

# FUBAR

---

**A NOVEL OF DECEPTION**

RON CARPOL



CONNOR & JAMES BOOK PUBLISHERS  
LOS ANGELES

PUBLISHED BY CONNOR & JAMES BOOK PUBLISHERS  
LOS ANGELES

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, businesses, organizations, places, events, and incidents, unless otherwise noted, are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously.

Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, graphic, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the publisher.

Book cover and design by Robert Aulicino

ISBN 0-9742560-4-8

Copyright ©2004 by Ron Carpol  
All rights reserved

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

First Edition

CONNOR & JAMES BOOK PUBLISHERS

[books@connorandjamesbooks.com](mailto:books@connorandjamesbooks.com)

[www.fubarbook.com](http://www.fubarbook.com)

The author is available for speaking appearances.

Distributed by Independent Publishers Group

814 N. Franklin Street

Chicago, IL 60610 USA

Phone: 312. 337-0747

Fax: 312. 337-5985

[www.ipgbook.com](http://www.ipgbook.com)

**fubar** fucked up beyond all recognition  
—U. S. SLANG, Words & Phrases

Do unto others before they do unto you first.  
—Kurt Stafford

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book would never have been completed in its present form without the invaluable assistance of Nick Carpol, who tirelessly worked with me in every phase of this project.

Thanks also to the following people whose vital contributions are gratefully appreciated: Sunghi Yoo, my meticulous proofreader for correcting my endless errors; Cathy Giblin, for her research editing; Chris Carpol and Suzie Carpol for their story ideas; Chris Martin, for some great fraternity reminiscences; Thomas B. Sawyer, the bestselling author, ([www.storybase.net](http://www.storybase.net)), for the invaluable information contained in his indispensable book, *Fiction Writing* DEMYSTIFIED, who was the first professional writer to endorse this book; Paul Rodriguez, the great comedian, for validating that this book really is funny; Robert Aulicino, for his cover art and interior design, ([www.aulicinodeign.com](http://www.aulicinodeign.com)), and guidance and patience.

And in alphabetical order, the editors of these major college satirical publications: Vern Cassin, Editor-in-Chief, PRINCETON *Tiger*; Aryeh Cohen-Wade, Editor-in-Chief, YALE *Record*; Editors of GEORGETOWN *Lampoon*; Sammy Elhag, Editor-in-Chief, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO *Koala*; Colin Kelly Jost, President, HARVARD *Lampoon*; Adrian Perry, Editor-in-Chief, STANFORD *Chaparral*; Ben Schachtman, Editor-in-Chief, RUTGERS *Medium*; Ken Scheffler, Editor-in-Chief Emeritus, CORNELL *Lunatic*; Melissa Surach, Editor-in-Chief, McGill *Red Herring*; and Ricky Van Veem, co-founder of [collegehumor.com](http://collegehumor.com).

And most importantly—for her help in everything involving this project—to Elizabeth.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## PART 1

### **THE FIVE MILLION DOLLAR CHALLENGE**

1	My Goddamn Grandfather.....	3
2	The Scheming Arab.....	7
3	Nobody Trusts Me.....	13
4	Even the Jews Hate Me.....	18
5	Nineteen More Enemies.....	30
6	The Sniper.....	38

## PART 2

### **TOO UGLY TO RAPE**

7	A Bail Bondsman's Wet Dream.....	45
8	Dirty Harriet.....	57
9	My Own Shyster.....	69
10	The Usual Suspects.....	76
11	The Snickering Cripple.....	81

## PART 3

### **EVERYBODY'S GOT A PRICE**

12	The Thief.....	85
13	Morgue Meat.....	94
14	My Professors Hate Me Too.....	108
15	Playing Perverted Games.....	118

## PART 4

### **PENIS & PENICILLIN**

16	Her Clit Ring.....	127
17	The Dominatrix.....	133
18	Our Death Warrant.....	147

## PART 5

### **THE VAGINAL CLUE**

19	The Traitor.....	157
20	Kidnapped.....	164
21	That's Not Beer.....	172
22	Covering My Ass.....	177
23	Going Down South.....	183
24	Like a 900 Sex Number.....	191
25	Lethal Target Practice.....	198
26	The Poon Tang Palace.....	212
27	But She Consented.....	222

## PART 6

### **THE EXTORTIONIST**

28	Autograph My What?.....	231
29	XXX Rated Photos.....	246
30	Faggot Hunting.....	256
31	My Obituary.....	262
32	A Dead Man's Hand.....	273

PART 7

**JUDGMENT DAY**

---

33 The Last Laugh.....289



PART 1

**THE  
FIVE MILLION  
DOLLAR  
CHALLENGE**



# 1

## **MY GODDAMN GRANDFATHER**

---

Friday, August 2, 2002  
San Francisco

**THIS CHINK LAWYER, I THINK HER NAME WAS YOKO ONO** or something like that, laid down the blue-backed papers on her desk and silently looked right through me with the Mona Lisa expression on her face. I puckered my lips, raised my right palm to my chin, and blew this gook a big, fucking kiss.

My father jerked around towards me. His eyes tightened and the veins on the side of his neck puffed out like thick rope. No doubt about it. He was mad about something.

“After today, you’re cut off. Whatever you inherit better last you a lifetime.”

“Who cares? I’ll be worth millions in half an hour.”

Then I’d be off to the Caribbean for the good life: beautiful beaches, smoking dope, always drunk, and lots of pussy.

The lawyer broke the stiff silence. “Besides the charitable gifts that I already read, these are the bequests for the family members.”

But instead of telling everybody what we got, she started spouting off a bunch of bullshit about what a great guy my grandfather was.

I tuned out, enjoying my throbbing hard-on, thinking about Jenna Jameson, the porn star that Howard Stern interviewed this morning.

When the slopehead paused to take a swig from an Evian bottle, my father poked me in the arm with his elbow. His facial expression looked like he was smelling dog shit.

“Lyman’s dressed in a suit,” he snapped. “Look at you. In that disgusting shirt that reeks of marijuana.”

Who cares if he didn’t like my wrinkled T-shirt that showed a guy with slicked-back hair from the ’40s smoking a joint? Above the guy was the word REEFER and below him were the words AT LEAST IT’S NOT CRACK.

“Any other complaints?”

“Yeah. Your breath stinks of beer and it’s only ten o’clock in the morning.”

“Anything else?”

He pointed to Lyman who was sitting between my aunt and uncle. “Yeah. He’s only seventeen and got accepted to Stanford and Berkeley. And you haven’t amounted to shit. You’re twenty-six without a day of college.”

“Quiet,” my mother hissed. “Let Mrs. Onoke read the will.”

What the hell did my mother know about anything except her daily ritual: church, expensive lunches, designer stores.

Just as the lawyer started to speak again, she suddenly stopped for a second and froze, staring at my mother’s diamond ring that was just a little smaller than a golf ball.

“Because I only have two children,” Yoko Ono finally continued, still in that squeaky, high-pitched voice, “Mrs. Catherine Stafford and Mrs. Suzanne Pomeranz, they are to receive equal shares of my twenty-one million dollar estate with the exception of five million dollars.”

Then for the first time, this bitch looked directly into my eyes. Two seconds later she looked over at Lyman before quickly twisting her skinny neck around and looking back at me again. Her eyes, which slanted much more than Lyman’s, suddenly sparkled, lighting up her round face with a smile.

“You’re Kurt Stafford, aren’t you?”

“Yeah.”

“Would you like me to tell you about your five million dollar inheritance in plain English?”

“Yeah.”

She tossed the will down on the desk and smiled again, like she couldn't wait to get to the punch line of a great joke.

“OK. Within one month you must enlist in the Marines and complete boot camp.”

Everybody except me burst out laughing; even the shyster.

“That's it? For five million bucks I got to join the fucking Marines? Looks like we're going to have a war!”

“Or,” she added, with a thinner smile that looked more sadistic, “that you enroll now in any accredited college and be sworn into your grandfather's fraternity—Sigma Omicron Lambda—by the end of your first semester.”

“That's it? Only those two dead-end choices?”

She nodded, smiling slightly. “Yes. That's it.”

That dead bastard did to me what pantyhose did to finger-fucking.

“What if I start college and don't last the semester? Can I still try the Marines?”

“Yes, but you must enlist within a month after leaving college.”

“What if I don't finish either one?”

“You get nothing.” Now, with a shit-eating grin, she looked at Lyman and pointed at him. “And your adopted cousin gets the money if he fulfills either condition.”

“But I get first shot. Right?”

She nodded. “That's right.”

My father's ruddy face beamed and his blue eyes almost twinkled. He looked way too smug for a personal injury lawyer who settled insurance claims from staged car accidents where quack doctors provided fake medical bills and reports. Everybody has a price, he continually bragged.

“We'll pay for college until you flunk out,” were his words of inspiration. “Unless you decide to skateboard down the Halls of Montezuma or surf the Shores of Tripoli.”

Again, the Chinaman bitch laughed like the rest of them, with my asshole cousin laughing the loudest before he sneered at me. “You’ll never see a dime, you fucker. I guarantee it.”

## 2

### THE SCHEMING ARAB

1:00 P.M.

**“WHAT’S THE DEAL?” ALI REZA ASKED**, still chewing on the spongy crap he showed me between bites as we sat on the tan couch in my apartment.

“You just graduated with honors, right?”

He nodded and swallowed what was probably camel meat. “Second in a class of 396,” he said proudly, before rattling off the awards he received at graduation. About the only things he left out were the Pulitzer Prize and the Congressional Medal of Honor.

I got right to the point with this naïve slob who had to work in a gas station after school for spending money. “I’ll give you five hundred bucks to take a college entrance test for me.”

“What?” he stammered. “You must be crazy. I got a full scholarship to Dartmouth. What if I get caught?”

“You won’t. The school I’m applying to lets you take the entrance test online. We’ll do it here. I’ll be with you to login any personal information about me.”

He started laughing. “What college would accept you? Especially at this late date?”

“College at the Sea. In Santa Monica.”

He shook his head and snickered. “Never heard of it. They must take anybody.” Then his voice suddenly took on a serious tone. “Why don’t you take the test yourself?”

“I’m kind of rusty on test-taking. It’s been eight years since high school.”

“What’ve you been doing since?”

“You know, a bunch of shitty waiter jobs that I kept getting fired from because the customers and the bosses were assholes.” I couldn’t tell him I was also dealing small amounts of pot and selling counterfeit concert tickets to suckers standing at the ends of long ticket lines who never knew they all bought the same seat.

“Why’d you finally decide to go to college now? Especially at your age?”

I told him about the will and its conditions.

He smiled with crooked teeth that glistened against his dark, olive skin.

“That’s it? That’s your only reason?”

I nodded. “Yeah.”

He shook his head back and forth slowly and rolled his eyes upward. “Look, I can get you into that half-assed college. No problem. But how’re you going to get into the fraternity? How do you know they’ll accept you?”

Shit! I never thought of that. I shrugged my shoulders. “I don’t know but I’ll think of something.”

“Another thing,” he continued, smiling. “A guy like you, how’re you going to put up with hazing from guys my age?”

Shit! I never thought about that either.

He continued. “I’ve got friends who rushed fraternities at different colleges. Some made it through pledging and some didn’t. But all of them took a lot of shit and embarrassment and humiliation along the way. Could you? You’re the laziest, most selfish person I ever met.”

“I’ll get accepted somehow.”

He started licking his yellowish tongue clean. “Five hundred isn’t much for maybe losing my scholarship if I got caught.”

My voice got cold. "You want the deal or not?"

"You pay me in cash?"

"Yeah."

"In advance?"

"Yeah." I pulled out five portraits of Benny Franklin from the front pocket of my jeans and held the fanned bills in front of his face. "Here."

He didn't take them. I guess I was too quick to pay.

"I want a thousand," he demanded greedily.

I paused for about five seconds, wanting him to realize that I was seriously thinking about it so he wouldn't go any higher. He didn't know that I'd probably pay him ten grand. "OK," I finally answered. "A thousand. But that's it."

Luckily, money wasn't a problem since my mother never bothered to check her bank statements or she'd have spotted the endless checks made out to me where I forged her name.

He paused a little too long for my comfort.

"This is all the cash I've got right now," I said. "I'll give you the other five hundred when you come back and take the test."

He stood up, grabbed the dough, and stuffed it in his shirt pocket. "OK. Call me when you want me here."

—

A week later this greedy bastard who lived down the hall from me was seated at the small table in my kitchen. My Gateway laptop was in front of him.

"You're lucky your father owns the building," he said, assessing the computer like an appraising rug merchant.

"Yeah," I answered slowly, wondering if my father really paid somebody to burn down the old apartment building that used to be here for the insurance money like the arson investigators keep trying to prove.

"The other five hundred first, please," he said cheerfully.

As soon as I forked it over, he logged on and started warming up, his hands flailing everywhere like a musical conductor.

"Pretty impressive."

“Someday I’ll play Chopin at Carnegie Hall.”

He continued gracefully on the keyboard for a few more seconds in silence before he stopped and looked over at me.

“This computer is much better than mine.”

I didn’t answer as he continued his elaborate finger exercises.

When the words TEST WILL BEGIN IN THREE MINUTES came on the screen, Ali Reza reached into his shirt pocket and pulled out a cashier’s check and showed it to me. It was made out to him for twelve hundred dollars and listed as the person who paid, my fucking cousin Lyman!

“What the hell is this?” I screamed.

He smiled. “Lyman paid me to intentionally fail the test for you.”

This was unbelievable. “How’d Lyman know about it?”

“I told him, naturally, to see if he’d outbid you. Like on eBay. And he did.”

“Where do you know him from?”

“High school. We’re in most of the honors classes together. Calculus, Shakespeare, advanced physics.”

I really had it with this sand nigger. “So now what?”

“Will you outbid him or not?”

“Look, we agreed on a thousand and you got it. That’s enough!”

Suddenly the screen said that the test would start in one minute.

“I’ll sell you Lyman’s twelve hundred dollar cashier’s check for fifteen hundred right now. Take it or leave it.”

I checked my Rolex and the second hand seemed like a spinning roulette wheel. I was running out of time.

“OK. It’s a deal. I’ll get you the money when I get accepted.”

“Bullshit. Now or never.”

“Will you take a check?”

“No.”

“I don’t have fifteen hundred in cash on me. So now what?”

His eyes were riveted to the computer.

"I settle for this."

"What?"

He stood up. "Otherwise I'm leaving."

"It cost nearly four grand," I whined. Except I bought it for two-fifty from some Mexican busboy who said his cousin stole it.

"Then I'm leaving."

Shit, what choice did I have? "OK."

"And I keep Lyman's cashier's check, too."

"OK, you son-of-a-bitch. But you better pass this test."

He smiled. "Don't worry. I will."

A few seconds later the test started and the questions flashed on the screen, a minute at a time. As he answered each question, the only time he wasn't smiling was when he was laughing. With jet-black hair, he had the beginning of an old man's lined face with a brush mustache that made him even look older.

As usual, he answered the question on the screen in a few seconds. But since the test was automatically timed, we had to wait the rest of the minute for the next question to appear.

"I can't believe this is a college entrance exam," he said, shaking his head between questions.

"Why?"

"For two years, I took an SAT prep course every Saturday. I answered thousands of questions."

"So?"

"So I know a college test when I see it. This is a high school entrance test."

"Who cares? Just pass it."

Finally question number 180 was on the monitor and as usual, he answered it in a split-second. He smiled broadly. "I think I scored 100%. Or at least 98% for sure."

"Great. All I need is a 70."

"My ten year-old sister could score more than 70."

---

Less than a week later I got the acceptance notice in the mail. I

called this blackmailer to tell him that we'd be doing more business together since I had no intention of doing any school work.

"Great," he answered. "That was the easiest money I ever made." He paused for a few seconds before adding, "I think I'd better warn you about something."

"About what?"

"Well, I met Lyman a few days ago to give him his money back since I knew I passed the test. Know what he said?"

"What?"

"That he can hardly wait to use all the shit he's got against you."

# 3

## **NOBODY TRUSTS ME**

Monday, September 2  
10:00 P.M.

**BEFORE I COULD WRITE MY NAME** in the fraternity sign-in book on the table on the front lawn, the guy with the STOVEPIPE nametag sitting across the table facing me clamped his huge hand around my right wrist, instantly stopping the circulation.

“What’re you doing?” he demanded, almost yelling over the sounds of Metallica blasting from speakers inside the house.

I yanked my hand out of his vise-like grip. “Signing the book. What the hell do you think?”

He stood up, standing about three inches taller than my 5-9 but weighed about the same 150. Ironically, we both had the same dark, gelled, semi-spiked haircut.

“What’re you doing here?” he challenged.

“Rushing. What the fuck you think?”

“Let’s see some ID.”

“What the hell’s going on?” I pulled out my wallet and showed him my drivers license. “Want to see my American Express Card too?”

Without answering, he checked a printed list of names on the paper that was clamped on his brown clipboard, running his

right forefinger down the list. Finally his finger stopped. “OK. You’re on the list of incoming freshmen. Sorry. But you look a lot older than most freshmen. You can sign the book.”

“Great looking signs,” I said, pointing to the flashing purple neon sign of the Zig-Zag man on one side of the front door and the dark-green, neon, Rolling Rock bottle on the other side of the doorway.

“Last year’s pledge class stole them,” he said proudly.

Stovepipe printed my name on a stick-on nametag that I pressed on the left side of my shirt and hurriedly walked past him into the house that resembled a glorified two-story, triple-wide trailer.

A huge American flag covered almost the entire wall facing the door. On another wall was a big poster of the planes crashing into the World Trade Center. On either side of it were NYFD and NYPD posters. Other patriotic 9/11 shit provided the rest of the room decorations. Some other guys were throwing darts in the corner, using a blown-up bin Laden wanted poster as the target.

About fifteen or twenty guys who looked like future Rotary Club members were milling around a couple of silver Bud beer kegs in the corner of the large, front room that smelled like a distillery. I grabbed a cup of beer, barely sipping its piss-like flavor. Slowly, I walked around introducing myself to everybody, obviously doing a lousy job of trying to fake being friendly. Everybody seemed to be talking and laughing to other guys but nobody seemed friendly to me. Mechanical hellos and stiff, forced handshakes were all I got from anybody. Something was definitely wrong. It was almost like I was wearing a police uniform.

I walked into the large dining room where a long emerald green cloth banner was tacked across an entire wall with two lines of white, block lettering that said:

SIGMA OMICRON LAMBDA  
WE PROMOTE FELLOWSHIP

Some guy with short hair and a basketball-sized head shaped like a pumpkin approached me. “Our biggest asset,” he mumbled

somberly like a mortician, pointing to the banner.

After a fast introduction and more stiff, robot-like gestures, he pointed to a few hundred photos on the two walls in front of me.

“Those are all the actives and alumni from the past five years,” he continued in his eulogy-like voice. “All good and true brothers.”

“Oh.”

I could tell that carrying on a conversation with this guy would be like conducting an interview but I tried anyway even though it was like trying to hear an AM station on an FM radio.

“Fraternity membership is invaluable,” this idiot spouted off like he was reading from a teleprompter. “Lifetime friendships, self-confidence, a feeling of belonging, mutual trust. True Christian values.”

I was dying to tell him my goal for being here but naturally I didn't.

Just as I was about to say something else, the sounds of laughter and the sudden whiff of pot floated in through an open window from the back yard. It drew me like a magnet, knowing it'd lead me to the sharper guys.

From inside the back porch, I switched on the outside porch light. As soon as I started walking down the back stairs into the chilled night air, two of the three guys standing out there flicked their joints into some bushes a few feet away. The third guy, with the dark Bart Simpson haircut, just froze where he was standing, with the lighted joint burning in his right hand that clung to the side of his knee.

“I guess I'm busted,” he said, dropping the roach and squishing in out on the grass. In the dim light his cheeks looked pitted like a pineapple.

Before I could figure out what he was talking about, a big, bleached-blond, surfer-looking guy with a pony tail snapped, “I didn't have nothing.” Three tiny silver loops were spaced evenly around the edges of his left ear.

“Me either,” snorted a goofy-looking guy about 6-8 with a shaved head wearing red Air Jordans almost the size of tennis

rackets.

“What the fuck you guys talking about?” I asked.

“Aren’t you a narc?” the Bart Simpson guy asked.

“Fuck no.”

“Prove it,” the tall guy with the shaved head challenged.

“OK.”

I opened my wallet and removed four joints. I handed one to each of the three surprised guys before I lit mine and theirs.

None of them seemed too convinced about me but slowly lit on the joints anyway. Funny, how laughter died everywhere as soon as I showed up.

“What’re you doing here?” the surfer-looking guy asked, sounding a little friendlier but not much.

“Rushing. What about you?”

“Same.”

“Aren’t you a little old? You look about twenty-five.”

“I’m twenty-six. And I fucked around too long. Now it’s time to get serious about my future. Anyway, I heard college is more fun if you’re in a fraternity.”

A husky guy with a goatee at the end of a pointed chin walked unsteadily down the stairs and approached us. “Anybody know where I can score blow?” he whispered. A yellow sun circled by orange and blue flames was tattooed on the side of his neck.

“Heard the boardwalk has more sellers than buyers,” I answered.

“Thanks, man.”

“What’s this Rule of Eleven shit that I heard some actives telling other rushees about?” the giraffe-sized guy asked. “Anybody know?”

“Yeah,” the coke guy answered, lighting up a joint. “No matter how many pledges there are, no more than eleven can be sworn in as actives.”

Just then it started to drizzle so we all went inside.

Then fucking-A! Who do I see standing in the front hallway? My asshole cousin Lyman!

My heart thumped loudly even though I tried to hide my

shock at seeing him as I approached him. The bright floor lamp behind him made his silky, jet-black hair look dark purple, and his soft, pink skin almost lavender.

“What the fuck are you doing here?” I asked, trying to sound casual.

“I’m rushing,” he answered with that George W smirk on his face.

“You got into Stanford and Berkeley. What’re you really here for?”

“What do you think? To fuck you over and get the money. And I’ve already started.”

# 4

## **EVEN THE JEWS HATE ME**

---

Sunday, September 8

9:30 P.M.

**THIS WAS THE LAST NIGHT OF RUSHING**, the night the actives voted in the new pledges. It was like the seventh game of the World Series; there was no tomorrow. It was now or never. My five million was down the fucking toilet if I didn't get selected as a pledge tonight. I was older and smarter than anybody here. I knew I could con these hicks into accepting me. Big wide smiles, extra-firm handshakes, laughing the loudest, backslapping. I'd do it all. It's the same formula for getting elected President of the United States.

The guys I smoked dope with the first night were back most of the other nights too. All four of them—the Bart Simpson guy, the big surfer, the tall Air Jordan guy, and the guy with the goatee—all seemed to be friends with each other.

But same as before, nobody took much interest in me even though I was at the house more than any other rushee. I forced smiles, shook more hands than a politician, and laughed at unfunny jokes. But nothing seemed to change the grim atmosphere. Guys would smile awkwardly and say hello disinterestedly

and some would even have trite, bullshit conversations with me. But other than meaningless small talk, I felt like I was only a piece of furniture around there. Nothing I said or did seemed to make any difference or interest anybody.

The words on the banner that said WE PROMOTE FELLOWSHIP obviously didn't have me in mind.

Jack Christianson, the fraternity president, led one smiling rushee after another down the hall and into a room where they closed the door. A few minutes later they came out, with each rushee beaming as he proudly wore a dime-size, emerald green pledge pin with the white Greek letter  $\Sigma$  in the center.

Meanwhile, time passed and I kept walking around getting more and more jittery, pretending to sip the tasteless beer from the plastic cup while trying to act friendly with a bunch loser guys I'd have never spoken to except under these uncomfortable circumstances. My stomach was in knots. My temples throbbed as I wondered when Christianson was coming for me. But it was getting later and later. I checked the Rolex; it was nearly midnight.

I was nervous as hell. I didn't want to join the goddamn Marines. Talk of war was everywhere. The odds were about ten-million-to-one that I'd survive the first day of boot camp. But what else could I do? Getting a job was out of the question. Here I am, you bastards! I wanted to scream out.

It seemed like about two dozen eighteen year-olds with big smiles and green pledge pins were being congratulated by the older-looking guys, obviously the actives. Everybody seemed to be laughing and joking and shaking hands with each other, already beginning the so-called fraternity goal of promoting fellowship. Most of the rushees who weren't selected yet gave up and left. The way I counted it, there were only three hopeful rushees that were still wandering around like lost souls: me, Lyman and some tall, pencil-necked guy with a large, silver stud protruding from under his bottom lip. Each of us stared at the other two like predators. I felt like I was playing musical chairs with hanging as the penalty for the loser.

Christianson and a jockey-sized active with a red bandana

twisted over his head walked over to the guy with the lip stud. A few seconds later they took him to the room where the other new pledges got their pins.

My stomach started bouncing like a non-stop pogo stick. Suddenly, a wave of nausea swept over me. I ran out of the house and into the back yard. I barely got to the bottom step before I puked my guts over a bed of dying pink roses. Thank God I was alone there. My mouth tasted sour and rancid, my face felt flush and my head was ringing from ear to ear. The heavily-falling mist was turning into light rain as I tried to pull myself together. I checked my watch again. It was almost 12:15. My rightful inheritance was evaporating! A crisp breeze started, chilling me. I thought about leaving right then and telling everybody to fuck off, but I decided to wait until the end so I walked back inside and desperately tried to mingle a little more.

It took me a few minutes before I realized that Lyman wasn't there. Maybe a miracle happened and he gave up.

Shit! Then I saw him walk from the hallway to the living room with Christianson. Lyman winked at me and pointed his chin downward toward his heart. I followed the pathway and gasped. The fucker got into the pledge class! He was wearing the green pledge pin and I was nothing but a twenty-six year-old reject.

But I wasn't going to get fucked-over without making sure they'd remember me forever. There were so many stupid regulations in the College Handbook that were meant for adolescents in a rural Kentucky bible school that I'd find some reason to close this fraternity down. Besides drinking in the house or smoking pot in the yard, my memory would also include seeing guys scoring coke from each other here. I'd gladly be a witness against these bastards while wearing my Marine dress uniform.

My asshole was so tight that a jackhammer couldn't penetrate it. I tried to act unconcerned, standing there alone in front of the big-screen TV pretending to look interested in some ESPN stock car race. If there was a mirror there I'd check it to make sure I

wasn't wearing a T-shirt that said I had communicable TB. And if isolation wasn't bad enough, I started stinking up the area with potentially-lethal farts which would have cleansed the room of the AIDS virus. I started moving around a little, like the white trash drivers of the stock cars racing on TV, so nobody would connect me to the stench.

I checked my watch again. It was almost a quarter to one. As I looked up, Christianson approached me with a grim expression on his face; gone was the big smile he had for the other rushees who got accepted into the pledge class.

"Stafford, please come with me."

I clenched my ass cheeks together, desperately trying not to fart as I walked along like a guy with each leg in a cast.

I followed him like the others had, until we entered a nearly dark room that looked like a den. He closed the door and pointed to one of the two tan, leather chairs facing each other in front of an unlit gas fireplace. As I sat down, I noticed that we were alone. The only light was from a tiny, flickering candle that was on a table across the room.

"This is the Chapter Room," he explained. "Ordinarily only for active members."

I was silent except for the pounding of my heartbeat that he probably heard. God somehow must've inserted Crazy Glue in my ass, temporarily keeping it silent.

Christianson had a soft, almost preacher-like voice with a very slight southern accent. "This is unpleasant for me," he said apologetically, looking down at my feet. "From your PLEDGE APPLICATION, I know you're a legacy. That your grandfather was a Sig O at Columbia. Ordinarily we want to have all future generations as members."

He looked up at me. I was rigid and stayed silent. From both ends.

"But you must know," he continued in the same tone of voice, "that you've been a big question mark here all week."

He was a little taller than me and about ten pounds heavier. Now he stared intently into my dark brown eyes, trying to check my reaction. He scratched his head which already had the

beginning of thinning blond hair.

Whatever he was trying to tell me, I wasn't going to make it easier by helping him pronounce my death sentence.

"Look," he said hesitantly, "it takes three guys to blackball any prospective pledge. You had three."

"Fuck!"

"We voted four times and each time you got the same three blackballs."

He paused for effect. I almost threw up again but there was nothing left of the Big Mac and the fries that fertilized the rose bushes. And I could feel the Crazy Glue in my ass losing its strength. I was too drained to speak as more uncomfortable seconds of silence passed.

"But," he finally said, probably figuring that I looked so weak that I'd faint any second, "one of the three guys who blackballed you is a gambler. In fact, he books sports bets for most of the school. He decided to give you a chance. Here's what he's willing to do."

Christianson stopped talking and walked over to the door and opened it. A tall, fat guy shaped like a bowling pin with light brown kinky hair and rimless glasses came in. He was wearing a green eyeshade that looked ridiculous, especially in this dark room.

"Stafford," Christianson said, as both guys faced me. "This is Bookie." We shook hands like robots and each nodded a little. "He'll tell you the break he's going to give you."

Bookie rubbed his nose and longingly sniffed whatever was on the pussy-finger of his left hand. Then he reached into the front pocket of his royal blue and turquoise CAS windbreaker, the same school jacket that most of the actives wore, and removed a silver dollar. He held it out to me.

"Flip it. If it's heads I vote to let you pledge. If it's tails you're blackballed out of here."

Before I could say anything he tried to hand it to me. I backed away like the coin was radioactive. I wiped the sweat off my forehead then I felt the back of my neck. It was wet too.

"Flip it," he ordered.

I couldn't fucking believe it! They were making me flip a coin for five million dollars! I just stood there dumbfounded and as motionless as a statue.

"Flip it or I'll say it's tails and you're out of here," Bookie threatened.

What could I do? Nothing. So I took the coin, trying to act casual. But I'm sure I was shaking like a vibrator while trying to keep my ass cheeks together so I wouldn't start farting again.

No question that these guys were serious. I had no choice. So I flipped the goddamn coin. It bounced up and down on the hardwood floor like a guy jumping on a trampoline. As the bounces became shorter and shorter, even in the dim candlelight, I saw it was going to land on tails. I was going to lose! Hurriedly, I stomped my right Puma down on the coin like a Mexican crushing a cockroach. I grabbed the coin before either guy could clearly see that tails was facing upward and tried to twist it upside down as inconspicuously as possible.

I stood up, holding the coin in the open palm of my hand. "It's heads," I said matter-of-factly, praying like hell that my nervous voice wouldn't crack.

Each of them exchanged quick glances but said nothing.

Bookie looked at me and snickered before turning to Christianson. "I'm almost sure it was tails." He walked across the room to the door and opened it before he turned around and looked at Christianson. "Let me think about it," he said, before he closed the door and left.

None of the finalists on *American Idol* could've been more nervous than me right then. My throat felt like I was gargling with sand and my heartbeat reverberated like Flea's bass playing a Red Hot Chili Peppers song.

Bookie was gone for less than a minute when another guy came in. It was the little guy with the red bandana on his head who was sipping a cup of beer. From five feet away he smelled like he fell into a vat of cheap cologne. I noticed a small, gold-loop earring in his left ear like mine.

"Bookie's still thinking of blackballing this guy but said you should call it," he told Christianson.

The room was silent as I stared at Christianson's expressionless face that hadn't felt a razor for a couple of days. It was the longest ten seconds in history.

Finally he spoke. "OK, you can pledge. But it was tails wasn't it?"

I shook my head and tried to deny it but no words came out.

His tone got sharper. "Tell me the truth or you're out of here. It was tails, wasn't it?"

I took a deep breath and nodded. "Yeah," I mumbled in a scratchy voice.

He persisted. "Then you lost the flip, didn't you?"

I nodded. "Yeah. I guess so."

"Fucking-A," the guy with the bandana said angrily. "Then you're out of here. We thought you won until you admitted it. You dumb shit!"

Oh fuck! Now what? I could feel a nuclear fart coming on so I sat down on one of the chairs to try to silence the explosive bomb that was almost ready to be launched. My body felt paralyzed sitting there. My vision was glazed. I started gasping.

"Jesus Christ, he's passing out!" the guy with the bandana yelled, grabbing hold of my right arm and yanking me out of the chair. He shoved the beer cup to my lips. "Drink this! Don't have a goddamn stroke! Not here! I want to graduate!"

"Just what we need," Christianson muttered. "Another pledge casualty."

Maybe from the putrid smell of the guy's cologne, my strength returned a little. And my hazy vision slowly began clearing up.

The guy with the bandana asked, "You OK?"

I nodded. "Yeah. I guess so."

He smiled a little and held out his right hand. "Gyp Adams. The Pledge Father."

I didn't move. I looked at his outstretched right hand for a second like he expected a free palm reading. Finally he lowered it. "So what?" I asked.

"So you've already been voted in as a pledge. The last one. And you've got nineteen pledge brothers."

I flinched like I got shocked by a jolt of electricity. “No shit?” I still didn’t believe him.

“Yeah. No shit.”

“What about the coin flip?”

Adams smiled. “Bookie gave the guys in the other room 2-1 odds that we’d convince you to quit before telling you that you made it.”

“Well, he lost,” I said, feeling the world’s biggest smile on my face.

Christianson held a green pledge pin and pinned it over my heart onto my blue Diesel shirt.

It was a totally new feeling to be wanted and accepted by any group. I didn’t know how to react. I never had any close friends before. The only other organization I ever belonged to was the Little League before I got thrown out for smoking dope in the dugout.

“Some pledge ground rules now,” Christianson said in a friendly voice that he must’ve saved in the past for other people. “You know that a pledge is just a probationary member?” he asked.

“Yeah.”

“And the duties of a pledge are to follow the orders of the active members called actives?”

“Yeah.”

“You know, you’re a special problem because of your age. You said you were twenty-six. You know you’ll be taking a lot of shit from guys much younger. You understand that?”

“Yeah.” But anything would be easier than Marine boot camp. “But,” I continued, “on the other hand, my maturity and judgment will add a lot to the pledge class.”

Adams nodded to Christianson. “He’s probably right.”

Christianson continued, “Now pledging lasts the entire semester. Until mid-January. About four months away. And the last week of pledging is called Hell Week. If you last that long, if you don’t quit or get thrown out first—and then if you survive the cutoff vote of The Rule of Eleven—you’ll be voted into the fraternity as a full active member.”

“You understand?”

I nodded. “Yeah.”

“Do you know what The Rule of Eleven is?”

“No.”

Instantly, his face lost its friendliness. “It means of the twenty guys who are now pledges—no matter what—no more than eleven pledges can be made actives.”

I was silent as I fully digested this for the first time.

“Remember, sometimes less than eleven guys get voted in as actives. But never more than eleven.” He paused and looked at me. “You understand?”

I nodded. “Yeah.”

“Tell him the other thing,” Adams said.

“Yeah.” Christianson continued, with the sternest look yet. “You know Bookie doesn’t think much of you.”

“Yeah.”

“Except maybe your slight-of-hand trick with the coin.”

I didn’t answer. I was trying too hard not to smile.

“But the other guys who blackballed you don’t like you at all.”

“You know why?” Adams asked.

“No.”

“I can’t tell you who they are, but both guys are Jewish even though they don’t look it or act it.”

“So?”

“They said that all during Rush Week they overheard you making anti-Semitic comments, calling people kikes and yids.”

The eyes of both guys riveted into mine.

“They’re wrong,” I lied.

“But if they’re right, it hardly follows our goal of promoting fellowship, does it?”

“No. But I never made those comments.”

“Well, we’re warning you to be careful. Even if Bookie votes you in as an active, if both the other two guys blackball you, you’re out. Two blackballs and a pledge is gone. Pledges only have a margin of one blackball. Understand?”

“Yeah.”

“Last thing. You’re taking at least twelve units, aren’t you?”

“Yeah.”

“What classes you taking?”

“Man and Civilization, Sociology, English, and Economics.”

“Good. That’s a requirement from National. Nobody can get sworn in unless they’re carrying at least twelve units with a minimum 2.0, C grade average. Understand?”

“Yeah.”

“And don’t forget,” Adams piped up, “you’ve got to have good moral character too.”

“Don’t worry. I got that for sure.”

“We’re Christians, at least mostly,” Adams continued, “so naturally, we don’t want no faggots here. If we hear from anybody that a pledge has any kind of gay sex, or anything to do with any guy who’s had gay sex, that pledge is history.”

“Fine with me,” I answered. “I don’t want no faggots here either.”

Christianson was smiling. “A few years ago some pledge named Ziggy stuck his dick through a glory hole in the toilet stall in the bathroom of the Grauman’s Chinese Theatre in Hollywood. Said it was a joke. Anyway, the guy in the next stall who was taking a crap was a cop. When the cop saw Ziggy’s dick slide in through the glory hole, he arrested Ziggy for morals charges. He said Ziggy kept yelling, ‘Suck it. Suck it.’ Ziggy denied everything but we kicked him out anyway.”

“Last warning,” Adams said to me grimly. “We don’t want no faggots here or nobody that has anything to do with faggots.”

I nodded mechanically.

“Like I said,” Christianson added, “we’re Christians. We can forgive a lot of shit in the name of Jesus, even lying or stealing depending on the circumstances. But we got zero tolerance for any faggot shit of any kind.”

“No matter what it is,” Adams hissed.

Christianson looked at me sharply. “You got that?”

“Yeah,” I mumbled.

“One last thing,” Christianson added. “Just to prevent any pledges from trying to get other pledges kicked out so they got

a better chance to beat The Rule of Eleven and make the fraternity, the last night of pledging is called Pledge Elimination Night. That's where each pledge votes for the guy he wants out. Whoever gets the most votes is gone. Like on *Survivor*."

"You understand?" Christianson asked.

I nodded. "Yeah."

Christianson got friendly again. "Good." He put his right arm around my shoulders. "Remember, you're now in a group. We don't want no dissenters. Your loyalty is to the fraternity, not to any particular individual. The Sig O's have an eighty-four year history of tradition; this chapter at CAS was founded when the college began twenty-nine years ago and we want to keep the fraternity here forever." He paused. "You understand?"

"Yeah. Loyalty is my middle name."

"Now let's go in the other room and meet your new pledge brothers. By next January at least nine of them will be history."

"Bookie's already made an odds chart on which pledges will make it," Adams said. "He's taking bets now."

Christianson pointed to me. "What's Stafford's odds?"

"100-1."

---

While most of the actives were congratulating the new pledges and the pledges were introducing themselves to each other, I spotted Lyman talking to some skinny creep wearing a pledge pin and headed over to them. While the beanpole was in the middle of a sentence, I hurriedly I grabbed Lyman's right forearm and almost yanked him into the corner where we were alone.

"Listen you asshole," I hissed softly. "We both know the rules to get the money: anything goes to win. But keep your mouth shut about the will to these guys."

"Why?"

"Because if they know about one of us getting the five million, these fucking blue-collar bastards will start blackmailing us for part of the money by threatening to kick us out if we don't pay them. They'll play both of us against the other and

probably get most of the will money from either one of us.”

He was silent for a few seconds, scratching the side of his nose, looking lost in thought. “Maybe you’re right,” he mumbled.

I nodded. “I am.”

“But still, anything goes to win.”

# 5

## NINETEEN MORE ENEMIES

Monday, September 9  
10:00 P.M.

**A TINNY, HOLLOW, METALLIC VOICE CAME FROM** a battery-powered megaphone in the dark side of the dining room where me and the other pledges were lined up side-by-side facing a bunch of flashlights that kept shining in our faces.

“Asshole pledges! When your name is called, take one step forward! When the next name is called, immediately get back into line! We want to know who you are! Pledge President first! Grossberg! Why you at this shit-ass school?”

Not only was he the only Jew in the pledge class but he was dumb enough to be the only volunteer for the stupid job.

He shrugged his broad shoulders and smiled sheepishly. “Heard it was easy work, lots of fun, lots of pussy.”

A big cheer went up.

“Froggy from Quebec! Why come this far to college?”

The guy with a dark, shaggy Beatles haircut took a step forward. He burped loudly before answering, “Beach Boys song. *California Girls*.”

“Stafford!” somebody yelled out. “What’s your favorite sex act?”

“Shaving a pussy, then giving her anal.”

The place roared with laughter followed by enthusiastic applause.

“How old are you?”

“Twenty-six.”

“Aren’t you a little old for college and to pledge a fraternity?”

“It took me a while but I finally realized the importance of an education. And I want to be part of a group of guys who know how to have fun.”

“Hymen breaker! Is Stafford really your cousin?”

My asshole cousin Lyman, with his 3.92 high school grade point average, must’ve correctly figured that Lyman rhymed with Hymen, and took a timid step forward.

“Yeah.”

“You really admitted to Stanford and Berkeley?”

“Yeah.”

“Then why’re you here?”

“Doctor told me to take a year off. Too much stress and anxiety from trying to be the class valedictorian. Then the depression I had from only being fifth in the class.”

“So why’re you here instead of going to the beach for a year?”

“To keep active. I heard the work here’s barely high school level. Besides there’s a Sig O chapter at Berkeley and Stanford that I can transfer into next year.”

“Hey, you! Stafford!” came a gruff voice from somebody I couldn’t see.

A big guy with muscles coming out of muscles and a snarling expression on his scarred, ugly face made his way from the back of the room and staggered up to me, stinking of liquor. He was wearing a camouflaged baseball cap with the black letters USMC under the globe and anchor.

“Since high school ’till now, you ever been in the military?”

“Fuck no,” I said too quickly, pissing off this Hercules-size idiot even more.

He inched closer to me, considerably letting me smell his rancid, alcohol breath from a closer distance. “My name’s Parker. Stafford, I never liked you from the second I met you. You know why?”

I shook my head a little and stood there silently.

“Because you got an attitude! You think you’re better and smarter than anybody here!” He paused for a second. I stayed silent. “I guarantee you right now, you’ll never get voted in this fraternity!”

I still didn’t answer, knowing that if I got kicked out, none of the rest of these assholes would be here either.

This burly lunatic gripped the bill on the cap, yanked it off his head and slapped it on top of my head. “You’ll wear this cap every time you’re in the house! You understand?”

I adjusted the cap so it fit better and nodded. “Yeah.”

Bookie’s voice yelled out, “Odds on Stafford making the fraternity are now 150-1.”

The thick smoke in the room from the pot, cigarettes, and twisted, wooden-tipped, flavored cigars would have set off every fire sprinkler within a mile if there were any.

The bullhorn was passed around again since a different guy’s voice spoke.

“Denning, you’re now called Dung!”

This slob twitched forward a little. He was about five-two and must’ve weighed two hundred, with light apricot hair and fading pimples like in a connect-the-dot book.

Nobody asked him a question yet but he blurted out unevenly, “My, my father’s a surgeon at the Mayo Clinic.”

“Licks the bedpans clean, don’t he?” some guy with a New York accent yelled out.

“No.”

“What?”

“Uh, I mean, I guess so, yeah.”

“Higgins!”

He took an awkward step forward, making his left club foot obvious. His blond wavy hair was brushed straight back and with a dimple in each cheek, he looked a lot like James Dean.

“Why you limp?”

He didn’t hesitate answering. “Birth defect.”

“Your parents sue the doctor?”

“No.”

“Sue the hospital?”

“No.”

“Parents sue each other?”

“No.”

“Parents sue you?”

“No.”

“You sue them?”

“No.”

“Grossberg!”

“Yeah?”

“Higgins family ain’t Jewish are they?”

“Guess not.”

Another voice came out of the bullhorn.

“Holmes! Why you talk like an asshole?”

His thin face and chalky complexion made him look like a cadaver.

“From England, sir.”

“Walsh! Know why you’re called Watson?”

He was a tall, barrel-chested guy with green eyes, cinnamon hair, and a freckled face that looked right off a Wheaties box.

“Nope.”

“Cause you and Holmes are asshole soccer buddies.”

He scratched his chest over the blue NO FEAR tank tap, revealing a ring through his left nipple. “If you say so.”

“Batman! Used to be named Bingham. Home town and major!”

He was my size, but stocky with his light brown hair already starting to thin at the top of his head. A silver piercing was above each eyebrow.

“New Orleans. Majoring in fucking around.”

First guy here that I liked.

“What’s that hairy shit growing under your bottom lip?”

“Flavor saver.”

“What’s that?”

“Keeps the flavor of pussy alive longer after going down on a girl.”

“Rasoom now known as Zoom! Why you always carry a toothbrush and stink of Listerine?”

The pledge standing on my right had rancid BO, a gut like a pregnant cow, and tiny pearl teeth.

“Good oral hygiene.”

“Can’t gargle away AIDS pussy!” was somebody’s great medical advice that got a few laughs.

“Rawlings! Why you here instead of at a school with a football team?”

At about six-four and at least two-fifty, this guy looked tough enough right now to play in the NFL. He had no neck, just muscles that connected his earlobes to his shoulders. “To raise my grades to play ball for UCLA next year. Sponsor pays me two thousand a month and gave me a new Xterra to go here and train every day.”

“Castle! Why you here?”

He was standing to my left. He was about five-ten, skinny as a broomstick, and so bowlegged that he must’ve been conceived when his mother was fucked on a saddle. He ran his right hand across the top of his dark oily hair that was probably soaked in Pennzoil.

“Killing time waiting for my father to die. He’s a multi-millionaire.”

“Vysell, why your high school grades shit?”

He was about six-one, with reddish-brown hair, droopy eyelids and a deep dimple in the middle of his chin. He always seemed to smile. An intricate barbed wire tattoo circled each biceps.

“Didn’t learn much,” he mumbled almost through clenched teeth like a ventriloquist. “School full of wetbacks.”

He seemed like another good guy and was obviously smart.

“Hood! You a virgin?” some other drunk yelled out laughing.

He was my height but heavier, with thick, dark hair and a very Ivy-League, prissy look behind tortoise-shell glasses. His first name was probably Skip, Buzzy or Troy.

“I went to Tijuana last month but I couldn’t get an erection. Girl looked dirty.”

“I got his name!” some guy with a deep voice yelled out over the laughter. “No-Wood!”

The loud cheering almost drowned out a different voice on the bullhorn.

“Wide-Load! You with the fat ass and goatee! What’s your father’s occupation?”

“Real Estate.”

“He’s a slumlord!” somebody else growled, making the word slumlord sound bad.

“So?”

“Who’re his tenants?”

“Mostly beans and niggers. Animals, they break everything and run out on the rent.”

“Brannigan, the IRA mick!” the voice on the bullhorn interrupted.

A guy with pink skin, green eyes and a reddish-brown crew-cut who looked right out of an Irish travel magazine stepped forward.

“I’m English,” he growled. “Anyway, what kind of insulting question is that?”

“A mick question.”

“What is this shit?” he snapped. “School rules say no hazing pledges; nothing insulting, degrading or humiliating. Doesn’t that mean anything to you?”

“No.”

“I don’t have to be insulted by you fucking assholes!”

Suddenly Christianson’s voice came out of the bullhorn. “Unless you’re the victim of an IRA kidnapping, the door’s open. Get the hell out of here!”

“Fuck you!” this short-lived pledge brother snarled. He twisted out of line and stormed toward the door. “Fuck all you!” he yelled over his right shoulder, slamming the front door so hard that it was lucky the door didn’t fly off the hinges.

And just like that, one pledge down and eight to go.

The mood was somber for about five seconds until the next name was called out.

“Rainey. Your blind barber near death?”

He was a husky, rugged-looking guy, with bright blue eyes, a thick, blue-black beard, and a dark mullet haircut: sides shaved, top in a crew-cut with the back hanging down way past the collar of his yellow Polo shirt.

He laughed. "Not really."

"What's your favorite sport?"

He smiled, revealing about ten grand of perfectly capped, sparkling, white teeth.

"Sixty-nining."

"Spottler!" somebody yelled out. "Your first name really got three G's?"

"Yeah. G-R-E-G-G," the guy with the pockmarked cheeks and the Bart Simpson haircut answered.

"You're now known as G-Spot. Why you here?"

"Got a track scholarship."

This got one of the loudest laughs of the night.

"This school couldn't win the Special Olympics."

"Ovary! Get up here!"

"Yes, sir. But my name's Overby not Ovary."

At six-one and wiry, he had tan fuzzy hair that looked like a Brillo pad perched on top of his head and enough ear, nose, and mouth piercings to keep an airport metal detector beeping for hours.

"You're always poor-mouthing. Who's paying for college?"

Somehow this question really hit a nerve. He swallowed slowly and seemed to hesitate before he answered unevenly, "My uncle."

"Rick Shaw now known as Rickshaw Boy! Why you here?"

He was the guy about six-eight who was smoking dope with me and the other three guys last week in the yard.

"Full basketball scholarship."

A bunch of guys laughed.

"This school couldn't beat a wheelchair basketball team," somebody yelled.

A squeaky voice suddenly screamed out, "Why ain't there no gooks on campus to pedal your rickshaw?"

"Because they're too smart to be here."

Christianson's voice on the bullhorn said sternly, "Pledges: Here's your last warning on the subject. Even any hint that any of you pledges is involved in gay sex is your ticket out of here." Then he sounded friendly again. "Congratulations to our new pledges. After you pose for Richie LeRoy, the house photographer, join the rest of us here at Club Jagermeister!"

# 6

## THE SNIPER

Monday, September 16  
3:15 P.M.

**“LYMAN SAID THAT IF HE COULD AFFORD IT,** he’d pay somebody to kill you,” Holmes told me at the apartment that he and Watson shared with Lyman in Westchester, near the airport. “Why does he hate you so much?”

“Because he thinks the whole family hates flippers.”

“Filipinos?” Watson asked.

“Who do you think I’m talking about? Flipper the Dolphin at Sea World?”

Watson laughed as Holmes continued this stupid conversation. “Only person he hates more than you is your grandfather.”

“Seriously, why does he hate you?” Watson asked.

“Because he’s jealous. My parents give me everything like they should but his cheap-bastard parents make him work. For grades, spending money, all that shit.”

“Why does he hate your grandfather?”

“Because he never had anything to do with Lyman.”

“Because he’s Filipino?”

I shook my head in disgust. “Probably. But so what? My

grandfather hated me too. Anyway, how can you guys stand living here with Lyman. He's such an asshole. Always was and always will be."

"Actually, he's OK," Watson answered to my surprise, "except for his obsession with that genealogy shit."

"What do you mean?"

"He's trying to locate his real mother and father. Look at his room."

It seemed like every five seconds another goddamn plane roared overhead. I looked up at the ceiling. "Isn't the noise annoying as hell?"

"You get used to it," Holmes answered.

We walked down the small hallway and Holmes opened Lyman's bedroom door and we went inside. Except for the girl with big tits on the collegehumor.com poster, almost all the rest of the wall space was covered with maps, charts, diagrams; all on the subject of ancestors and finding people.

"He's got a new lead," Holmes said, sounding happy.

"Oh," I answered, not really giving a shit.

"Yeah. Well, you know, Lyman's mother worked for your grandfather as a maid."

"What're you, his biographer?"

"Hardly. But that's the only thing he does that drives me and Watson crazy. Always talking about when he got adopted."

"So his mother was the maid. So what? She's a flipper too."

Holmes looked puzzled, obviously not understanding my logic and continued with Lyman's pitiful, who-wants-to-hear-it? biography.

"When he was a year old she left to go to the Philippines temporarily for a family emergency and she left him with the woman who took over for her at your grandfather's house. Some woman whose husband was in the Army."

This was still boring as shit. "So what?"

"So when his mother never came back, and the replacement woman went to Germany with her husband when the Army transferred him there, that's when your aunt and uncle adopted him."

“So who-the-fuck cares? Anyway, what’s the big lead from the Army?”

Holmes, with his pretentious English accent, sounded like a goddamn butler. “Army records came back a few days ago and showed that the woman and her husband left Germany and now live near Fort Worth, Texas.”

“Lyman talk to her?”

“No. Records must’ve been old. She moved from there since. But he’s got a search company out looking for her.”

“You know what else I think of Lyman?” I asked innocently. A second later I broke the silence with a rumbling, five-second-long fart that picked up speed as I blasted it out of my ass. Then a big burp finished my opinion. “That’s what. So who the hell cares if he finds his parents anyway?”

“He does, for one,” Watson answered testily. He looked over at Holmes and both guys shook their heads and looked at me. Then Watson smiled. “You told us why Lyman hates you and your grandfather. But why did you hate your grandfather?”

“Always criticizing me. And instead of calling me by name, he called me ‘useless parasite.’ And he was always bragging about the goddamn Marines and showing off his war souvenirs.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, for instance, I remember a large, glass-covered picture frame in the den with his uniform shirt covered with dried blood that had the Purple Heart pinned on it. That was the biggest thing in his life. The minute anybody walked in the house, he’d grab them, take them into the den and show him the goddamn shirt and tell them he wore it when he got shot at Iwo Jima killing Japs.”

Holmes smiled. “You know what you and your grandfather have in common with Lyman?”

I shrugged my shoulders. “What?”

He pointed to the open bedroom door. “Look behind it.”

I pushed the bedroom door closed and saw two black and white cork dartboards, one on top of the other. My grandfather’s cut-out picture was glued into the bulls-eye on the top one.

And my picture was in the center of the lower one! The sharp, silver tips of red-feathered darts was stuck through each of our eyeballs!

“A lot of pledges hate you too,” Holmes suddenly informed me, keeping this great conversation going. “And the list is growing pretty fast. There’s even talk about most of the pledge class signing a petition threatening to quit unless the actives kick you out.”

I was really surprised. “Why?”

“Everybody can see that you don’t give a shit about the pledge class or the fraternity. Always criticizing everybody, making cruel jokes, just being an arrogant prick. In fact, nobody can figure out why you even want to be in the fraternity.”

“To make friends,” I said straight-faced. “And the pledges are wrong about me,” I lied. “Anyway that flipper bastard’s got no reason to hate me. I never did anything to him.”

Holmes opened the door. “Let’s get out of here. Lyman ought to be back any minute. Nobody but me and Watson are allowed in here without Lyman.”

The continual rumble overhead from the planes was finally driving me crazy. “How can you stand the fucking noise?” I yelled.

“Told you. You get used to it. Don’t hear it after a while.”

“Not me.”

We went back into the living room to wait for the others so we could discuss our term project in our Sociology class.

About two minutes later Lyman walked in with two girls. The taller one was Nina, Lyman’s girlfriend. She was a dull, mousy-looking thing that we named Headlights since her good-sized tits bounced as she walked. She was with her bosom-buddy named Heather; a little twat about four-ten, with wild, frizzy hair that she probably styled by jamming a hairpin into an electrical outlet. Everybody called her Frizzhead.

Our planning session barely started when Frizzhead, who was sitting next to me at the kitchen table, started rubbing her fuck-me high heels against my ankles. It would’ve been welcome if she was decent looking but she was a scrawny dwarf. I

kept twisting away from her but she wouldn't stop. Finally I couldn't stand it any more. I leaned over to her, cupped my hands over her right ear and whispered, "I wouldn't fuck you with someone else's dick." Then I left.