain, or that it will die with the brain. Neuroscience has discovered neuroplasticity and neurogenesis. Neuroplasticity means mind can redeploy functions from damaged neurons to other parts of the brain. Neurogenesis refers to neuro stem cells which create new neurons for new learning. For a long time it was thought that adults can only lose brain cells; now it seems the hippocampus which shrinks with age (causing forgetful senior brain farts) can also generate new neurons. We always said use it or lose it; now science has caught up with the old bromide

Some mental functions that are closely associated with bodily functions in the material universe, like pain, flinching, muscle memory, etc., are more subject to neurological, physical laws, while other mind functions like feeling, imagination, meditation, etc. are far removed from physical laws and do not respond to them.

I feel perfectly justified to draw a line between reflex and reflection. And since there is no material science of reflection, I feel perfectly justified in creating a second domain for consciousness where I can wax philosophical.

As you know from my last chapter, I have posited a “high mind” in my “scientific spiritualism” where I think we connect out to a universal consciousness.

It seems to me that the high mind has nothing to do with high IQ, and nothing to do with worldly success. It has been my experience that the highest minds are found in the most unlikely heads. High levels of success and recognition neither promotes nor inhibits spiritual altitude. Being well known has nothing to do with knowing well.

I have divided my inner voices for purposes of illustration only, into facets: Thinker-[Th] Tinker-[Ti] Warrior-[Wa] and Worrier-[Wo]. The high mind, [Th], having the broadest view can, at times, glimpse the whole

canvas, the big picture, the big consciousness, the ideal, from which ideas, trickle down to the inventor [Ti] and become action for the warrior [Wa] and reactions for the worrier [Wo]. These are beliefs not hard and fast rules, bubbles not bocci balls, but none the less effective in reflecting and affecting my existence.

The high mind [Th] gets tired and has regular rest periods and sometimes, unexpected absences, only sometimes. If it [Th] were absent more frequently, I would be under the care and control of others. An example of this mind's [Th]'s regular respites is "dreaming." The illogical garble of characters and chaotic event dynamics in dreams happens because the upper mind [Th] is on break, and the low mind [Wo] has the stage all to himself. While we don't know where the high mind [Th] goes on these nightly breaks, it can't be very far away, since we see that he can get back in seconds.

My [Th] access to a dimensionless and timeless realm may be beyond scientific proof, but nevertheless I hear a resonant hum and an inspiring drum coming from this border state, beyond the hum drum of tedium. We all march to the different drum, but I feel I can share this resonant hum because I believe we are fractals of this indefinite, universal, "holigram".

"Oh dear, another prophet with a message from God; what next, commandments." No no, none of that. Moses was the first to download instructions from a cloud onto a tablet (a joke I found on the internet). Plato was the first to discover that downloads are not possible for mere mortals even though they become aware of the divine cloud. I have always doubted the word of any mortal who can tell me what God thinks. I can't "tell" but I can ask, and this quest connects me to the divine cloud, the universal consciousness.

We can argue ad infinitum, about whether Plato's ideal or my universal cloud is real, and what exactly we mean to include in the "real" and whether "real" has "realms," but I can tell you arguments will get us nowhere since there is no way to prove anything in the mystery realm. It's in there and out there; it's everywhere and always as far as we know, no arguing that. I'm just saying, it all must be connected. I don't call it my soul, because I believe that soul is not all "mine" as such.

Everything that happened to me in the decades recounted in these chapters has left its marks, scars even, but that is not all that is in there; I

now know that “in there” is also “out there.” I believe that I am connected through my high mind to a super consciousness. How else would I [Ti] have become an amateur physicist or pianist? How else would my “Warrior”[Wa] self have learned that courage is not just for punching others? How else could the fist have opened and become a helping hand? How else could I realize that it is in our mammalian, gregarious nature to work as a pack?

“Pack” is a term for gregarious animals, which we are, but in human packs, the accepted term is “team.” A team is a group addressing an immediate problem with the hope of mutual benefit. Being part of a team is an art in itself, when to lead when to follow. How else could I [Wa] keep these roles straight, unless I could step out beyond for a glimpse? ‘Group think’ is the new essential ingredient for technology development, but really it has been around since the family and the tribe. Team is a way to connect minds; super consciousness is a way to connect teams.

In the previous chapter, I had to guide my universal consciousness bubble through the prickly thicket of scientific skeptics. After writing that chapter, I found out through Wikipedia, that the epicenter of skepticism seems to be Oxford, England where Gilbert Ryle poo poo-ed the soul as the ghost in the machine. Daniel Dennett and Richard Dawkins also spent time at Oxford. Presumably they all met over a beer, and agreed that there was nothing beyond scientific proof. Later scientists discovered that there was no proof of that “nothing.”

You know, from what you’ve read here, that I have absolutely zero formal training in science let alone quantum physics, but somehow the great thinking of others was available to my thought. It might be interesting to add some details here, on how I piggy backed on this ‘quantum’ leap.

My only formal exposure to physics was at the feet of a tall round monk who’s fustian robe was tied around his belly with a rope; he looked more like an alchemist than a physicist. Father Pious, a Franciscan at Christopher Columbus High School in 1952 gave me a straight A. Truth to tell, I don’t ever recall hearing anything about $E=MC^2$, or quantum mechanics. Either I have forgotten the lecture on relativity or Father Pious never knew anything about Einstein, or maybe ‘relativity’ had not yet received the ‘imprimatur’ from the Church, trying to keep God at the center of the universe. We now know Einstein was not trying to replace God. Anyway, after I left the Franciscans, my high school mastery of

Newtonian physics exempted me from the science requirement all through college. So I never heard a word about electrons or neutrons.

By the time the Sixties rolled around, I was a drop out lawyer and an accomplished imposter, dabbling in electronics, neurophysiology, psychology, playwriting and other things. I could look like I knew enough for those who knew to fill in the blanks. And why would they? Is it because minds are in a circuit, where knowledge must flow, like a charge from positive to negative?

In the sixties the knowledge within the flux of my curiosity came throughly close friend Will Karush (a mathematician on the Manhattan project where the atomic bomb was developed), and his close friend Richard Feynman. I had no idea that Feynman was a Nobel prize winner, or how important he was. He acted like just any other of Will's L.A. backyard guests. I knew he was doing something important up north in the Bay Area and that he had something going on at UCLA, but had no idea that he was to become a historic figure. He would stay at Will's from time to time, trying to forget his deceased wife, and I would too, trying to avoid my ex-wife, who he was anxious to meet. Feynman had an eye for women. Dick, as we called him, seemed to enjoy my company; maybe it was the fact that I was a hippie dropout with a professional degree from Cornell where he worked, or maybe, and this is most probable, it was the woman who accompanied me. Whatever the reason, he suffered my endless questions and took the time to explain things to me, which he did better than anyone I ever met. Will's wife Rebecca (Ricky) edited his papers and his journal for years, which I pretended to read. I understood some of the words; the math, not all.

I learned about Neils Bohr and his dispute with Einstein. Remember Bohr and Einstein were still alive in that decade when I was privy to Karush and Feynman's rendition of their dispute. I learned about Roger Penrose, and read on my own about Heisenberg's principle of Uncertainty.

By the time I got to writing this work, I knew that a lot had happened since those backyard barbecues; I knew that what I learned in the 60's needed an update. Fortunately, and this continues to blow my mind, I could just turn to Amazon Prime's, Great Courses wherever I happened to be with my tablet and somehow the knowledge was there, passed on by truly great teachers, like Neil deGrasse Tyson, and Sean Carol and one not so well known, who helped confirm my metaphysical speculation,

Steven Gimbel. Gimbel has a way with words and is a walking encyclopedia of the changes in scientific thinking. Thanks to this virtual wonder class, I could customize the flow rate of information to my own absorption rate.

I learned that recent scientific discoveries such as quantum entanglement erase the dimensions of space/time. Without any detectable connection, one particle moves with the other no matter how far apart they are: not limited by the “speed of light” these entangled particles erase the distinction between ‘going’ and ‘being.’ Being there can now be accomplished without going there.

Other recent scientific discoveries point toward undefinable force fields beyond gravity, electromagnetism, the strong force and the weak force, dark matter, dark energy.

I learned about the great mathematician and scientist Leibniz’s Monads which are not so new,(1646 –1716) .

Excerpt From: “The Monadology.”Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz.”

... souls in general are living mirrors or images of the universe of created things, but that minds are also images of the Deity or Author of nature Himself, capable of knowing the system of the universe, and to some extent of imitating it through architectonic ensamples [echantillons], each mind being like a small divinity in its own sphere. (Theod. 147.) “

In a few months, including the time I was shut in because of the Corona virus, I had all the updates and some new intellectual and spiritual allies. Physicists, physicians, philosophers, all landed coincidentally in and around the spot where I landed on my own, on the banks of a new scientific spiritualism. It is important for you to understand that my belief system, whether it was a metaphysical consolation or a rational hypothesis, or utter nonsense, was arrived at before I did the research and discovered my intellectual allies. Why is that important? Because it is an instantiation of the belief itself. The belief in the invisible connection to the universal consciousness is demonstrated by the coincidence of all these minds coming to the same conclusions on their own. This makes my discovery a *revelation*, and the research a validation.

After I figured out that the ‘Big Mind’ could never fit in the little brain, I found validation in the changing conceptions of reality caused by science. Steven Gimbel in his “Great Course”, “Redefining Reality”

brought a new clarity to La Place, chaos theory, quantum mechanics and the uncertainty principle. He confirmed my suspicion that all the major players in the new physics were also scholars of Eastern thought, including the Hindu 'Maya' which characterizes reality as an illusion and Buddhism. The Gimbel lectures confirmed my belief in the ineluctable illusiveness of reality. Heisenberg's uncertainty, and Schrodinger's cat posited two separate realities: one when you weren't looking and another when you looked. He explained Wigner's and Everett's ideas that consciousness itself might be a force in this separation.

In other online explorations, I found, Stuart Hameroff, a physician who was sufficiently versed in quantum mechanics to posit a transition of information from eroding subatomic brain particles (tubules) via "entanglement" to a universal matrix, which I have called universal consciousness. He talked about a proto-consciousness, citing Roger Penrose. Proto-consciousness is an 'a priori' Kantian stack of Platonic values that integrates and accommodates 'a posteriori' perception and "qualia," which I take to mean the subjective response to all of our experience. This proto-consciousness according to Deepak Chopra (a media celebrity who bridges medical science, and Vedantic spiritual teachings) is the same as the Vedantic "pure consciousness" which is believed to survive death.

One interesting validation of my refurbished dualism which I found on the Internet was David Chalmers quote on Wikipedia which says:

Chalmers characterizes his view as "naturalistic dualism": naturalistic because he believes mental states are caused by physical systems (such as brains); dualist because he believes mental states are ontologically distinct from and not reducible to physical systems....Chalmers argues that consciousness is a fundamental property ontologically autonomous of any known (or even possible) physical properties,.... He further speculates that all information bearing systems may be conscious, leading him to entertain the possibility of conscious thermostats and a qualified panpsychism he calls panprotopsychism. According to Chalmers, his arguments are similar to a line of thought that goes back to Leibniz 1714 "mill" argument; the first substantial use of philosophical "zombie" terminology may be Robert Kirk's 1974 "Zombies vs. Materialists".

With Andy Clark, Chalmers has written "The Extended Mind", an article about the borders of the mind, which I read after I mapped out my own extended mind, as is my peculiar form of research.

Chalmers made the connection between this extended mind and machine intelligence- the “cloud” of external processing and storage. This is fast becoming an appendage to human intelligence and one day may be a single mind for all humans and machines ,“singularity.” I really don’t know what to make of that. I do not confuse the plumbing with the water, which is easy to do since they are so joined. I think machines will always be only a tool of consciousness. Heisenberg agrees with me that the physical sciences will never provide experiments or devices to define (let alone duplicate) consciousness, Physics and Philosophy, pp104-107.

AI’s alter-consciousness was mentioned in my last chapter, where the Tin-man sold us a consciousness replica, stored in the cloud or on any customized robot. This “alter” consciousness will contain all my memories, and thought processes, so that, in effect, the “I” will never “Blink”: I will always be here for my friends and family. My friends and family will not be able to tell the difference between interactions with me and this bogus mind.

There is the remote possibility that this might be God playing scientist, but it is much more likely that this is scientist playing God. A monument to my self may provide some consolation for my family and friends, but that consolation would be too late for my [Wo] dread of death and unnecessary for my [Th] surviving connection to super consciousness, which bids me to let go of the lower selfish selves. Selflessness is the path to eternity.

At the death bed of Auntie Josie, as I watched the peaks of her vital signs on the monitor flatlined by the tug of time, I knew her brain was gone. Somehow there was still mind enough for an unforgettable smile and a loving hand clasp. For a split second, I felt the beyond through her. I felt blessed.

It may seem preposterous to you that a God consciousness is directly connected to me or Auntie Josie. With all God has to do, running the entire universe, isn’t it preposterous to believe that God has time for one death scene at the Mass General in Boston? Actually it is more preposterous to think that God could be ignorant of any detail no matter how large or how small, including me and Auntie Josie. This would be defining and delimiting God’s consciousness and love, which we already said is blasphemy.

Earlier in this discussion I distinguished reflex and reflection, the mind that is closer to bodily functions from the mind that has ideas, and imagination and free will. Reflecting on reflexes has raised some doubts in my, universal consciousness and scientific spiritualism.

The reflexes, by definition, are instances of automatic damage control. Flinching, mirages, delusions, swooning, shock, amnesia are autonomic anesthetics for the inevitable psychic pain caused by adverse external events. Such a design by implication admits that it has no control over the occurrence of this adversity. This puts us right back in the same old, evil and loving God conundrum.

This conundrum goes all the way back to Epicurus, who pointed out that a good God by definition is omnipotent and “omnibenevolent.” If there is evil in the world which he can do nothing about, there goes the omnipotence; if he put evil there on purpose, that’s not nice, not benevolent. In short, you can’t have evil and God in the same universe. There is evil, no doubt about that, so there can’t be God.

Early Christian Gnosticism and Manichaeism (which I learned about in the Great Courses on Amazon), posits two supernatural powers, one a lesser god, (a demon) who rules over nasty nature. We can’t go that way without giving up monotheism.

Since Epicurus, philosophers and theologians have struggled for thousands of years to keep God in the picture. They use the term “Theodicy” to cover all the proposed solutions, such as, there really is no evil; evil is just an illusion. None of the detours worked for me. Plotinus and Irenaeus came close with the idea that maybe some good comes out of evil suffering. As you have already seen, I do believe that suffering is essential to the development of the super self which provides a path to God. I also believe what Plato said about mere mortal understanding.

Plato said, in so many words, that a natural being trying to define the supernatural is unnatural. Defining God, by definition, is beyond our mental capacity, beyond our math, beyond our science, beyond our logic, beyond our philosophy. (“There is more in heaven and earth...”) The infinite is indefinable by definition. This keeps me from ascribing human limitations to the mind of God, such as anger and ignorance. Defining the infinite is blasphemy. I certainly believe that is true. But how can I believe that and then describe (define) a divine plan which contemplates growing

from suffering toward the universal consciousness, which I also believe is God.

Once again Plato to the rescue. In an earlier chapter of this book, Plato draws a distinction between belief and truth. Distinguishing is not the same as extinguishing. Despite the fact that I may never be privy to absolute truth in this mortal coil, I still believe that truth is out there. I cannot keep from wondering about it; it is part of my human mind to speculate about it. There is nothing in Plato which denies that there is some, albeit loose, connection between belief and truth. So without foisting any new truths, any commandments, any obstacle course view of life, I do believe that God could have included suffering as fertilizer for spiritual growth, and that spiritual growth brings my consciousness closer to the universal consciousness, which is God.

LOVE- thy neighbor

if there is such a thing as love, then I can believe that it must be connected to such a thing as God.

The opposite of Christ's wisest maxim- "Love thy neighbor as thyself..."- is my own observation, "fuck thy neighbor as you fuck thy self". "Fuck your self" seems to be the worse thing you can say to anyone in any language, maybe because it is the retroversion of love, the ultimate solipsistic punishment. To make this more than a joke, translate "fuck" with all its meanings in American slang: penetrate, harm, kill, destroy. The reflexive conjunction works perfectly in the equation of both maxims- you do it to others; you do it to yourself, whatever the predicate is.

From the moment we are disconnected at birth, we struggle to reconnect. We learn to suckle; we learn to grip; we learn to caress; we learn to kiss; we learn to speak, cajole, woo. In the disconnected struggle to connect, we make many bogus connections, like sex. I, (Wo), was not the first male to view females as objects of conquest. It is the original sin which banished us from Eden. And I had it in spades. The sin I am confessing here is the existential sin of making objects of subjects. You can be addicted to objects, but not subjects. When women were mostly objects I was magnetized by their beauty; I worshiped it and defaced it. It took most of my life to see that they were not whores or Madonnas but humans like me.

There have been around 84 women in my 84 years, from one night stands to 20 plus year relationships. As a testimony to memory and human relationships, I actually created tables; one, the "long list of short relationships" and another, the "short list of long relationships." I will keep them separate if one day there should be some scientific or historical curiosity that might be satisfied by these lists.

Keep in mind, women's liberation was completely missing from the first half of my life. I was born and raised in a society that reinforced the "object" view of women and condoned and profited from the seduction and addiction.

I figured out that I was more prone to lust when I was alone or tired. If I was alone and tired, lust was almost overpowering. There was always something [Th] to keep me from really big mistakes. Whether or not the urge was satisfied or frustrated, lust kept me from looking at my loneliness. I [Wo] howled, I [Wa] hunted, most of my life until I [Th] began to see that others could not solve the problem of self hatred.

Each person on my long list of short relationships was simply an attempt to come out of my lonely ice box. Each person on the short list of long relationships was an attempt to stay out of the lonely ice box; in most cases failed attempts. Mates were for mating and perpetuation of the species, an objective function; loneliness was pure subjectivity.

As each relationship ended, I could see that my partner had not taken the time to look at me as a subject. I was cast in a role in their play, a role which is an object, and, inevitably, as the play wore on, the role wore off. Just as I was miscast in their plays, I see now that they were miscast in mine. Whether it was my play or their play which failed doesn't matter, "the play was NOT the thing..." to end the loneliness. The more I realized that women were subjects, the less "use" I had for them; the less use, the more respect. Respect, like love and hate, is a double edged wand; the more you respect others the more you respect yourself, and vice versa, which was the point of my opening profanity.

The wisdom that comes with age never causes lust to completely lose its luster; it has to be overpowered by self control, which then leads to self respect, which then leads to self love.

I love Socrates' line "I am not alone; I am **by** myself." I never imagined in those days what it would be like to be enlightened and "**by myself**"; now I am beginning to see that once I am "comfortable in my own skin" (originally French), the connection with others can become "agape" (originally Greek). Platonic love is not needy.

This "by myself" posits one self sitting with another self and each keeping the other company. The idea is as old as Socrates. If you admit that self doubt, self hatred or self love exists, then you enter the new world of multiple selves. If there is self doubt, hate or love, then there must be one self in a separate position to have an opinion about the other self/s. Some myths put a black devil and a white angel on each shoulder, I avoided that dichotomy with a trichotomy which presents an even

greater challenge for self integration, another name for self love. My most important discovery in this exploration of self is that self love is the root of all other love.

We have already seen that the propensity to connect is indigenous, a reflex. We see suffering and we cringe. We are able to feel the suffering of other humans and even animals. The first level of connection then is “pathos”, the root word for suffering, “..pathy”, finds its way into our sympathy, and empathy, which is our autonomic first level love. Have you ever noticed what psychology researchers have called “the entrainment response.” I’m sure you have, though you might not have known it by name. Some one yawns and suddenly others start yawning. The same with giggles, or wiggles, or stretches, they becomes contagious in connected groups.

Does everyone make the big connection? Does anyone ever make the big connection? No one is completely connected and no one is completely disconnected. You know in your “gut” when you meet someone how well connected they are. We are drawn to people who seem to be connected to the outer most consciousness: they become our saints and avatars. They seem to be wide open to everyone and everything, more like a funnel than a tunnel.

I imagine that with this universal love connection comes the total freedom from fear which is another word for disconnection.

Connection

by John A Ciampa

Love connects
hate divides
division subsides
connection abides

WORK hard

My work ethic came from my father. The chores assigned to me by my mother, I never thought of as work, never felt any “work satisfaction.” I had to run errands, help with the ironing and stuff, but I never thought of that as work. My first thoughts of work and work satisfaction occurred at the side of my father, repairing and constructing. At a very early age, he took the time to explain to me what all his tools did and what they were called. He’d be under the sink and call for a crescent wrench or a Philips head screw driver, and I would hand him the wrong tool. He would correct me, and eventually I would be handing him the correct tool and got this feeling of worthiness. That became the key to work satisfaction, feeling like I was accomplishing something for someone else. In fact, one of my first complete sentences was, “ I wanna be a fix-a-man like my daddy.” For whatever reason this was immortalized and repeated by family members all through my life, which may explain the deep satisfaction I feel, to this day, whenever I fix something, no matter how big or small.

From age 9 to present, some of the jobs I have held for at least two months include shoe shine boy, newsboy, chocolate factory worker, olive factory worker, construction worker, men’s clothes salesman, waiter, lawyer, public relations director, screen writer, Professor, musician, CEO (I gave this job to myself as result of successful inventions).

In the seventies and eighties, I wrote books and articles theorizing about media. Media is covered in my ‘Play soft’ essay below, but the books were “work,” so, I will say few words about them here.

My theories are not well known, except for a handful of students and a few friends. What I called “Communication Theory” became courses at a couple of universities where I taught, but as far as I know, no longer exist as a field of study. Two books, “Communication the Living End” and “Castle of Consciousness,” blended what I knew about classical philosophy of mind, and sociology, and modern media. In a nut shell, I divide the universe into subjects and objects, i.e. mind and matter. We are matter in our material bodies and mind in our immaterial consciousness. I contradicted Social Darwinism by suggesting that we subjects, survive in order to communicate rather than communicate in order to survive. I believe this comports with the “connection” ‘virtu’ at

the core the 'scientific spiritualism' espoused elsewhere in my latest writing. This view elevates consciousness to a supernatural realm which we cannot know until we disconnect the immaterial from the material (leave the body).

Recognition for my life's work eluded me, which is ok. (I have to refer the reader back to the **1966-76** decade chapter where I learned from Henry to elude recognition rather than rue the fact that it eluded me.) I read in Einstein's biography that most important discoveries are made by undiscovered individuals. In the case of this undiscovered individual, I put forth the following discoveries for your consideration and any private recognition you may wish to accord. They are:

1. Some Sort of Justice - The Law (mentioned earlier) was the first time Hollywood saw a braided story line where every character was central in a single story strand; after which, many followed that lead.
2. Landisc and Pictometry were the very first patents and developed systems to describe the automatic, machine assisted georeferencing of land imagery.
3. Communication the Living End was the first book to suggest communication as a reason for being, and look at human interaction from a unique taxonomy of channels of exchange.
4. Altametry patents were the first unmanned lighter than air platforms manageable by a single individual.
5. Castle of Consciousness, read by very few, answers philosophical questions posed by Descartes, Wittgenstein, Shannon and others.
6. Scientific Spiritualism bridges the microscopic universe of Heraclitus and the macroscopic universe of Plato.
7. Salsa Nipponese- The first Italian made Bolognese sauce to use soy sauce.

Financial rewards flowed from a few of the technical inventions, and even fewer of the artistic inventions, but all without recognition.

I do not expect my amateur philosophizing to bring fame or fortune. I remain a bubble maker in every sense of the word. I was exposed to formal philosophy, but the difficulty reading it, was compounded by my distractions and dyslexia; so, I decided to become an intuitive philosopher. Using my own internal observations, I attempted to create a new subset of "philosophy of mind" called "Communication Theory" based on the idea that the basic human condition generated a basic need

to communicate which develops ontogenically and phylogenically, i.e. in the individual and in the species. The information age, cast in this new light, creates new ramifications for psychology and political science.

Whether or not it was intention or inability, I always wrote the first draft of any of my books, including this one, without preliminary scholarly research. However, I did not rely solely on inspiration, instinct and insight. After completing the first draft, I would search through all of the classical philosophers and relevant scientific ideas for confirmation or conflict.

I was encouraged by world class professionals at the University of Pennsylvania and Columbia University. I was invited to some fascinating conferences and met some amazing thinkers. One, Louis Forsdale, a colleague of Marshal McLuhan encouraged me to take the theory to the next step which resulted in Castle of Consciousness.

The two books: Communication the Living End, published by Philosophical Library and Castle of Consciousness, published by Finger Print Press have been available on Amazon for decades, despite the fact that no one ever orders them.

My compulsion to invent continues even to this day. My ideas and inventions for unmanned aerial systems have eaten up the small fortune I made from my ideas on georeferencing oblique land imagery. I say “my ideas” but I know ideas are not originated by anyone. Probably because minds are connected to the Big Mind, the ideal realm (which I have explained elsewhere in this book), the ideas which are ready to hatch always occur to more than one person. When they get to me, by whatever means, I do everything I can to make them materialize. I know that I will never stop spending my time and money on inventions, whatever else I do.

Some ideas which have come to me that I have not acted on yet, except to tell a few friends and now you. These include my “Marcas” house/boat with retractable mooring legs which can raise the boat above water. It can move on natural energy (wind or sun) or stay for any length of time on any water, where energy would be added by fluid dynamics. Harnessing the energy of tides and waves below and the sun and wind above have already been accomplished; optimizing such systems for Marcas has yet to be accomplished.

My biggest idea, MedCloud, is bound to happen whether or not I live long enough to do anything about it. MedCloud is a marriage of sensors and telemedicine technology.

Science will soon replace medical labs with an array of internal and external bodily sensors. These are then connected to habitat sensors, monitoring the proximate environment (room air, water quality, media usage, brain functions, refrigerator contents, smart toilet waste analytics) and remote environs (meteorology, economic indicators, natural and man made disasters). All that sense data- temperatures, blood glucose levels, blood pressure, cell counts, antibodies, flow rate, pulse, petscan, mental functions, weather, agricultural production, economic data, public safety data etc. will be transmitted in real time to MedCloud.

Deep data and medical AI will replace the narrow minded private specialist available to the few with virtual care for the mind, body and pocketbook of the many. The savings in sick time, waiting room time, labs and hospitals will more than pay for the new technology and overwhelm the opposing social forces.

The idea of privacy will disappear very soon, now that private health has become a valid public concern thanks to the Corona virus. As for the economic forces that wish to preserve the status quo, that too shall pass. The national capitalism of the 'medical industrial complex' will be overwhelmed by the global capitalism of MedCloud.

PLAY soft

Play is meant to include any activity that is not classified as “work”. My term ‘play’ includes both active and passive pastimes.

Social science suggests that play is prelude to work and love. In this anthropological view of play, you are honing the skills required for the survival of the organism and the continuation of the species. This is also true for other animals. However, we humans play at some things that, I believe, are beyond animal play.

Esthetic joy, “ars gratia ars” (art for art’s sake), and vicarious experience may be reserved for humans. As far as I know, It is uniquely human to be able to dwell in a vicarious world. My cat stares at the TV sometimes, sitting on my lap; my sister’s dog seems to follow the soccer ball on TV, but there is no evidence that they are transported to the media reality.

The gift of imagination, which allows us to learn from others by imitation continues to optimize our own experience in the real world, and connects us to the “reel” (media) world of absent partners. The reel world spools representations of experience to be experienced by another mind in another real space and/or real time.

The media reel world is one of three of my pastimes, which include sports, with more muscle than presence of mind, music with more presence of mind than muscle, and media with no muscle, and an absent mind.

Sport

I played sports as a younger man; in the boxing ring, school yard, and in high school, and was unaware that every event was a learning experience, even when I was a complete failure as JV basketball guard in high school. I hated basket ball; the taller kids could not be blocked without creating a foul and extra points.

I wrestled in college very briefly. Later in life I became a scuba dive master, and learned to sail. I spent lots of years on boats of every kind. In

the last few years, all I do in the water, is swim regularly in a pool, walk (not on water, on land), and use weights to keep my muscle toned.

Music

I played **at** music all my life, accordion first, then trumpet, then piano, clarinet, sax, years on the guitar, and finally settling down to piano jazz and easy classical pieces. The most exciting thing to report here is that it's never too late. I had to overcome not only the "old dog/ new tricks" stereotype, but also a long standing dyslexia and phobia of printed music.

In my late seventies and eighties, I believe, I continue to make substantial progress in reading music. I play almost without looking at my hands. I can sight read a classical piece at about half tempo, first time out. I can play from jazz fake books in tempo, and can play jazz standards from "pocket changes" (shorthand symbols for harmony; melody has to be supplied by ear). I even improvise and compose not nearly professionally, but better than most amateurs.

The most amazing thing I have to report, which continues to thrill me, is that I am making progress every time I sit down at the piano. I literally learn something every time, which is nearly every day. It might be about hand position, or harmony; always something. Growing keeps me going.

The Gulizia accordion lessons left bad habits, self doubt, misunderstanding, and enough musical sense to see the huge gap between my playing and even the lowest level professional. But there was always a basic sonic delight with whatever music came from, or to me.

As I was "fooling around" with music, all through the fifties, I always had friends around me who could really play. Playing and listening to live music was much more important in those decades. TV was so new, not everybody had it, and for those who did there were only a couple of hours a week of programming. There was no internet, and phones were tucked away in booths. So, play time was spent on live music from our own harmonicas, or guitars, or street corner quartets, or dance hall orchestras, or recorded music on the radio or phonograph. We had no hi-fi until the late fifties; so, the crackly little speakers of the radio and victrola sounded just fine, and actually made the fidelity of live music more thrilling.

Big bands of the post war era were still around when I wore my first peg pants to dance halls packed with jitterbuggers, where I might jitterbug, or just squat at the edge of the band stand, bedazzled.

By the time Tony the barber mowed down my pomp wave, the dance halls were empty and big band music was almost gone. I took my crew cut instead to jazz clubs and the new coffee houses and on rare occasions, to Storyville in Copley Square.

The harmony of Swing; the ninths, thirteenth, blues, rhythm changes, and the like, were folded into, what I must call, an esthetic revolution. Bebop, as it is sometimes called, came from much smaller combos, where each individual musician was both soloist and real time composer. As sophisticated as that sounds, it was not reserved only for elite audiences of cognoscenti. There were affordable jazz bars and coffee houses in every major city for up and coming small groups and jam sessions, which helped form new groups. Right around the corner were the big clubs, where higher cover charges were now divided by a much smaller number of artists. Jazz stars made more money than surgeons.

It wasn't just the economics that narrowed the focus onto the the individual players. It had to do with the American political and psychological and esthetic revolution which had begun to value the individual. This also raised the sophistication bar for audiences. It is true that most of the audiences just heard the rhythm and the heads, and politely applauded the long solos, which were over their heads, but they knew enough to want to learn what it was the 'cat' next to them was really 'digging.' When you paid a cover charge equivalent to a day's pay to hear Charlie Parker or Dizz or the white collar jazz of Gerry Mulligan or Dave Brubeck, you had to at least pretend to understand jazz and that is the beginning of real understanding and appreciation.

Those 'cats' who could 'dig' knew that it took great skill and talent to spontaneously generate fresh new melodic allusions to the musical lexicon and at the same time magically blend in with the other artists on the stage. It was not until I mastered all of the 'changes' (chord patterns also known as keyboard harmony) that I could fully appreciate a jazz solo. "Can you dig it?"

While I was at Cornell, there was a baby grand piano in the Law School lounge and I played two tunes that I knew over and over. My fellow students suffered in silence. I played a horrible arrangement of “Where or When “ that I figured out myself and a variation on a 12 bar boogie blues that cousin Laurie taught me as a child. (She just happens to be on her death bed as I write this with the Corona virus.) *Thanks for taking the time, Laurie. I still think of you every time I play boogie on all the black keys. God knows where she learned it.*

Once I left law school, there was no piano, and my trumpet was no fun unless you played with others, who were hard to find, since I wasn't good enough to jam with pros and too good to jam with amateurs. I had to find an instrument on which I could play with my selves, where one self played one part and another self accompanied. The accordion had separate parts for the left and right hands but my early revulsion for the squeeze box, left me with the guitar, where the fingers divided up into selves.

Over a couple of decades, I figured out, note for note, a repertoire of three or four classical pieces by Bach, “Romance Di Amor,” “Leyenda,” and the Joe Pass jazz arrangements of Jerome Kern's “Yesterday”; oh yes, and “One Note Samba.” It took hundreds of hours of practice. As long as I played within 48 hours of a practice session, all the notes were there in muscle memory for a performance. To non musicians it sounded professional. And as you saw, I played a couple of concerts in a Church, and at an Air Force Base, and a lot of background music in clubs. But the guitar demanded constant practice and I was looking for a more casual relationship with an instrument.

About the time I gave up my ‘travel light’ hobo fantasy, I decided that I could make more music by myself with a keyboard. The permutations and combinations of ten fingers on piano keys afforded a range of possibilities which could not be matched by any other instrument. In the next 25 years, I spent the 15,000 hours it takes to connect the left brain to the right brain and the right brain to the arms, hands, wrists and fingers. I studied with teachers from time to time; went to jazz camps at New Haven, and later moved to Coral Gables to be near the University of Miami Frost school, where I learned from and played with the few young people left in the world who can be called jazz masters.

Back in the fifties and early sixties, I pretended to improvise, with licks that I had already practiced, which I could play as long as the train stayed on the tracks.

I am now ready for the train tracks to become a runway; I manage to have short flights from time to time, enough to demonstrate to myself that it's never too late. I also had to learn to get out of the way during take off. (I never understood what Joe Pass meant when he told me that). My good friend and teacher Konrad's advice was: "Don't think too much." Those moments where I don't know where the music is coming from are treasured, whether anybody else hears it or not. That mystery of mastery, is one of the paths to the universal consciousness.

A lot of my time on the piano was spent trying to play without looking at my hands. This new skill had to elbow its way through the crowd of old survival habits, including one incorrigible habit: 'look before you leap.' Those old cautious look habits do not welcome new leaping skills.

The "gestalto-stasis" (invented term, borrowed from homeostasis), likes to keep things the way they are. It takes a miraculous chrysalis for the crawling caterpillar habit to suddenly fly like a butterfly.

First, I had to be logically convinced that this is humanly possible. One of my teachers called my attention to piano master's who are blind: George Shearing, Stevie Wonder, Ray Charles; this information went into my left brain [Ti] and blazed a path to my right brain and my muscle memory, and I'm happy to report, it is starting to work. Slowly the heat of my concentration and the friction of my practice are melting the ice block that imprisons the butterfly. The sight of the printed notes becomes the mind sound which directly drives the arm-hand-fingers.

With your permission, I would like to dig a little further down under the ice of the "gestalto-stasis." The ice block is actually frozen spiritual doubt.

Why would nature install this counter instinct in our consciousness, when it is obvious that adaptation is essential to existence, which comes down to asking God, why put obstacles in my course if you want me to get there? Why not make us all virtuous virtuosos to begin with? This would be the same question as why leave it up to me to do good or evil?

I have dealt with this quandary in several of the early chapters. My answer is an extension of Niels Bohr's answer to Einstein. Bohr said "Stop telling God what to do". I would add, "instead of telling God what to do, ask him how to do it." That is the virtue which underlies virtuosity.

I haven't missed one story or movie about jazz musicians, and I can say, without a doubt, that none of them deal with the mastery mystery at the root of jazz. Unfortunately, it is much easier to interest the audience in a freak show, where jazz musicians have to use drugs to numb the pain of persecution they suffer from being misfits. This completely misses the point. The jazz musician, like any artist, has to practice extraordinary discipline which involves dedication as much as talent. Such a glorious combination of choices, more often than not, occurs without the distraction of suffering and drugs.

I have not achieved that mystery mastery, but have come close. I have had moments where a part of my mind, or maybe some outer mind, took over and invented alternative melodies, which fit and, at the same time, bent, the harmonic structure of a tune. It wasn't until I glimpsed this in my own playing that I could fully appreciate what was coming out of the jazz greats. This didn't happen until I had been playing the piano for 20 years. I am delighted when I hear real jazz wherever it comes from. Words cannot do justice to the delight jazz brings me, but this being a wordy medium, I must make an attempt.

So, I hear the first few minutes of music often referred to as the "head" (don't know why). This is one or more established themes from the lexicon of Western music (on rare occasions Eastern music as well), which could be from show tunes, folk songs, Christmas carols, symphonies, etc. That sets the stage, as it were. The pattern of frequency intervals, called melody, in this head is built on a progression of chords which spawns alternative but related patterns, and parallel harmonic structures. Jazz musicians often assign numbers for the scale degree of the notes and another set of numbers for the role of the chord in the harmonic pattern. C in the key of C would be 1, D -2 etc... At the risk of losing you, suffice it to say that everywhere and always, the mathematical patterns, in the form of chord progressions, proliferate themselves like sonic fractals. For instance, 2-5-1- which is at the basis of thousands of tunes becomes part of 1-6-2-5- like "blue moon," and that can become, so called, 'rhythm changes', blues, minor blues, and "dixie" changes 1-3-6-2-5. Familiarity with this Mandelbrot, sonic

geometry gives you the tools you need for appreciation. Mastery of this musical, magical math affords you the mysterious joy of creating unexpected/expected harmonic particles and melodies, which are at the same time familiar and brand new.

I believe there is something primordial, and even spiritual, in the human mind that responds to this esthetic revelation. If I said it's a Kantian 'apriori' or a Platonic Ideal, skeptics would say, "Humbug, it's nurture not nature; it's all about what you learn from those around you. Do asians resonate to the chord changes in Western Music?"

"They sure do." I would answer. There are a lot more Asians playing Jazz than Westerners playing Gamelon, or Ragas. My point is: there must be something transcultural to get so many asians to drop their nose flutes and pick up the sax. This is not ethnocentrism. Jazz comes from and goes to subcultures all over the world. I have no idea why or how this happened, but jazz beams across geographic borders to Pori Finland, and St Louis and Tokyo and even through the iron curtain to Moscow; just as it passes through social classes from Park Avenue to a slum in Brazil.

Media

I still spend more time sitting in front of screens than I do sitting at the piano. One of the draws of media is that it requires no effort. It reverses the maxim 'no pain; no gain' and appears to be offering gain without pain. The 'reel' world offers painless violence, duty free affluence, and worry free romance. But there is a price for this vacation, an aftermath, a media hangover.

Sartre calls the media hangover nausea. His book, Nausea, describes a dizziness which occurs when the house lights shock the, 'in the dark', cinema audience and dump them back into the glaring chaos of "real" reality. Suddenly the smooth, orchestrated unfolding spool of 'reel' events is gone and the enigmatic 'real' world of 'anything can happen' is back in your face. Each world has an effect on the other. The more the reel world is like the real world, the more we are drawn to it. We dedicate

our talent to making the reel world more like the real world, and we dedicate our ingenuity to making the real world more like the reel world.

Our unique ability to absorb the experience of other members of the species is connected to our propensity for vicarious experience in the 'reel' world of media. This 'reel' experience can optimize our real experience, or it can it replace it.

Once we realized that our minds are nodes in a circuit that sends and receives information across time and and space, it was inevitable that technology would enhance the connectivity. However they got there, (we won't blame God) the space/time baffles to communication are hurdles that science continuously surmounts.

When I was a kid there were telephones, radio, comic books, and, of course, movies. The hours per week spent immersed in media could be counted on one hand. Most of our time was spent in "immedia", I.e. live, face to face, interaction. My first electronic screen had two choices on Tuesday night between 8 and 10 pm. My current household array of electronic screens has over six thousand choices of stored programs and/or virtual access to anyone, anywhere in the world, available any minute of any hour on any day. Whatever else it is, this story is the odyssey of a kid with a comic book under his arm, becoming the old man with FaceTime, Wikipedia and 4k movies in his shirt pocket.

It is difficult but necessary to distinguish between two forces that draw me to my smart screens. One is a natural curiosity that creates an unending appetite for information and the other is a need to be distracted. I know that the distraction is like alcohol. A drink at cocktail hour is relaxing; getting drunk is enervating. For better or worse, I believe these technological changes have created an enigmatic entanglement between the "reel" and the "real" realities.

"Communogenesis", (a term I invented in my book Communication the Living End), is a *raison d'être* that shapes consciousness. The same need to connect, which leads us to love our neighbor also makes us susceptible to identifying with fictitious characters through whom we can live vicariously. Let's call it "vicariousity" (a term I invented just now). Whatever else it offers, vicariousity also causes us to disconnect form the real world. While connecting with fictitious characters of the 'reel' world, we are effectively taking a vacation from the 'real' characters in our own

real world. The vagaries of survival make us want to flatten the chaos out of real events and spool them onto a reel of predictable events. Vicarious experience is much easier to ingest, whether or not it is ever digested. While we are in the chaotic real world, we are all, young or old, domestic or foreign, drawn ineluctably (I love to use that word) to the organized reel world. But in the end we have to sober up from our vicarious benders; or do we?.

“Binge”, which means an extended period of inebriation, has come to describe immersion into an extended reel of concatenated episodes. Since the coming of Netflix and Amazon and other providers, there is no waiting between the hooks of each episode, which makes for much longer viewing sessions. I wonder if one day the reel will become strong enough to lock us into a virtual reality for months instead of hours.

The term “couch potato” deplores the total replacement of the real world with a reel world. (Some think it is best if couch potatoes are kept sessile, vegetating, considering what they have done when activated in the real world.) I am not a couch potato even though I have been known to ‘binge.’ When I have been bingeing in the reel world, I am much less tolerant of the natural friction from the ‘immedia’ relationships in the “real” world.

Unlike great art, which forces you to think and leaves you with something you can apply to your real world, more often than not, modern media leaves you with nothing but a hangover.

Addiction to “binging” should be called “vicariosis” (invented term), which would make it a disease and then we could search for a cure. Whatever it is, it has spawned financial empires which, you would think, would resist any change, but we know that is not true. Money doesn’t really make the world go round. Already the money mad media of the TV networks has been forced to share reel time with burgeoning competitors. TV advertisers interrupt the trance they are sponsoring and annoy rather than motivate. This is at the basis of the rise of the alternative cable channels, and streams which now complete and almost dominate the new generation’s reel time. I watch news on the networks no more than one hour a day; the rest of my reel time is spent on some internet stream.

That reel time bubble grows like a cancer, if you don’t keep your eye ‘off’ it. It takes all my will power to control it. Many of my friends and family

are unable to control it, and they become deluded and are unable to make the distinction between the two realities.

Not all binges are a total waste of time. In a few cases, I have become immersed in documentaries about a particular topic, like Nazi Germany, ancient Rome, or ancient China, for example, and have felt as though I had another life there and then. Also, we now have a pause button, which is a game changer. It makes the streaming reel more like a book which you can move around in or put down. It doesn't change the fact that media requires much less intellectual effort than books. Media wants to become more and more effortless in connecting minds.

You see by now, that I believe we are compulsive connectors.

'Immediate' connection with present company in my lifetime has had to make room for media connection with absent company.

Those who are absent because of space can now be reached in real time almost anywhere on the planet; those absent because of time can be reach back to and beyond recorded history.

The vast pool of spatially absent partners offers a broader selection and therefore, a higher probability of satisfying current connection needs. The spatial distance also affords insulation from the vagaries of contact, such as violence and infection (including pandemics which have recently become a major concern). All this is paid for by the absence of any pleasure afforded by physical contact.

Instantaneous, interactive virtual connection with spatially absent partners has the bandwidth to satisfy intellectual and even spiritual needs; it remains to be seen whether that alone will be enough.

Virtual connection with communication partners, who are temporally absent, provides access to a much greater pool, including historically significant great minds, but lacks the interactivity of the spatial media bridges. Bogus seances aside, you can't have a back and forth conversation with a dead mind.

Artificial Intelligence may be able one day to manage a virtual interactivity, but how close is that to the bandwidth of real interactivity? Could the best AI program make room for all that might be experienced in a real time dialogue with Socrates? It wouldn't be Socrates, I was talking to; it

would be the programmer's impersonation of Socrates. It's hard to imagine a program with a big enough mind to completely encompass Socrates's mind, but you never know. They are both fractals of the universal consciousness. The trip to the universal consciousness may involve machines at some point.

Like all my peers, I spend less and less time with "present company" and more and more time with absent company. However, unlike "the kids", I spend almost no time on social media with live absent company. I use email and cell phone, of course, for business circuits which has freed me up from "the office," but I prefer to cross the time barrier rather than the space barrier. This is a kind of media necrophilia: I seem to prefer dead virtual company to live ones.

Late one sleepless night, I really got to know one of my favorite dead authors, even though he will never know me. I found out that we had a lot in common. Through an honest insightful, no frills, documentary, made by his daughter. I connected with Arthur Miller in my own reel time without interruption and I resonated with my hero.

1. He was let down by the decline of intellectualism and live theater; so was I (although I had a lot less to lose)
2. He went to Michigan - so did I
3. He was encouraged by winning a playwriting award- so was I
4. He had many marriages - so did I
5. He had a retarded child- so did I
6. He was intrigued by bridging the chasm between father and son- so was I
7. He found a relationship with a loving daughter, so did I
8. He wrote plays, so did I

His plays have become American classics because they not only entertained but informed and inspired. Mine never made it past a storefront theater in Venice, California, but our virtual connection made that less important.

I am not the first, and will not be the last, to point out that "present company exclusion" has become more and more prevalent. Intimate virtual connections with absent company from anywhere or any time will change the very nature of stories, including how, why and to whom they are told.

The sole aim of money mad media channels, controlled by mindless capitalism, is to feed the fire of consumerism. This will hopefully end before it burns down the planet.

My connection with Arthur Miller could not have happened in those money mad media channels; nor would this story have found you, my absent communication partner.

Whether or not my “I” fits into your reel world, is answered by the fact that you have come this far. Whether or not the “Blink” was worth the real time it displaced, has a lot to do with resonance, which has a lot to do with the intention of the communicator, which I hope by now has come through to you.

TABLES

FAMILY TREE

PATERNAL - ITALY- AVELINO REGION, MONTEFALCIONE, SORBO SERPICO

Great Great Grandparents

Nichole Capriglione+ Maria Lombardo

Great Grand Parents

Giovanni Ciampa+ Teresa Tutino.

Domenico DePasquale+Angela Capriglione

-

Grand Parents

Giuseppe Ciampa (1880-1925)

Maria Angela De Pasquale (1879- 1951)

Father

John Ciampa (1905-1969)

MATERNAL - ITALY- CALABRIA, REGION, CATANZARO, MONTAURO

Great Grand Parents

XX- Schiavone + x... Santoro

Salvatore(?) Mercurio+ Matildax

Grand Parents

Giuseppe Schiavone

Mariangela Mercurio

Mother

Matilda Schiavone Ciampa (1907-1996)

WORK HISTORY

- Jobs that lasted longer than one month

Shoe Shine Boy	1946
News Boy	1946-47
Caddy	1948-51
Bag checker 1st super market	1950
Chocolate Factory	1951
Olive Factory	1952
Leather Coat Cutter apprentice	1953
Water Boy on Construction	1953
Laborer	1954
Oiler on Backhoe	1954-55
Gas Station Attendant	1955
Trumpet player	1956
Recreational Therapist	1957
Rat Brain Surgeon	1957-58
Menswear's Salesman	1959
Iron Worker	1960
Dump Truck Driver	1960
Bar Tender	1958-61
Waiter	1960-61
Trial Lawyer	1961 — —
Screen writer	1964-1978
Playwright	
Director Stage	1967
Director Film	1979-
Classical Guitarist	1963-
P R Director -Riker Pharmaceutical	1967
Professor RIT	1980-2009
Founder CEO Pictometry	1991-1999
Merchant Marine Master	2003
US Coast Guard Auxiliary Coxswain/ Instructor	2004
Founder CEO Altametry	2011-

TECH VENTURES & INVENTIONS

Founder CEO AVI	1979
Founder CEO Landisc	1984
Founder CEO Pictometry	1991
Founder CEO Altametry	2011
Airborne Response	2016

WHO'S WHO

The value next to the name corresponds to the extent of the relationship, e.g. 1= a simple handshake; 2 = a single conversation 3=more, 4= still more etc..

NAME DROPS	V=	NAME DROPS	V=	NAME DROPS	V=
Woody Shaw	3	Caroline Kennedy	3	Dalton Trumbo	4
Ted Williams	2	John Cazale	2	Charlie Haydn	7
Steve Jobs	1	Joe Pass	8	Caroline Kennedy	3
Shirley Mclaeen	4	Gerry Mulligan	3	Buckminster Fuller	8
Sen Paul Douglas	3	Jackie Onassis	2	Bill Clinton	2
Sally Fields	5	Jack Benny	2	Art Pepper	6
Robert Redford	6	Hubert Humphrey	3	Art Farmer	3
Dwight Eisenhower	2	William Inge	8	Arnold Schwarzeneger	3
Richard Nixon	2	Hillary Clinton	2	Adalai Stevenson	3
Richard Feynman	5	Henry Miller	3	Abraham Maslow	4
Richard Conte	4	Henry Grimes	3	Isamu Noguchi	
Primo Carnera	2	GH Bush	2	Jackie Kennedy	2
Placido Domingo	3	Frank Sinatra	4	John F Kennedy	4
Natalie Wood	4	Fayrouz	7	Rob Reiner	4
Mi.Gorbachev	1	Estes Kefauver	3	Lee Strasberg	4
Merril Streep	2	Ellen Burstyn	9	Dave Bailey	3
Melvin Belli	4	Karl Reiner	6	Woody Allen	2
Leonard Nemoy	5	Dean Martin	3	Will Karush	9



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

By now you know as much about the author as I do.

Bottom line: I was more pleased than disappointed with all that happened in my long journey.