

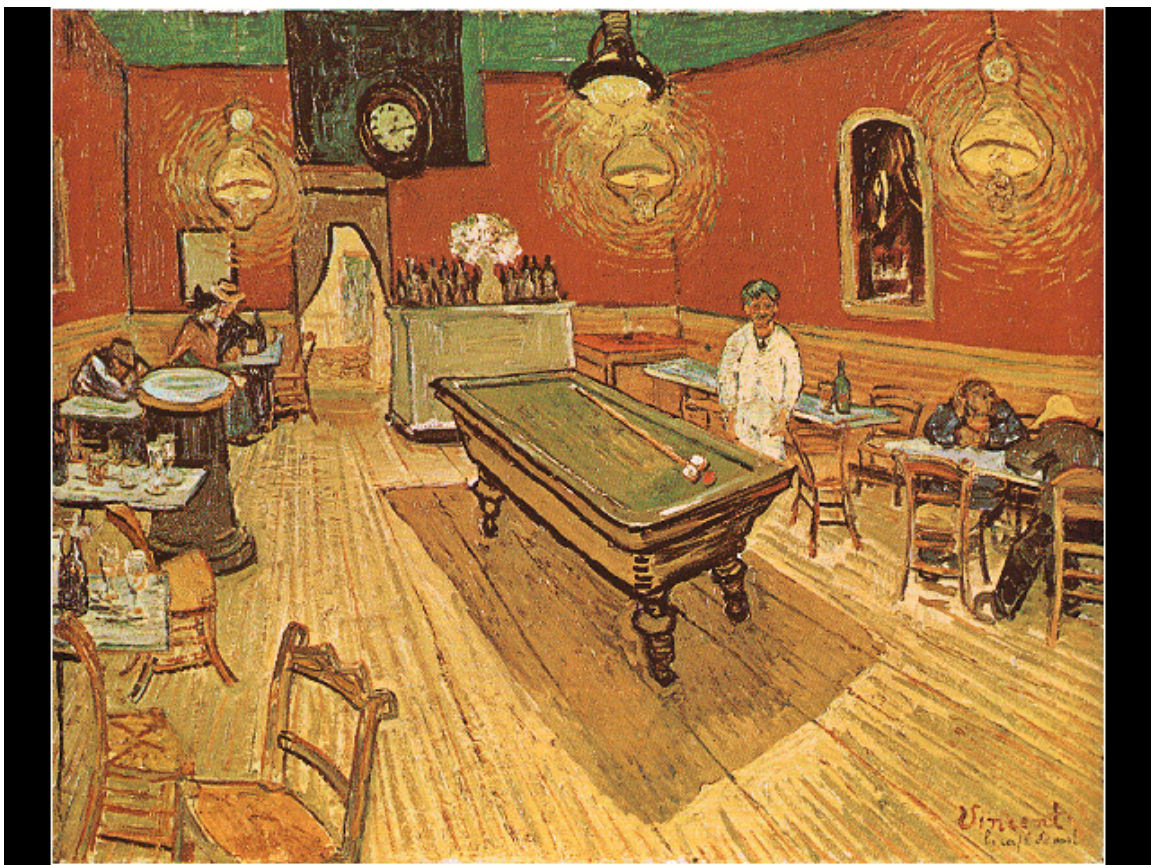
# Passaro Noturno

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Passaro Noturno - forward

I found the *night birds* in the city of Sao Paulo, Brasil. Firstly I must explain that they are not birds. These are a special kind night watchmen whose job it is to be guardians over neighbourhoods in the evening hours while most of the population is asleep. The concept is an amazing, and one I loved immediately. Interestingly as beneficent protectors, they are not an instrument of force, or of weapons , but of inspiration.

After about 10 o'clock in the evening, boys are employed to cycle around the streets of Sao Paulo's extensive residential neighbourhoods patrolling for trouble or unusual activity. They carry a special whistle which they blow about every three minutes or so as they roam the streets. This dolorous soft voice, coming out of the dark streets, starts high in pitch falling gradually to a lower one. It announces not a sense of alarm, but of comfort to all who are in its reach. This most soothing and plaintive sound seems to say, "be calm, sleep, all is well" we are watching out for you. These boys operate from small lighted boxed enclaves located at strategic residential street corners in the city. They do this work all night till early light.

I know of no other cities in the world, with perhaps the exception of Rio de Janeiro or Buenos Aires where this practice would be used as it is here in Sao Paulo, Brasil. It's reflective of the Latin American spirit which still can embrace the idea of placing benevolent protectors on their streets, protectors who discourage crime simply by their presence.

My use of this theme in this book, the *night birds*, comes from the real similarity with the phenomenon of their life and the life an artist lives.

Like artists *night birds* must be able to live with one foot in reason (the day) and one foot in the magical world (the night). To affect a change of energy often requires us to act from two positions at once. The position we are in, and the one we yearn for. This produces a life neither of complete satisfaction nor of complete disparity.

One is always working towards the ecstatic moment, the epiphany, the resolution of all things. An artist wishes above all to share the truth of his experience. Through much toil and application he has found that the golden secret is that the kingdom is within you. Sharing it becomes then the very reason for one's existence.

I have not heard people here refer to these protectors of the kingdom as *night birds*, however in my eyes they have earned this sublime sobriquet. Like many unknowns, they are a humble community of humanity working to sustain the world for us all. I dedicate this story to the night birds of Sao Paulo and of the world. Boa Noite, Buenos Noches, Good night.

## Passaro Noturno

### #1 A night bird's story

I was in a slump in my working career, I say *career* with some sense of dramatic angst. My jobs from the beginning really have been only to keep me alive at all costs doing anything I could, while trying to support my real career. Maybe we should talk about this first.

There is a guy down the hall I lovingly call "Brother Bill", I don't think he's any Doctor of Theology, or that he has much education at all for that matter, but he's got a sense about things. He's straight up and he's always willing to throw in his two cents worth on about any topic, forging his deliberations in religion, philosophy and quantum physics into a wacky sentient beauty.

I happened to run into him last night and after some great pasta and beer I related a little to him about my dilemma, my so called career and how it was going. Bill was loose and in rare form and, damn if he didn't set me to thinking.

Bill, with cigarette and wine glass ...

began dramatically by asking rhetorical questions while he walked to and fro around the room apparently talking not just to me, but to the room in general. The mark of a true orator.

"Your real career..., you ask and what is that? Are you saying you are artistic type, a cowboy philosopher, a singer of the blues, a magician, a writer of tall tales, a prophet, a Leonardo or perhaps a professional dreamer?"

Do you think your ideas have the right stuff to find even a small audience out there. Who wants to hear your story, where are they? Do you have the energy and tenacity to run after enough agents, lawyers and assholes for years to get yourself published even if you're good enough.

It's dicey, very dicey indeed Jack. To weasel your way into even one person's sagacious literary mind is very difficult, especially while they are being

pounded day and night by the massive advertising campaigns of every commercial interest on the planet. Automobiles, drug companies, entertainment sloth's , major news outlets, chat lines, computer games, oh I forgot ..yes TV of all kinds. And by the way , most of these people work and have families. They also barbecue on weekends and have friends over, they drink and get loaded and forget who they are, they pay money in taxes and to ex partners, they have medical emergencies some die and some even contemplate suicide. Life is busy.

To create a book or something of the sort people will buy, I'll be honest, Jack your chances aren't slim ...they are almost without consideration, comical even. You will need special help. You are a man, yes funny, unusual, nuts, nervy, a bit silly perhaps but just a man.

And why can you not just except the daily grind such as it is, take your paycheck and go buy a lunch and a used novel, and eat quietly in the park without disturbing others.

But there is a reason, isn't there? ...he winked

There is a reason why you and a few others can't stop trying. Listen to me carefully , *true living means no tinkering with your original software package.* You can't tinker with the mission that head office upstairs has given you, you do so at great peril.

And ... he paused ,

your mission ...if you'll take it, it is to respond to this voice regardless of money, position, power, sense, nonsense, business or otherwise. For you there isn't an option , and that's the most important realization you can get tonight. Remember, this struggle is to remain truthful to that mission we were given on the first day. The first day , the creator wanted us to do a job for him, and he said, you will stumble and fall and screw up , but keep your eyes on the ball. Everything you can ever hope to be is has been set down from that day onwards.

Go get that *ball*.

## 2) My movie

If you let it, mankind being what it is, will lead us all totally astray from our true calling. Today most people play with somebody else's ball or have no ball at all. On any given day a smörgåsbord of diddley squat lifestyles are being sold to anyone who will listen. And now, what do we have. We have more diddley squats on this planet than people with balls. Lives with the appearance of wealth are everywhere, yet that cord connecting the soul to the outer world is taunt, hungry and it's losing the battle.

What's the matter? People have sold out the rights to their own movie, that's what's the matter. They have *tinkered with their original software package* and as a result they have no ball. With nothing meaningful to play with, they virtually are out of the game.

This the lesson then. If we believe all things are possible, if we can dance that funky chicken way past midnight, if we could drop all fear into a dark hole forever and declare tonight the angels are with us ... the almighty would, within a degree of a second, remove this silly seal of doom from our heads and open up the doors of our true destiny forever.

if you can believe this, then this ballistic moment coming will instantly release us from all chains, real and imagined, foreign or domestic, corporate, karmic, departmental - wiping out all bank cartels and their phony debts, media conglomerates and their mind control agents, globalised food outlets and their crap foods and their genetically modified affiliates and their phony international agents everywhere.

Bill continues, even more splendidly,

"Yes, and countries will dissolve like salt in water and the world will become our true real estate. Finally you will be able to acknowledge your inherited wealth and position as a galactic citizen and have, at no extra charge, a real and permanent address in the universe."

Bill grabs a flashlight and pretends it's a microphone,

So , let the holy unction begin. Discharge the undiluted waters of the Spirit to a distracted, confused and parched humanity. Yes folks, the almighty power of the *heavenly waters* of pure awesome joy will be sent to all, ..the needy, the deserving, the ill and even the ill advised. Drink deep and pass your cup..

Gone will be the days of deficits due to greed and stupidity, gone seat belts and adult diapers, gone ugly yellow false teeth falling into your dinner plate, gone are exploding oil tankers in your favorite bird sanctuaries ...gone forever are the presidents, the executives , the bankers , the politicians... all sent chipping their charred golf balls out of the eternal sand traps in a last gasp attempt to live under par in a galaxy of their own design. They will be saying things like this ,

"Dicky , Give me an extra cold iron ...this ones still a little too hot"!

Bill now laughing as I am , slaps my back and pours a cool one , spilling half of it down his pants

Yes..., and we shall watch as these purging waters fall into the seedy laps of all the libidinous usurers of mankind, the creeps and lairs, the destroyers of beauty, even to the seventh overtone of the seventh generation ... sealing them forever in a vat of their own demonic self effacing creations. This carbuncle of catastrophic cleansing will scourge them with no chance of karmic parole. Yes sir , even their bodies and spirits will torched for health and safety reasons.

Bill, pacing and talking, looks at me in earnest....

You may say, this is a tall order, for even taller people and these are tall times ...are we ready ? I ask you , are... you... ready ? Bill dares me with his eyes. Ask yourself am I that tall ?

I sure hope so , I added.

3)

### The dance of the Night bird

A night bird is a creature who walks in two worlds at the same time. One must walk a fine line between seeing one thing with clarity while living another. All artists live this strange conundrum as they must try to be of the world but not in it in order to observe its machinations. Perhaps you may have seen this passionate night bird dance while you sat in the company of a writers , artists, even comedians. In short, any creative persons are all night birds, all angels with dirty faces and are all a tragic and magical thing to behold. They still hold a belief that within us the supreme beauty exists, and the eternal heaven is here, waiting to be experienced on this earth.

For me it has been my predilection to sleep at least a part of the day, to escape at least part of the insanity of the habitual linear world. To have just enough of an escape from normalcy, to be properly energized before the dusk of night awakes another world. Night birds find the most energy near sunset, in the quiet of the evening and lasts till the early morning hours, the time of jazz and romance.

Like mythic creatures night birds live lives that are forged in real danger, in fear and even ecstasy. Their countenance is tempered by deaths and resurrections, their visage is a true kaleidoscope of colour, ranging from the blood red of sunsets to the cold inky fullness of stars drenched in blue heavens.

Like an alchemist, they must consider all temptations, terrors and miracles in the last light of a day before preparing a special song of the night. The night rightly being a time of sublimation, grace and consolation of all things. His is always a solemn song at once triumphant, tragic and somewhat lonesome. It is the earth opening up her throat to the infinite, the release of night bird's song is a burnt offering, a requiem of hope, a dance for the new day.

After sunset these birds are known to roost in little huts on particular street corners away from traffic and crowds. Then with growing

expectation they emerge one by one like phantoms, directing themselves into the dusky neighbourhoods and forgotten back alleys of the city, protectors of the living and the dreamers.

If you are willing to listen, certainly later than ten o'clock in the evening, perhaps sitting outside on your porch or in the confines of your bed, then out of nowhere you may hear a whistling sound approaching from an inky darkness. It begins at a higher pitch then expires in a long slow breath falling slowly to the ground. It comes from a part of the night you cannot exactly place. It is at once alive and yet unearthly, you feel the sonorous sound as a feeling in the solar plexus as something old and precious, something forgotten.

A comfort to all in the streets and those safely tucked under the sheets of a warm bed. Do not try to observe or seek out the night bird; he is best appreciated by hearing him far off in the distance, something to be left in the mysterious darkness from which he comes and to which he must return.

From all this you may conclude I may have got reality and spiritual ideas all messed up, perhaps you are right. You cannot live in two worlds at the same time. Life cannot be lived in a fantasy. You've got to live in the here and now. Yet I will tell you, a night bird, as is his calling must live in two worlds the best he can. For this task he's highly unsuited like all mortals. He will pay a heavy price for trying, but try he must. This is the story of a night bird's flight.

4)

In my time, I have been a paper boy, theater usher, vacuum cleaner sales man, cab driver, musician, salt salesman, shoe salesman, hotel clerk, flower delivery driver, I checked for pantie liner in outgoing hosiery ( as a job ), music teacher, air-conditioning technician, songwriter, dish washer and hotel clerk. In short, I have seen the kingdom to which I describe but only as a guest.

I made an early escape from the "real world" into the music business and I spent many years touring in rock and roll bands. This unique start in life can



teach a man more things in a year about people than most learn in a lifetime. However, if you are roaming around the country for months in small truck with a bunch of guys, their dirty laundry and with someone with a case of crabs, this can lead to significant disharmony, and who needs that.

So then I went solo and put some butter on my chops and I took jobs playing piano bars, the money was better but the drunks got closer.

I'd watch them doing the circuitous trips to the bar, the urinals or the phone booth calling home ( its Ok honey its just a long meeting... be home soon ). In general earshot from the piano you could hear the cat fights, the back room dealers, crap players in the toilet, the love triads emerging from those plush seats at the back of the bar. And all round me the local regulars at the piano seats in bad eye liner and hair pieces singing *My Way* to each other all the while going up in smoke at the end of a cigarette at the end of that long bar stool of life.

And it's always crying time again, it's cheating time, it's lying time, schmoozing, dealing, stealing time again and that jive time again. What a show.

My spot in this rotisserie of madness was simply to create a temporary illusion of romance in between those dark velvet walls. To grease the opera seats, wail with the hunted, smile at the man washing glasses in the sink, hold a disheveled woman vertical till she could pull it together enough to slide into the hailed taxi cab, "cuse me driver, first time for everything." Now you get some sleep honey , you'll feel rough only for a few days . "

I'm holding a temporary tourniquet around the battlefield now but the troops are fading fast. Then at 3 am, the call of the wild whispers and all bets are off . Out the door we all go where reality checks in with a winners ticket every time.

## #5 The job

After many years of living in the living room of the blues I decided I had enough of this end of the spectrum of human dereliction. However moving to

another part of the spectrum although a change, is no easier and mostly no better and often less attractive.

What could I really do ? I was trained for nothing much, but I knew quite a bit from keeping my eyes open. Getting older and more frightened, I picked up the classified section of the newspaper.

One weekend I ran across some ads for superintendents of apartments. This sounded easy, once you have the job down , you could even have your own little life I figured. I could have a world to write, compose a song , paint , sing ...love dance and go crazy. All those things one must do to really live. Well, one never knows what's behind a door until you walk in and hear it close. I was about to find out.

After many interviews and exits the door finally opened. I got the call on a Friday to start work on the following Monday to be a Superintendent at this 50 year old 40 unit apartment building. My one bedroom apartment looked pretty decent at first blush and I'd get free rent and a few extra bucks for compensation.

I had never been a superintendent before but how hard could it be; basic repairs, cleaning and garbage, take no bullshit from the tenants. For a man who hated hard labour I figured this was the life. No traveling to work in the cold winter or hot summers, easy to sneak off home for a rest, have few cold ones. During the day twist a few wrenches, collect rents from a few deadbeat backsliders. How little did I know.

On my first day the owner Vinnie, a two-bit crème puff megalomaniac, was to show me around the building and give me my duties. The former Super, John, now a white haired retired man, would train me. It sounded like a piece of cake.

I arrived Monday 9 am with all my stuff books, laptop, clothes, cigars and a small amount of furniture. As I was wedging the front door open the landlord came out of the basement , his face cold ashen and white as a sheet.

"Ah can I have a talk with you Jack "? We went into the furnace room a large dirty room in the basement with junk stacked to the walls , old

photographs on the walls, faded memories, somebody's old rusty tools, a gas furnace and hot water heater. The place had an old forgotten smell , something you didn't want to know about. Wincing he said, " Our friend John died last night ". I stared silently back at him; there was a long pause ... "really, really sorry to hear that Vinnie". He was your right hand man.

He fumbled with a wad of keys, "Yes he was , in so many ways. So you are going to have to do everything now, is that ok with you ", he looked hopefully into my eyes.

"Ok, no problem, don't worry I'll be fine ", I said, we can change the agreement for my compensation this week and things should be fine, and took the keys from him.

Then he gave me an odd look , like he was thinking - Jack you aren't asking for more money here are you? Vinnie could instantly blow holes in the space time continuum between a well meaning soul and himself , leaving the person feeling they just had their head stuck out a 767 window doing 500 mph while he repeatedly flushed the air toilet. Things were starting bad but I decided I felt better about running this building completely on my own terms.

I was washing the floors a few days later when Bart in #105 comes waltzing down the hall , "Hey you must be the new "Super."

Yeah that's me all right " I said. Did anyone tell you how John died? "

nooooo , I said.

"Oh it was really something I'll never forget."

" I found him hanging from a pipe in the boiler room !"

"you don't say " I said, I stared into his vacuous eyes,

"it was horrible John dead white as paper, hanging there slightly swinging from a rope".

"My god that's awful" I said , this basement does have a strange vibe come to think of it.

I didn't show it but the passing of the former Superintendent by suicide had rattled me quite a bit. I was coming to feel like Vinnie was a real prick to work for, like he worked the other guy to the grave or something. I'd find out soon enough that he pretty much did just that.

The one thing you learn quickly around older apartment complexes especially ones 50 years old or more, even if the façade looks good , don't forget the building slowly decaying, rotting ,falling down around you and your place could be next. You've seen the archeology digs on National Geographic , right? I was afraid they'd be featuring this place next week.

#6

After I surveyed the joint I knew I had my work cut out for me. The owner wanted a 50 hour work week for 100 dollars a week and free rent. You needed to be on call 24/7 too. So be it , but I was committed to giving him only what he paid for. Run around the halls wet moping , a little garbage detail unplug a few toilets. Lots of spare time to write, relax and maybe even hustle that tart Bonnie, in 306 .

The walls were starting to talk too. Tenants love to confide in a new Super about all the stuff the old Super never did, but did promise to do. They'd stand around in old housecoats with rabbit slippers an extra long cigarette burning down to their first finger, door propped open whining about the kind of third rate brain dead people who live down the hall.

The guy across from my apartment was an older European man was an exception. All day long he played classical music loud and it slipped under the door out into the voluminous halls of the building of concrete and terrazzo. It was a like living inside a pair of stereo headphones. It was beautiful. He stuck his head out into the hall one day and said,

" Do you work here full-time ? " , Ah , no not really he doesn't pay enough". " He's damn cheap and nobody likes him " he said. The place is falling apart. Oh , I said. He pulled me into his apartment and showed me old square particle board tiles on the ceiling held up at the joints by screws and washers . The tiles were stained with water damage. The ceiling looked as if

it could collapse any minute.

"Maybe I should report that to the owner " , I said. " No, he said, hahaha don't bother , he knows already . "

Some tenants you hardly ever see and some are right on your ass every other day. One night at 9:30 pm I was having a few beers watching the hockey game and when the phone rang. "Hello " . "Its Bonnie in 306,

"Jack can you get down here fast ", the ceiling has just fallen down in the bedroom. , "Whaaat ? "...that's right all over everything , lucky no one was in there , oh and by the way our toilet keeps running all day and night ....and

"Ok , sure Ill be right down ," I dragged my ass downstairs with a broom and tools to find broken tiles all over the floor . Bonnie was pointing out everything, the ceiling , the floors , the water in the bathroom ...but all I could do was stare at her fine ass , and mumble something about we'll fix it . Some women keep that something, no matter what and it gets more beautiful through adversity , maybe a little worn , but still dangerous. Bonnie had it.

She had obviously spent years battling those impossible cruel demons of poverty, bad luck ,bad marriages and a hopeless striving for a life in the loins of a lover she never really quite found. Days of looking out the window at gray buildings, at street workers looking into a sewer, kids laughing into infinity, and the persistent conviction you may not make it to tomorrow. It can wear a you down.

But what an ass she had and her with a that little *attitude*. It made me nervous just to think of it . I could picture her stripping down in the quiet of the evening all tears , cigars and cigarette butts in the ash tray. A little red wine in a glass on a table, smeared lipstick on one side. Some crazy talk on the couch led to investigations into what was beneath each others clothes.

We'd glide each other down the hall to an unmade bed in somber stillness knowing exactly what our bodies and broken souls really needed ; a silent private place to sink into each others bones, to break down and cry into each others softness , a little crazy talk to push away the night.

I awoke from my reverie standing in crap, ceiling tiles at Bonnie's apartment. It was becoming abundantly clear this damn place was decaying faster that I could fix it. "This is just unacceptable, I am so pissed off " Bonnie said and stormed through the hall door,

"Not to worry I am definitely on your side" , I blurted.

Calling the landlord the next day, - " Vinnie its Jack , what are we going to do with this damn bad ceiling in 306.

"Hey back up a bit " , said Vinnie , " people have to realize these things can happen". My eyes rolled to up to the ceiling. What an all star , Vinnie my patron saint.

And ...I said, soooooooo/...

"Get a quote from the drywall guy ...don't you know anyone who works cheap ?  
" Probably, I said. "Call them , get a quote". Ok , I said.

This looking for a drywall guy who would work for nothing lasted almost two months. The first guy came highly recommended.

At 5pm on a Friday he pushed my buzzer.

Look he said , "I'll need two hundred bucks to buy materials and hire my buddy , and I'll be back Monday at 8 am sharp. ". We'll do half the job by Monday and finish Tuesday. He sounded right.

He never did make it back that Monday or Tuesday or any other day. I got squeezed good and proper and he and his friend did some nice bar hops on the two hundred. I got big shit for it , like it was my fault? I talked to ten others before a professional showed up and did the job in an afternoon.

#7

When you get into this business you find out sooner rather than later that dealing with garbage is one of your biggest pains. Because this was a

relatively small building I was told I had to collect garbage by hand from four floors. There were lots and lots of bags to take. Down the stairs they would go each day, then they all would sit the boiler room waiting for the day of garbage pick up. Then I would then take them out the night before.

Now anybody knows all boiler rooms are hot in winter and summer so I can tell you, by the third day I would walk in there wondering what died ...and why didn't it crawl out on its own.

A combination of week old bread, salads, decaying lamb chops, baby diapers, one bottle of ancient pickles, cat litter, wine and beer bottles with just a little yeast left for rising, used condoms and who knows what else, ...it was alive.

Vinnie was too cheap to actually have a garbage bin like almost everyone else did on the block.

"Listen Vinnie , I was saying one night over the phone ,

" why don't you get a bin outside and let the tenants take their own garbage out, then I could concentrate on better things. "Nooooo, hey listen, DO YOU KNOW WHAT THOSE BINS COST?,

his voice squeaked over the phone. I had checked , it was about three hundred a month. We took in maybe \$25,000 a month in rents. The man was cheap all right, I'd have to figure out something around this one.

One night late maybe 11:30 pm I had the urge to take out the garbage so I could sleep in the next day. There were maybe fifty large green extra large bags sitting there and they stunk. I opened the outside door wide and started hauling. Up and down up and down the stairs I went.

I was taking two bags up when I look up to see someone going through a bag. "Hey "I said , what do you think your doing. "

A roguish man in rags maybe 50ish with a limp and the deepest darkest eyes you ever saw stared back at me. He waited then he said , Oh nothing' , I always used to come here to look you know. "

"To look ? for what ?" , "odd things" he said , a smile drifted off his face .  
"Well how about looking in the day time " ? "" Naw , gotta look now , I never know when ill be back, he said .

Well, listen we don't allow anybody hanging around here at night so why don't you just drift off . He stared back , and a hand stretched out to mine.

"I'm Limo"...

"Limo ? what kind a name is that? I barked, "I used to drive a limousine" .  
"Oh... I see" and now ? Oh it's a long story haha , no driving now . See ya Limo ...the last bus is at 12 am ...beat it.

#8

As with other things in this unraveling nightmare Vinnie wanted me to collect and keep the rent money for him and to serve any late tenant with a notice of non- payment (an N-4) i think its called. He really didn't know me from Adam but at the end of the first month I was receiving rents, some in cheques , but many in cash. Anywhere from \$600 - to \$1000 cash per apartment. Of course you count the money in front of the tenant , we both sign a receipt and that's it.

Vinnie gave me an old fishing tackle box for keeping his rent in. Do you believe that? True. The lock had been busted years ago. He said what you can do is keep all the checks, money and receipts in this box and put it in the freezer, no robber would think to look there. Hardly I laughed.

Cold hard cash I thought, its a really good feeling to have around. At the end of the first month I had about 7 grand in cash in the box in the fridge ...I had some thoughts about how to take advantage of this like using it for borrowing for extras from time to time or perhaps a holiday in Greece, a man could start a side business on less, but I never really got up the nerve to take it. What if Vinnie should suddenly drop in and want to scoop off some the cash while losing in a poker game , not worth the chance I decided.



After several phone calls, two days after the end of that first month , Vinnie said ... ok , ok I am coming over to get the rents. I see you in half a hour. I thought , ` Mr. Mobster coming in 30 minutes , he'll probably have a security guard with a nervous German shepherd accompanying him.

A knock on my door 15 minutes later snuffed that vision . Here he was , dressed like a gay construction worker carrying a small picnic cooler ...and saying nervously ...can you bring it downstairs to the furnace room I'd feel better counting there. I am thinking , how small does the big time get? I guess Ill find out.

Oh ya sure Vin , give me two minutes. I grabbed the stash from the fridge and stepped out.

Walking into the furnace room I quietly locked the door behind me . It was kind of dark there was only one small light from a simple 60 watt lamp on a 1950' s style card table in the far back of the room.

Vinnie's shadow reflected on the wall like something from a macabre Disney cartoon character. He sat nervously beside the table, smoking , hat off and scratching his balls looking for the money box. Ok ...ok lets do it. I felt we were pulling some kind of illegal break and enter at a bank.

I walked to the card table and set money box down. Vinnie's hands shook as if the box contained pure gold coins.

I guess its all there huh , ? Its all I have, I smiled. His voice was weak and forced . Well ok , lets do it, he repeated. He didn't give me a chair so I sat on a overturned garbage can.

Oh , I see you didn't put all the checks in order , by apartment and date , and separate the cash by apartment ...and ahhhhh. Damn , this will take forever, he sweated under the lamp. Well I said , I was never instructed to do anything Vinnie except collect it , just take your time I am sure its all there.

Watching a greedy man count 6-7 thousand bucks in cash four or five times in a row can be a bit funny ..., especially when he was getting different results each time. He sweats blood knowing HIS boss will give him major problems if there is dime missing. For me I am the low boy and if there is

something missing I could just say , damn , #502 just left his cash without me counting it ..or something like that . You know these stupid tenants Vinnie.

Finally, he said Ok you count it. I counted it slow and easy ...I could see the impatience building, the smell of money drifting past his eyes. I smiled wide and counted very slow.

Seven thousand , three hundred and twenty -nine. YES exactly , ` he barked ` , ...though we seem to be \$100 over what we should have. Without a blink . I said , ` Yes that's right I put that extra hundred in there just to make sure everything would be kosher.`

` What do you mean by Kosher?. "Well , Vin listen; I figured if I had been out a hundred I would have just said to myself , I guess I lost it somehow being my first time, so wanted to take no chances being short. But seeing we are

exactly a hundred over what we need ... I grabbed 2 fifties, ill just take it back, after all its mine."

Hey , how do I know you put it in there ? he said

Don't you trust me ? I just handled twenty - five thousand of your bucks for you this month which was saved in a fishing tackle box stuck in my fridge. Do you really think Id shaft you for a lousy hundred? Come on Vin.

Vinnie was a bit taken a back but as always he had to win every argument , he said , well if I ever catch anyone stealing from me Ill take it out on them myself ...forget the cops. Do you understand that.?

"Sure Vinnie you can count on me to keep you informed of anyone I even suspect trying to steal OUR money , that's for sure."

He got up from the table neatly folded all his receipts , checks and cash into a folder and put it all in that cooler. He , shut off the light and we stumbled out to the furnace room door .

Leaving he shouted reminders and orders , "Make sure those drunks in #603

never drink in the halls . ...and , call Larry the plumber about those damn front risers , someone almost sued me for burning their ass in the shower last week," and on and on ...his dictum bouncing off those large terrazzo halls out into to the street. So many assholes in this world.

Just a little man with scruffy clothes, stupid shoes , no shave, no savvy , no lexicon of any kind ...and , twenty-five grand sitting in a picnic cooler. He would be back exactly one month again to repeat the same silly operation. Some people just get lucky I guess.

I closed my door, and sank into my old extra used couch ..but it felt good , I grabbed a beer and almost forgot that everyone in that building, all those people coming home tonight, had my phone number and could call me at any time for an EMERGENCY . Like for instance , a dripping faucet or a broken toilet chain . Friday , what Friday. Shit, no wonder they say more "Supers " become alcoholics faster than cops.

About halfway through the second period of hockey, Leafs leading Habs , 2 - 0. The phone rings. I check the clock , 9:30, this better be good. I pick up the phone ...yeeeeeeessssss? Do you know how to stop a toilet over flowing all over our bathroom? I do yes , I muttered politely. And which suite , would you be located in. And have you informed the apartment below you this might be a slight problem for them, no...

Very good then , don't say anything, Ill be right down.

#9

Trades

As the superintendent you are required to call tradesmen from time to time to do jobs that you either cant do or simply refuse to do. Since I was new at this business I found the trades very handy as free teachers for little tricks in plumbing , electrical, dry walling ect.

If you like down to earth people who talk normally using all of Gods expletives correctly , tradesmen are your best bet. Time after time on any given job you could hear a sampling of these wonderful earthy pearls of 21st century English coming out of the mouths of high skilled tradesmen.

"What the fuck is that hole for , ...go get me a hammer ill fix this whore good, ...piece of shit this flashlight , ...hold it there while I tighten this motherfucking' nut , ...how in hell did he get that in here ...tighter than a black bitches ass in the middle of January standing in a snowstorm with a fire hose up her ass ...and Vinnie what a cheap prick he is to work for. I am still waiting to get paid for the last job , but don't worry Ill fix his ass but good.

And on and on ....

Now another thing with trades is you have to check the time they get there and the time they leave. I learned early on that these guys are your lifeline to look like an efficient Super to the tenants.

My rule of thumb was ; if it looks like a shitty job and you have never done it before or even if you have , call a qualified tradesman, these guys are your friends and will charge the owner what the job is worth ( which you can't ) and the tenant will love you for it, especially if its at 3 am on a Sunday morning. The best thing is if you hang around while the guys are working you can learn a months information in just an hour.

Vinnie always told me , "those damn trades will bleed you dry if you let them , so I want you to make sure they are reported exactly to the *MINUTE* when they come and leave". Vinnie would only use trades who were cheap anyway.

When the plumber came who was a decent guy, I'd get him a coffee, chat for awhile and discuss sports, women or about the last job or the next one. After a lazy 20 minutes he gets his tools out and has a peek at the problem.

People and owners forget , that you only hire trades when there really is a **PROBLEM** that you can't fix, sometimes in a few minutes they can do wonders get your little ass out of a jam and make a tenant very happy. You'd think an owner would appreciate this , but they don't. Most of them say , screw the plumber , can't you fix that hole with some plumbers tape ?

Sooner or later they learn , good tradesmen are gold and deserve what they get, some like Vinnie never do. After a tradesman had finished their job I'd have a smoke by the truck and help them with the tools. Then I pulled out

the time sheet.

" Hey , Larry , so you got here at what time ? Ten AM , and its what time now , 12:20." " Yes, but don't forget my travel time I had to pick up those parts" . Ok sure , why dot we just say 10 to 2 and call it a deal. ` Sounds good , we have to make sure that prick Vinnie pays one way or the other. "

I laughed , signed off and he left,

Now, when I really need him for an emergency it will be no problem, this is what I call good management of the owners property and its also called covering my own ass for the tenants .

#9 Mr. Thong

When I get a call from # 205 I know what to expect. Its 8:12 Tuesday night.

He says ; " its Phil calling' , " he stutters badly , " jjjjack ..I I , need ... / Phil, Phil ... I know , I know what you need . I' ll see you tomorrow , I know the walls are falling in on you , do you have a motorcycle helmet , might want to wear it overnight .." I make a mental note to get some repair plaster tomorrow.

At 10 am the next day , I knock at #205. Inside I hear a waddle , like a duck, ... flawp flawp flawp ... yawn, fart, flawp. Finally the door opens. Phil stands there, 6,1 with his big fat gut rolling around , a violet red Iroquois hair cut, his mouth squeezing a chocolate puff donut, the inside exposed like puss from an infected wound.

As per usual he's dressed in nothing but that big black thong that covers a very small part of something nobody ever wants to see . If it ever broke while I was there, I can picture being drowned ...slowly in gobs of lardy smelly fat, the stuff you see on lipo-suction programs, all that ...pushing me slowly into a filthy corner of the room to suffocate and stink and die alone.

Still I have to go in there.

Shit Phil , its , February, cant you cover that thing up ..., grab a robe or something. Phil sucks in his cigarette snaps the butt with his first finger into the toilet. " I ....I I eeee ...like to to to ...be comfortable. Be comfortable Phil ...just stand back , I need some breathing room in here.

Phil, waddled back to the couch and sat , it sounded like a whoopee cushion when he landed on it . Phil's wall was in almost the same shape as he was.

It took me 2 hours to give Phil a replacement fake wall and though my craftsmanship was mediocre , I said , " let this dry I'll sand it and paint it later, I'll have it good as new tomorrow. I could see Phil already wanted to inscribe his initials into the wall. After all it was his home , his prison, his castle ...it was , Phil's world and he was Mr. Thong.`

Two days later Phil's wall collapsed in a cornucopia of plaster old and new, wire supports, dead single celled animals from the prehistoric age peppered in plaster chunks on the floor. The smell was of fifty year old beer farts sautéed in urine from the same era. I couldn't face the gawd awful results this time , so I said ...

"Phil this is a job for a professional" , not that Vinnie would hire one , he wouldn't. Vinnies bank account had a one way door ...money in , no money out.

I said; " Phil you know Vinnie , he wont fix it. What I suggest is when you've had enough; piss and shit all over all this mess and leave.

## #10 Dope fiends

In apartment 406 - George Pinkerton and his wife Lilly, called and left a nice message about their apartment hall light not working. So next day I was down there., such a nice homey apartment with matching furniture , clean glasses stacked in the sink , and some kind of popporri in the air. I felt like she'd be baking me an apple pie. How could anything bad happen to people like this , I wondered.

After checking the light switch , power and the bulb there seemed to be a short in the actual fixture which was very old. I told them this wont take long and went down to the supply room for a new one. You never knew if there would be an extra anything down there you just had to take your chance. One trick you can use if there is a free apartment around you can often take the spare from that apartment a put it in elsewhere. Anyway I got another fixture and was just removing the old one when I get a jolt from old wires inside the old fixture. I am standing on an aluminum ladder which is on a wooden floor. Not only that but the insulation was so bad it fell into my hands like dust. I am thinking all the wires of the building would be in this condition , this was a calamity waiting to happen.

All I could do was wrap some electrical tape around the exposed wires and install the new fixture. It worked now. Meanwhile as I am busy doing this George nuzzles in close to the ladder , says, hey you know who's in apartment #404 ?

Ah ya , I guess. Listen Jack he smokes all the time and we cant sleep and wake up with headaches ,it's a strange smell.

Ok , I said , I'll get to him shortly , no one is supposed to disturbing the other tenants.

That night I quietly roamed down the hallway of the fourth floor. Sure enough there was a distinct odor emanating from our friend in # 404. I believe I detected it was a high quality sensi weed probably grown locally. What body ...what taste how come we didn't have any of this shit. I was getting turned on out here in the hall , what a nice bonus. I approached the door semi- stoned.

Knock , knock ...Heeeeeelllooo ...hi keef uh..Keith . Its me the Super. Slowly I could hear the lowering of Crosby, Stills and Nash wailing "Wooden Ships" which sounded like they were personally in the apartment. I had never met Keith before , but upon his opening of the door I felt I was talking directly to the opium smoker in , *Alice and Wonderland*.

Keith was a big guy with an equally soft natural heart having the velvet fog kind of voice. Hey , what's cooking , so you're the new Super ...come on in. Nothing was going to bother Keith , I liked him right away.

I eased in the door and I looked around the room ...it was being taken over by plants, all the same kind of plants ...obviously Keith was natural farmer. There was a green hue in the air and even some green residue on the furniture. Keith flopped into a large couch ...dented perfectly for his large frame , and I sat in the other decaying piece of furniture.

Well, I said ...you have certainly made it comfortable in here. Oh ya , he said , of course I am just a sublet tenant here with Bob, he's very cool.

Ok cool, I chirped.

What's your gig , Keith. Oh , well, ...not much been collecting unemployment now for 7 months , shit there ain't nothing out there for a guy over 50 workin' nowadays. Ain't that the truth I agreed.

Oh by the way, he said, I smoke weed is that a problem in here? I had to laugh ,to myself,

No Keith but you going to have to be very cool about it, because you have neighbours.

The guy next door complained today about the smoke going under your door and filling the hall.

Oh shit , never thought about that! Why don't you get a rug or a blanket and put it up against the door, that way the smoke cant get out. I must tell you , theoretically I don't know anything about this but I am sure the owner would evict you if he knew. Personally I don't mind. So play it cool and things should be fine.

I couldn't remember how many times I said COOL , but i felt like I was definitely just coming home from Woodstock, NY .

Oh I really appreciate that , thanks a bunch, he said, as he shoved some plastic bag into my hands.

Ok , you take care now Keith .Once outside I remember feeling what a dump the place had been and only two weeks a later they moved, the apartment had been rented 20 years and looked like a war zone inside ...even with 20



year old spider webs , "dope webs ". It needed a total complete overhaul and I'd make sure Vinnie didn't get me completely renovating his apartments for the kind of money he was giving me, not with the place I just came from.

That would be *tinkering with my original software* and I couldn't mess with that.

#11 How to get laid and other dreamy themes...

There are always a few loner guys in an apartment building that are living the lonely single life and wish they could get laid more often. Guys after 30 or 40, most have been there and done hard roads , big promises and broken hearts. The tough real lonely times and missing women and kids and everything. We all have some burn out stories to talk about. Many of us never really can start to trust again anymore, but we act like its possible. You have to do that. Most of us were married at least once or twice before, and the damages we suffered will be with us forever in one way or another.

Some guys here stopped paying child support after the ex wife married a tool and die maker or a mobster of some kind or they continue to pay even if they have nothing at the end of a month. Some still are seeing kids every other weekend. Not one of us has much more than a high school diploma, a small trades license or a long history of hard slugging construction work, or sales jobs and the like. Who said life was easy , of course even Ph.D. drive taxis so education is a weak platform for wealth. You'd be better just to start early stealing and get very good at it.

A relationship for us is a ridiculous word that no one talked about and really we probably didn't understand the concept anyway. I think what we think we want is something closer to a maid who exhibits complete servitude to her man, who can play the role as hooker if needed, talk when spoken to, entertain friends with hours of dazzling repartee and can keep the fridge fortified with cold beer and frozen pizzas. You would think we were asking for very little. However this is never the case. Women do not think like men and they are unfortunately they also not goddesses in panties either. Men are always asking for so much more, more than we know and certainly more than most women are willing to give. Certainly we should continue to ask for

everything possible even if we only get 30 percent of what we think we need.

For most of us the term "getting laid " is a complicated affair. It could mean everything from a simple exchange of bodily fluids ...to a real live in relationship. Marriage doesn't qualify as getting laid because after all the things you have to do keep the relationship going; you'll get laid even less than guys like us.

As single guys you have the freedom to boast and brag about your exploits real or imagined without ever having to give or show evidence. Somehow the equations never add up to the talk but the talk is always more hilarious and entertaining than any action that might have occurred.

Now and again I'd play poker or watch hockey with Nick and Fred two local loners who like myself needed to share humour or horror stories with just the guys. Some weekends we would have a few beers together after a few card games we'd try hitting the bars for excitement. Together we felt stronger and more viral and would even support each others exploits told to any women who had the interest and sense of humour to listen to our nonsense.

Most men naturally hunt for a women by themselves, and women naturally surround themselves with other women for protection from just such roving males. It may be true they want to meet a man , but hiding in a group seems to give them protection from the ones they don't want, which is the majority. They can usually make a guy feel like a jerk very quickly while in a group, so not many experienced guys want be the first to break into a girl mob.

When you are a man trying to enter the circle of fire of four or five group tight women , is a very sticky job , and I would offer this remark. "Don't go unless one or more women is inviting you in". If she does, try getting her away from her crowd and into a more intimate one on one situation otherwise you will be left standing in a group of females staring at the floor. You'll laugh at the wrong jokes, stare at the ceiling trying to be cool, blow smoke out your ears and then probably by mistake butt your cigarette out in some gals hand. Always a crowd pleaser, but if this happens ...go home, you aren't bankable that night and they don't forget easily either.

And remember women, not men, are the real trappers. They are the most ruthless of the sexes in getting just what they want, if you are the man they want you will know it. If you aren't, you will know this too. Just make yourself present and not too loud, if you have something that a female in the crowd likes, keep your presence low but pleasant, she'll let you know easily if you are on the inside track. Remember it's the woman's choice anyway, not yours.

The sexes want to mate, to be with the other, yet like race horses kicking in a stall and nervous as hell about the race, we are the most clumsy creatures about consummating that connection.

#12 Nick

Nick was loud, a used car salesman, he dressed the part, was mouthy and full of crap. He did however have the ability to ramble a tall story to ridiculous ends on his dramatic efforts in getting females. He always was telling us how many tarts he met while selling cars. That part I could believe. Chicks as we all know love brassy new cars as any guy does.

"You just never can tell what a broad might do, really. One day I took a little bonds trader from the local bank for test drive in a red and white Porsche at lunch. I thought it we'd just drive around the corner and park it at the office".

About 5 blocks down the street she drops a wet one on my cheek and said: "It's not that far to Niagara Falls is it Nicky boy, what do you say we keep on cruising through the weekend?"

I pulled over and tried to regain my composure ..."listen, is it Carol?"

No Caroline.

Ok Caroline. I can't imagine the boss would let us do this but I could call him."

"Nicky, this thing is full gas and it's polished and red and creamy and white

...its a sunny day in June. I'll bet you don't know what I am wearing underneath do you ?

No.

Now get on that telephone and put the squeeze on Larry . I know he'll be fine ...he KNOWS me ".

Needless to say my mission was clear , Larry was going to say yes, no matter what. I caught Larry just out of a dealers meeting , a meeting that I suppose he prevailed in because ...his voice was light and easy.

"Nick my boy ...how many times have I told you ", sounding like the Godfather ,

"to be is to sell and to sell is to be - so SELL this chick". If this broad wants to see what that fucking sex machine can do ...let her at it (not referring to you either). Make sure she signs all the waivers for insurance. And get it back here pronto at 9 am Monday morning , with a check in your hand. Roger that Larry.

By the time I got off the phone with Larry, Caroline had striped off her black jacket revealing a sun flower yellow tight fitting cotton shirt . She also managed to change her slacks to very high cut short shorts.

I wandered as casually back to the car as possible with a big stupid grin and said.

"Well Caroline do you know the way to the Falls? Lets get out of this cracker jack box of a town ... she smiled and floored the machine and we were on the freeway in minutes.

The whole weekend she was teasing but nothing, no action . By Sunday night I told her, Caroline you are most certainly one of the beautiful and sexy women I know. Excuse me for being forward. How'd you like to go dancing tonight? She smiled.

That night I had a shower and got nicely dressed , she came over from her hotel room ...and knocked. I looked. I could see her nipples through that top

...she must have planned this whole thing.

After letting her in we stared hard at each other. The dance club was only 15 minutes away. I asked her if she'd like a little cocktail to start us off, here in the room.

Sure sweetie, she said ... her voice like honey moving silky smooth onto a spoon on a very hot day.

The bar in the room was a stocked well and she seemed very relaxed ...we had a couple more and could feel the heat from the back of her eyes. We had decided on white wine , pate and cheese.

In half an hour we were dancing a local radio station ...soft feet moved smoothly over deep carpets. I moved in closer ...and the lower part of my body was slowly asking for much more attention than it was getting. I grabbed a white rose from the flowers in the bowl and fixed one in her hair. I drew her her much closer , the perfume was exhilarating.

She said clearly into my ear as we hung close to the dance.

"That bastard Terry ...my ex, he is going to pay for that fucking car out there, you just watch", you just watch Nicky".

Really? I said ,

You have no idea ; she said and started to laugh outrageously. Now we seemed very close and relaxed .

Nicky , tomorrow you will have sold a new Porsche to me and we will have consummated the sale with the finest éclair, right here in this room. How about that?

I said , do you drink champagne ?

It was at this time she removed my belt. I unbuttoned my shirt and I had the greatest feeling that I had chosen the right profession. Her bra slowly fell to the floor as we shifted to the open bed. Sales was better than anything else , especially when you just made a deal , but sales and sex ... was

that extra that you only hope for, even when it's happening".

On Monday morning I sauntered into the office prompt at 9 am. At 10:30 I got the call from the bank , a Miss Caroline Roberts had been approved for a white and red porche she was looking at over the weekend.

I showed the faxed approval to Larry the boss , and he laughed ...ok Mr. heart throb lets see if we can do it again this week, way to go .

As far as we know , this is a true story from Nick , and I believe him. You can't just make shit like this up.

#12

Fred was almost brain dead from too much drink but had a comfortable personality, if you were drinking like him he made perfect sense. He used lived in a run down artists studio in a changing part of central downtown. Now he lived here. A small bachelor apartment, walls peeling paint , a sink full of dirty dishes and half his last months rent unpaid. What the hell. He had a job at a local car park that really paid nothing so he spent most of his time reading pulp detective novels at work ...and drinking beer at home. A very bright guy really but the bricks of that temple of wisdom were being slowly decayed by alcohol, sadness and desperation no one could heal.

His kind of women were caretaker types , and he needed this aspect dearly in his life. He had a stubborn streak and at times would brush off even the most dedicated harbingers of tenderness. Then weeks, months and sometimes years after he would reminisce about how he fucked up such good relationships.

He'd call them at odd hours, drunk and thinking wildly.  
He'd ask , would she would return, ... could they get back together? Always he got the same answer ...

"You need a woman , for what?

To hold your beer and pay the bills that's what you need a woman for. Let me tell you Frederick , you are a sick man ...very ill ..don't call here again or ill call my 7 foot brother and he'll clean your clock but good. You wont be able

to drink beer after his workout with you. *GO AWAY AND STAY AWAY.*

Fred would hang up , stare at the TV ....get a drink and fall asleep on the couch.

#13

In emotional situations men consoling men usually ends in a silence that can only be broken by passing cigarettes, telling a jokes, going drinking or even better going drinking at a local strip club.

It was a Thursday night and we had ordered pizza and few drinks. Nick was all for going to going to the bar to check out the ladies as Thursday was ladies night at the local place. After much talk we decided ok , lets go. If all else failed we would end up at "The Birds", a strip club.

In the car on the way with Nick driving, he made some startling comments as he weaved in and out of the passing lanes. Looking into the oncoming headlights like they were angels of enlightenment his repartee began out of the blue.

"you know boys when it gets right down to it, there is nothing finer than a nice ass jacked up over a pair of high heels, " don't you think"?  
All righhhhhhhht on! we yelled.

"Heels crank the legs into that infinite saucy confident strut which somehow projects a womans body way out beyond it's natural limits. Some how she is now curled into a tight ball of zero point energy, just oozing, dripping her sex liberally into the local atmosphere which no man can disregard. This wild kundilini of feminine power, stay with me here .... now circles back up behind her legs finding its natural destination tightly curled up against the cheeks of her fine ass. "

"Amazingly, making the whole picture a pouty naughty, "knock three times and I might answer look". And do you want to look?  
As a man its your duty to look... and you do at least look ...but certainly action is also appropriate. Your job , whether you know it or not is to know

which situation right and which isn't. Of course , you probably know jack shit about that, and you probably think every situation is yours to act on. That's probably why you're alone right now. It's a very tough thing being a successful man with women. And if you keep listening to me you'll all die of loneliness.

"Shut up , Nick", I laughed

Anyway , he said ,

"like I was saying, combining heels with a tight fitting pair of blue jeans some women can pulverize me at 50 yards. It's that wobble , that gets to me, created by the heels and the tightness around the legs. If a woman has even the slightest bit of sexuality, heels will scream out the rest of her fruits in technicolor.

It would say this ;

"I am a woman and I am showing something to you boys and you better pay attention". In addition if she has even the slightest pair of tits highlighted by a decent push up bra, then she commands an even much larger legion of male acolytes. All the damn guitars and tangos in the world won't change that.

Sexuality from a mans point of view is amplified by a small simple truth. If a woman even does one small thing to suggest ..." I am doing this to attract a man ". It could be a kind of lipstick she wears , a fragrance , a lacy top, toe nails done with fingernails, nice shoes , cool hair cut. Anything like that and a man notices quickly.

The trouble is today many women have decided to stop paying attention to their natural energy, their natural endowments ..their true source of power. Many have forsaken their genuine connection with those true feminine feelings. All those saucy, sweet and sometimes silly kinds of ways to attract men has been scuttled today in favour of cold anti-feminine intellectualism's. No longer is this kind of women interested in pleasing a man for his sake. She has decided it's just too much work and really , why bother. Men aren't worth this trouble is the general sentiment.



I call it the , "Wash and wear and who cares lifestyle." Here the modern efficient women is doing things that make economic and functional sense. What real romantic ever thought romance could be calculated in some dry mathematical way based on simple efficiency .

Who said sexuality needed to be efficient. The less efficient sometimes the better. Sex is silly , stupid , really ...but it starts with an attitude and from there, just make your own movie. There is no time and nothing but pure velocity to burn with real fire.

In the highly efficient world in the western world of twenty first century, people have become slaves to the "less is more philosophy". Just get a short hair cut, forget that those flat shoes on women look like shit, or that "*later I'm busy*" tee shirt doesn't say anything to interest a man.

But I guess that's just the point , these women aren't interested in men, unless the man can provide money and elevated circumstances for living on their terms, terms which include the exclusion of demonstrating any true femininity on their part. I ask you , "what man would want this ".

I must also say that , many men have fallen also into this trash heap also, the uninspired, unattractive, ... the unforgiven, broken men of the world. The forlorn spirits of the world have become mainly , complacent , apathetic and willing to accept second best. Drawn more and more to receive what little human inspiration we can from second-hand creations, distractions of no import supplement our lack of true living from our own experience. To be alive we must bleed and fight for ourselves.

### #13 The Bar

We pulled into women's night at , "Johnny's Steak and Beer" joint, parked and confidently made out way to the door.

That's a five buck cover charge the doorman said ...

"What ?"

"Hey if you were a chick you wouldn't have to pay, its always the same , pay

now or you'll pay later., he chided us.

We grabbed a table at some distance from the dance floor and I bought a round. At this distance you could see who was coming in the door and if you might want to track them, Nick laid out the course.

Fred and I were dressed just in jeans and a shirt but Nick had on designer pants with a leather jacket with his initials on it.

Fred said; "Your a yuppie Nick" ,

Nick paused ;

"you never know what will walk through that door gentlemen, besides wearing some kind of leather always draws a woman. Ok, we'll see who is left standing at the end of the night."

Ten minutes , fifteen ..thirty, an hour ...where are all those broads ?

The doorman , I always wondered how much ass he got. Such a slick bastard, that little shit eating smile and the phony French cologne. But the chicks loved the image anyway.

Soon the DJ started throwing some music at the floor and the place got warmer. people got dancing. All told there were maybe 50 people there at ten o'clock, about one third were women. The men were starting to look queasy and hungry.

We stared at the women and silently picked out potential candidates. It was basic stalking pure and simple , something the men understand comes from the hunter gatherer days. Who said that ever ended.

Nick with his natural charm and his nothing can go wrong attitude was first off to talk with a couple chicks sitting with one guy. The logistics were simple , one down and one for me Nick thought. Some men are nervous about approaching a table full of girls because if they all give you the uninterested look you have some real back stepping to do to crawl back to your table and

look unaffected. He thought had a chance, but then Nick always did.

This is a natural place to declare a simple but much overlooked reality in the dance between the sexes that men often totally forget.

Guess what? About 85 percent of the women at the bar or on the street or anywhere, either have boyfriends, or don't want one, or they maybe have forgotten what sex is (except while watching a soap opera). Maybe they are basically just attracted to women, one has to count horses and riders.

So that means as a single man, if you are lucky, and even a hunk ...there might constitute a potential 10 to 15 percent of the girls you see might be available on any given day. Those aren't exceptional odds, especially when you add in your age if you are over say, 45, and don't have a great job. Even in a suit you aren't much competition.

Even if they thought you met their criteria ...which now is very exclusive territory, the must do and must be list for men is higher now than the price of gold at Rothschild's on a Monday morning. Its better for a man not to know this, thankfully most don't.

But occasionally there are some women who will still buy our crappy come ons, and are still willing to forget we aren't gods, even for a night or two. Maybe one day you'll meet this woman, and maybe you are lucky enough she doesn't care you aren't perfect. She might just straighten your tie and say, "hey sweetheart, it's not so bad, let's dance".

If you do you are very lucky, but "are you smart" says the song, "My Funny Valentine". How true, are we smart? So in short, there is hope even for the hopeless. Don't use that rope just yet.

## # 14 Bible Thumpers

Every once in awhile people in the building will want to be your buddy often for alternative reasons. This is something I never encouraged . There was a tenant, Jersey , a single guy, flaccid , thick glassed and a serious student of the original power book.

He had it in mind early on after we met to try a get me saved.

One day I was in his apartment fixing a cupboard door, He's standing behind me watching carefully, as if I was defusing an atomic devise.

Out of the blue he says ; "Have you been saved ".

"Saved from what I asked " , knowing perfectly well what he meant.

"Washed by the blood of Jesus" , he said.

Oh , listen Jersey could you pass me the cup of screws over there. He passed me the cup.

You didn't answer my question , he said.

I faltered and mentioned religion wasn't my bag, but he persisted to drill me in his most energetic missionary style.

"Have you ever read the Bible" ? he queried.

Damn big book isn't it , little bits , I remarked.

I read a chapter every day , he said ,

That so ? I said. You must have no time for magazines or newspapers.

"there isn't anything in magazines or newspapers, he stoically replied.

"You got that right " , I said.

I finished up at the cupboard and was cleaning up. He grabbed me by the shoulder and said ; you need to be serious about your future.

Yes , that's true , I said . I don't have a retirement plan. Ouch , that's going to hurt. I'll have to continue to play heavy on the lottery maybe meet a rich broad and shack up in a condo down by the lake. I was dreaming that when I heard...

" BUT what kind of future can you have without Jesus ?" he said

"Mercy Jersey , why don't you just put in a good word for me, you seem to be close enough to him get me in the back door."

There is no back door Jack , its just you and Jesus .

Oh I said , and he's always at the front door ?

"Yes that's right , just waiting for you to make a move towards his all abiding love. Do you know how much he loves you, Jack?"

Why don't you sit down , I'll make you a coffee and we can talk .

Noooo , I can't just right now Jersey, how about another day" , I scrambled towards the door. He put up a stubborn fight but I managed to slide out the door.

Two weeks later , I was in a cast after an accident when a couch fell on my leg while helping a tenant move. I wasn't completely off the foot but I had to rest a lot. It was then when Jersey decided to pounce.

I was sitting at home in my apartment when I hear a knock on the door.

"Who's there " I asked.

"It's Jersey I have problem with a plug could you look at it, I cant make my dinner."

I wanted to tell him to scram but I didn't, he backed away from the door as I opened. Ok, lets go see this plug. The kitchen plugs were always blowing fuses and that's all it was . I changed it and that was that.

Ok thanks so much , I owe you a coffee ... no , it's ok , I insist!

All right , all right , I said.

He brought the coffee and the sugar and we sat across from each other in the living room. I noticed there was a bible and some study books on the coffee table. We just sat and drank quiet for maybe one and half minutes.

Then his roving eyeball got me, Listen Jack , I know you don't believe in Jesus but let me ask you a question.

Ok.

Are you a happy man ?

Well... sometimes , I said.

Maybe you are worried about never getting into heaven and being lost forever. That's a common issue with many of our converts, the thing is they never knew what was bothering them till they were confronted directly about their belief. What a joy it is to be relieved of that lingering doubt.

I am sure it is , but with respect Jersey I don't worry about heaven , that's not my job ..and furthermore I am already lost , so I am kind of used to it. Do you really think all that stuff in the bible is true or necessary ?

Absolutely , he said. Once you have come to know the Lord it all becomes natural and easy. You hang out your dirty laundry and its all changed in an instant to pure white linen.

I see, I said. I always had a multitude of weird questions about anything I 'd ever heard in that book. So I decided to ask him a few to get a response.

Do you think , for example that Jesus really needed to die on a cross ...I mean why not a heart attack or a auto accident on the Nazareth freeway, cancer, a stoning or just plain over work? Would he still be an ok savior in that case?

Jersey burst in ; "He needed to die like that because he was willing to accept the suffering for all of us on the cross."

Well , if that's really true then we are all covered aren't we , sort of like a *universal cross insurance plan* right.?

Yes in some ways that's right. ... but, you need to accept him too .

Yes accept , but accept what ?

Accept that he's your personal savior, that's all.

Well ; Jersey ... I don't know any different but sure I can accept that I guess I mean its been two thousand years, heck its any body's guess if we are right.

" For people who know the lord there is no "maybe" its all true as can be. Without Jesus we can't have eternal life", he said

But listen Jack , we have Bible classes informally every Thursday night right here at my apartment , and I am inviting you to attend if you are willing to explore this further. We'd love to have you.

Well, that's nice I said, but this kind of thing just isn't for me , I cant sit still even for a movie let alone a Jesus seminar.

I did have lots of questions like , The walking on water thing always seemed like a stunt for non- believers , and when he ascended into the clouds I wondered could he be seen from a space station, and where is heaven anyway?

why 12 disciples why not two or ten ..., the idea of a virgin birth seems a bit far fetched , more like a Disney story,

how much wine did he make at the wedding and were the guests loaded afterwards ...if so did they take taxis instead of driving themselves?

why didn't he write his own book? If he knows men like I know them , I would never leave it to others to get my story out.

I was caught from my reverie of questions, when I noticed Jersey was pouring more coffee.

"I think you'd be an excellent candidate for our Thursday night meetings , I really do ..you would bring in some fresh ideas".

No , Jersey , please don't take me wrong but I don't get involved in religions like that, I usually have all the wrong questions. I am sure the meetings are fine but leave me out of them..

He seemed quite disappointed , but then he said , ...ok look why don't I slip out little monthly magazine under your door once in awhile , maybe you'll find that interesting. Just like a true missionary , they just never give up.

That's beautiful Jersey , lets leave it at that thanks for the interest.

Oh , ...its not my personal interest in you, he declared , its Jesus' interest in you .

Ok , I figured that too . Slowly I backed out of the room , see you around Jersey. I'll look into the book once and awhile.

"GREAT" he said , I knew Jesus was going to work through us today!

Bye ... man.

#### #15 Romance strikes

Meanwhile days passed without much going on for two solid weeks when I get a gentle knock at the door at 8pm on a Thursday night.

"Jack how are you , its Bonnie # 306 ?.She was standing there about 5, 3 in slightly raised heels ...rolled up jeans and a very shapely cotton top ... the perfume was slight but well placed ,which would dog my sense of smell all night, which sent me back a mental tape saying , trouble , trouble trouble. Again she offered that magic and how was I going to escape?"

We'll... as its Thursday evening the decorum was to invite this dazzling female tenant into my quarters for further repartee and confidential considerations regarding her apartment and her issues of praise or



complaint about the building and my work there.

"Please I said , come in", I directed her to the soft couch and offered a drink right away. She muttered no ...then yes ok.

We sat there , I in the chair with a beer , while she dissolved into the couch, holding a lighted cigarette and her drink , Vodka on the rocks. Her warm eyes exploring and considering the whole room.. She started talking at first about...the landlord, his pathetic history, the shame of the death of the last Super, the weather , my job , her job , her daughter, her ex, her future life , the universe and everything. I guessed she needed to expunge some past unresolved issues, I watched and listened.

As the evening worn on she had kicked off her heels and was much more comfortable, ( something about a woman getting comfortable in your presence that's so appealing) blouse popping open a little at opportune moments ,she was laughing and engaging me in an easy natural way, ...and I was enjoying it too. We were soon both on the couch watching some old movie.

After some time and getting face to face on the same piece of furniture it was certain we had a strong libido for each other. By the morning she made me feel like a man who was wanted. What a difference , my pecker was in full of expectation and I thought I could have a life too.

It wasn't long before we were spending most nights together ordering pizza's and videos, we were happy just to be there for each other.

There were of course dark sides to both our lives we tried hard to hide, with me it was the running away from committing to anything the society wanted me to follow blindly without seriously challenging it. That included almost everything. I always was trying to satisfy my creative side while still having to look the jaws of hell everyday in the real world and make the demons go away , which of course they never did.

Bonnie had many bad experiences with tough guys who had slapped her around and often leaving to times of part time jobs or no job or welfare.

She said , "One thing you have to remember Jack , I won't take anymore

bullshit from guys who want to take advantage of me ! "I don't mean you of course . But of course , "she did mean me. These could be warning signs of back taxes waiting to be paid by somebody ,even the new man in town. Ask yourself , are you the "new man" ? Take it easy and listen to what is said. Naturally I seldom do.

Three weeks later we had decided to move in together , having no rent to pay ( I cover that with my work) , and her being a waitress, she'd buy groceries, booze and smokes ...life could be good.

Things didn't go bad for quite awhile , but in few months we were looking for a better position , using her skills and mine we could make pretty good money and maybe have a little extra.

One thing that set us off was the ever nagging notion that Vinnie could fire us anytime close to payday. Off and on he say snarkly , " is that girlfriend of yours still working at the bar , because when she rented from me she was always late.?"

"Hey Vinnie , back off , haven't you ever had some tough times in your life. She's a decent woman and I wont take anyone putting her down. Well, he said you know you always got to work harder to save for a rainy day, he chuckled . And I thought, which day might that be , Mr. Weatherman

There was a little secret I knew about him he didn't know. The apartment building , was NOT his , no it was owned by his Father -in-law. And his daddy in law might, ... may transfer the building to him if he is a good boy in running it. But seeing this father in law was from the mobster gene pool , anything could happen. So we knew his ass was always in the vise making sure the money was there and he tried the most outrageous things to ...save money, including stiffing me for money.

He'd constantly looking to raise parking space prices, sneak in an illegal rent hike ,drive up a new apartment rental as high as he could , almost never fix anything unless it was a on the spot emergency. The whole building could be shut down in a minute because of very serious wiring and other issues with building bylaws.. I could be the man to close him down but , I am sure he never thought I would ...then I'd be out a job. But I was tempted.

## #16 Moving up

The constant hassle with Vinnie worn Bonnie and I down and finally just before Christmas something happened. We had been looking through the papers daily and calling all the most promising ads and sending resumes. Bonnie kept on sending our picture with them saying it would help us get the job. I wasn't happy about it, but damn , that girl did get us a job. Sure enough after six interviews together, on a Monday afternoon after walking all around all day in a driving rain shopping , the cell phone rings. I find it in my back pocket figuring it was Vinnie.

"Hello is this you Jack" , a voice asked. Yes , that's right it me. "Well we represent the ABC Victory Suites group , do you remember our interview for a superintendent position.?"

Ahhh ...Yes , I certainly do , its Carol right? Right Yes.

We have decided we want you and your spouse to be our new assistant superintendents at the Eastern Valley complex. Thank you. Great could you come in for a second interview on Friday . Yes sure thing see you then.

This job represented a whole other level of *apparent* customer service, the pay was much better but it involved almost three hundred suites. Three hundred suites with about four people in each , about 1200 people. Enough people to start a revolution or an army.

As it was, they were an army and usually there was always a revolution about something. Three hundred toilets, sinks, radiators, cupboards, cracks in walls and broken windows, garbage detail, evictions, kids writing all over the walls, stuck elevators, gangs in the parking lot, parking space wars at three in the morning. I straightened my shirt, it was going to be a challenge for a real professional.

As in all nightmares you have your back against the wall on several levels.

Yes we had a extra large apartment for free , but if we got fired we had exactly seven days to pack and leave. A very unnerving position to be in.

Second , we were only assistant superintendents which means we had to take orders from the real superintendents. The real superintendents in this case, we were as close to the Twilight zone as you'd ever want to get.

#### #17 The Russians are coming

We took the job knowing we had a very few days to pack and leave. This was something that needed to be done secretly and in the middle of the night or early morning. Since Vinnie was such asshole , I decided not to give him a minutes notice. He would be much more trouble and the chances of getting any recommendations from a guy like that was very low.

We packed day and night ...boxes , suitcases, stacked all over the apartment. We had to be extra careful that Vinnie didn't pop around at the door, that would have been a disaster. I had been calling around for a mover ...a cheap one. Well , I found a cheap one , a Russian one .

The only day we could move that was satisfactory was early on a Sunday. I took that date. Slowly Sunday approached and every day I carried on like normal , on soft feet carefully doing all the things I'd usually do not to tip off any tenant of our escape, and it was an escape.

We would have a large truck and one trip not too far but we had a lot more stuff that I imagined. The morning of the move was the first day of snow that year. The snow slowly started to build up early but nothing to bad , we got a knock at the door a 8am.

Ok ;said a dark Russian voice, " you come". ok we'll come I said.

I went down and examined the truck. It was big all right ...lots of blankets and dollies , looked professional enough. I went upstairs and started to bring stuff down and organizing the two other workers. There was one guy who just sat in the truck smoking a cigarette. After I had brought out some stuff to be loaded he waved me over this his driver window.

You vant pay ? he was wearing a tuck and a thermal vest and jeans.

I said ; Now ...pay now, we haven't gone anywhere ?

Da, ve pay now \$150 bucks. NOW he shouted

Well , I had never paid in advance before so I told him all will be paid when we are there and done. Quickly he turned the truck engine off and pushed the truck door open.

He advanced on me like an enemy. What gives I asked.

He said ; YOU pay now or we leave NOW. I realized now that I was dealing with a little mobster , how nice, how convenient.

There was nothing to do , it was 9 am and we had only a third of the stuff out of the apartment, the snow was getting harder and this Russian was winning this one.

Ok , I said and gave him the \$150 . Ok he said and motioned the other guys to get back to work. He would want an extra \$150 bucks when we got to the other place (before unloading), and if there was any change from the bill he would give it to me there.

We had never discussed this before moving at anytime and its totally not the way most guys work but you gotta go with the program.

So we loaded and the snow got thicker. I wasn't so worried about Vinnie anymore, he was just another mobster. Life's just a trail of mobsters it seemed. I supposed some wake up early bird tenants must have thought something strange was happening , but we were leaving all that behind and soon. It felt good. Leaving and arriving all feel good , it's the in-between we all get screwed in.

Finally all loaded, we all squeezed in the truck with the driver , including the dog , he staring oddly at this Russian mobster who liked to hear his own conversation. And talk he did.

According to him , he didn't take shit from anyone including women. As we drove slowly through snow he tells an ugly story of a woman who stood up to him over some argument. Apparently the woman was pregnant at the time , but that didn't stop Stepoff. He didn't like her remarks , so as he drove and laughed , he told us how he kicked her in the stomach , not once but several

times. He spit in her face and told her she deserved this kind of punishment.

We were in unbelief but couldn't show it. I remember just nodding. Later we would be discussing guns, comparing one to another and how best to shoot them , his favorites and so on.

After a seeming long drive in snow and slippery streets we were coming to the new place. All I could think of was , lets get this stuff out of this guys truck. I raced and even pushed the other guys to work harder. They didn't, I did. The driver sat in the cab, had a smoke , yawned , farted bellicose cabbage farts, he felt so much superior sitting in that cab listening the stereo. He probably felt like he was a new dynasty of the Russian Czars.

The job was done , I checked the truck and then banged at his window to say we'd finished. He took his time , grinning inside his warmth, his ugly yellow tobacco stained mouth staring down at me.

Finally he rolled down the window. Da ...done huh? He pondered at his watch then rolled off a twenty dollar bill.

"Ok see you", as he passed it through the window. I took the twenty , looked back and walked away. You don't need to be starting arguments with this guy. I was here and it was over. I walked inside closed the door and grabbed a cold beer from the new fridge. I tasted very good .

## # 18 The new job

The *real* Superintendents were a husband and wife team,

Vasolov and Anna who must have just landed here fresh from a Superintendent training school in a Siberian Gulag. Speaking almost no English I tried to communicate with them based on old boy scout semaphore training, grunting in Esperanto and staring knowingly into vacant eyes for some indication of a completed communication transaction.

Vasolov peppered his spam English with staccato orders only a Russian general would love. Three times a week was garbage day, a large truck would

pull up to shake and stack ten iron bins of super compacted garbage and haul it away. It was a noisy dirty work, it was with great pride that Vasolov would run outside even in the dead of winter and salute the fucking garbage truck driver as he was working the bins. I knew we were in trouble when I saw this happen on a regular basis.

Each morning promptly at 8 am I'd meet him in the office for a coffee.

He'd say; Don't worry today we do what we do is today ...tomorrow ...is the other day , no. Be calm.

The idea was to plan a strategic day for both of us over coffee . How quickly this became an absolute farce. These jobs not only teach you not to think, but even more they will penalize you for doing so.

Vasolov took all the easy jobs and gave me the crap ones. Like removing carpet tacks from a hard wood floor, that a former asylum patient I am sure put down. Tacks in the corners , tacks in the middle of the rooms, in the bathroom everywhere. Its a forever job ...whether you take , two hours or twenty , you can always find one more carpet tack. They wouldn't accept even one tack anywhere because they were going to sand all the floors. That job took me two days ...and everyone thought I was slow...perhaps I was. A tack remover I am not.

Our tenant complaint system worked like this. The tenants would fill in work order notes and put them in the office door over night whether it was dripping taps to leaking bath tubs, no heat or too much , kitchen doors falling

off , doors not closing right ..you name it. Many times the tenants would see you in the hall and ask you to fix something right then. Forget that.

Work order Sam , get that work order filled.

In the morning , Vasolov would go through the days work orders , circle the immediate emergencies , then write my name on them.

The most hilarious thing about the whole operation was , we literally had almost no stock in the stock room to fix anything. Here I was with 300 units

, in a 30 year old building - which is getting to be in the fix and or repair daily phase - and no stock .

I am in the stock room , one day looking for a couple of toilet bowl washers used in holding the water box onto the toilet. We have over 300 toilets , you would think we would have a couple of these things . No not a one. I was told when I reported to Vasolov , that he'd have to go to the hardware store to pick them up immediately. Yes , and he did . He got exactly two ... not 20 or 30 - only two.

His wife Anna would sashay into her office each day next door about 9 am looking very much the queen. Arrogant and bitchy , she was 6 feet of barrel house muscle, topped off with a cropped style hair cut jelled and curbed in the front like a Russian sub.

I suppose it's very attractive if I you lived in the navy barracks. At 40 below zero at night after the dogs had gone to bed, and you wanted to play torpedo games with your husband., he might think it was foxy.

She was in charge of rentals and complaints ...the tenant complaints were collected from the work order box by her in the morning , she'd send them to Vasolov and he'd keep simple ones and give the rest directly to me.

As for renting the suites, her English was so bad I don't know how she could rent anything many times she'd rent the same apartments twice, getting rent money confused and giving parking spaces away to two different apartments. As a result we had walked into a round of 24 hour emergency chaos in a building we thought was going to be much better. So much for going up the ladder.

"Ve ave two suivtes wit evrytink located vor your convenience, lik, a stove modern, and da fridge is vorkink, da heat ok kourse you kin have pets contained only on da leashes. Please try goink out to da balcony , it vil be safe both vinter and summer. Opps da Super forget to plug the toilet in ...ve get him NOW".

# 19 Don't mess with head office

Things got so bad that I called a couple of private meetings with the building



manager Margie to discuss how some of these problems might be overcome. One would suppose that being eager to make things flow easier and cheaper, would bring a radiant smile to the owners representative. You'd be wrong.

"Now, I appreciate your thoughtfulness here Jack but ...perhaps you don't know the place is up for sale ...and the owner won't spend any additional money here unless it's a real emergency. "

Funny I wasn't told this when we were hired, I remarked. "

When you were hired, there was just too much to consider to get into that," she offered a lame excuse.

Well then, I guess that's what I can tell the tenants, just hold off till things get straightened around and the building sold.

Nooooo... don't tell any tenant anything, got that? The tenants don't even need to know the build may change owners.

Just try and do the best you can, till things settle down.

I wondered when that might be, the best I can. I considered walking the halls with Valium and any tenant opens a door, pop one into him. I envisioned 50 tenants chasing me down the halls for various problems and screaming, "I pay rent here "I want some action". I didn't have to envision this too long, as everyday it got more and more visceral between tenants, myself and the management. It was in short; an impossible job and nobody was winning.

These people very well did pay rent there and we were caught in the middle of a big mess. The night bird was getting some extra colour in his wings on this job.

One day, the building manager had a cute idea. Get Bonnie to take over showing of rental units, on weekends and evenings, she'd make extra money and take some pressure off the Russian team.

This idea went over like a ton of bricks on the Russkies. Apparently they were fully capable of doing everything on their own, of course except, they weren't. They were horribly behind in every department. It was odd because

they seemed to walk around the building assuming that just their presence was enough to say they were on the job. Vasolov would ..salute a few tenants and pat them on the back assuring everything would be done shortly, he really didn't give a damn when. When ever I encountered this situation I'd say , "down periscope "or ...tenant dead ahead , just for larks.

His wife being so dramatically caught up in her hair and fashion statements , her presence added up to the same effect , nothing.

The shit hit the fan after about a month of Bonnie trying to work with Anna on renting apartment suites. Suites were getting double booked, Anna would never create a updated list of suites to be offered for showing , and of those many weren't ready to show. That would be my fault , of course.

Our home life was starting to fall into patterns of poor sleep, no sleep, drinking lots , fear, arguments that started to get worse. This is when you know a deep shit wind is heading your way.

Jack , I didn't expect this kind of crap from this job, Bonnie said, it's impossible and I cant work with that bitch ...she wants everything for herself. In that case I'll make no extra cash.

I could see a fight any day now. I had to keep reminding her that it was still winter and who needs the streets in winter or anytime for that matter. But she had good points that I knew would never be handed fairly. The pressures were building.

One day there was a apartment moving out , and after inspecting it we saw they had left tons of good stuff behind. All the staff looked over what was left, and staff put dibs on what they wanted. Bonnie wanted a few things and I said why don't you go and get them now , here's the key, you never know when the Supers will change their minds and say they want everything.

Unfortunately, somehow in getting into the apartment and getting out, the key was lost and according to the management this was ..very serious. I expected a death sentence was too light. Heck anyone could loose a key.

I could feel an unwarranted amount of heat was on us , somehow the heat we were getting didn't fit the crime. My gut said, they want *yes people* for this

job, and I wasn't giving them that.

Something odd was going to happen I knew it.

## # 20 The last straw

One crisp evening in the middle of February I came off shift , went home and grabbed a beer and sat on the couch. I didn't know it at first but , Bonnie looked very wired and kept going over and over the days events regarding the, Twilight zone people our dear cohorts , the Russkies. I don't know exactly what started what , but she wanted to go and report something to a higher authority, meaning I guess the owner himself, and she meant like , ...right now .

I said ; no its ridiculous and on and on ...soon there was some fight about never taking her side ect...

When these things start rolling whatever the truth was, is lost in the scratch me scratch you arguments ...Now drinking will compound whatever is going down , and we were into the beer and scotch and vodka. So a fire was set and shit was about to fly.

You told me this was going to be a better job , she cried.

"Well yes , I mean I did I but I couldn't mind read the future here Bonnie."

Now what are we going to do , it's the bloody middle of the winter we got almost no money , I gave up a good apartment for THIS !

A good apartment .... Jesusssssssss Chrisst at Vinnie's dump? Is that what you mean by a good apartment. I am so pissed at you for that.

We had a small dog , Victor, who like all dogs will pick up easily on whatever energy is going down. He started , barking uncontrollably ...and finally I grabbed him to cool him out.

You slapped my dog ; she said .

What are you talking about ? I grunted

You hate that dog , here give him to me... I walked over and put the dog into her lap.

Gawd damn it , she screamed ..you've ruined my life ...now I can't even get my apartment back ...you fucked me up good Jack.

I wondered how this all changed in two minutes into WWW3 and had an uncontrollable urge to break something. I walked away and up and down the living room floor ...but it did no good. Meanwhile Bonnie was on the couch calling somebody...

Who you calling I said; ,

The police , you hurt the dog and assaulted me .

I did whattttt.... ?? Huh ? I couldn't believe it. I did nothing of the sort.

You just wait till I GET THE POLICE HERE , your in big trouble mister. She was crying into the phone and panicking, over reacting.

I tried to grab the phone , saying don't be ridiculous this is nuts. You aren't going to let these assholes ruin us are you ?

Hello ...hello ...is this the police ... yes come to number 25 Amberton drive ...yes I been assaulted and my dog's hurt.

I attempted to get the phone away from her but to no avail.

You'll see ..you'll see , you are a very scary man when you get going , you know. I had no idea you were like this.

Like what ...like what ?

I was totally lost. At some juncture I looked around the living room and all was silent. No woman , no dog ...no life, nothing. Just the TV talking to itself , half finished drinks sitting their, like a party suddenly closed down. I had a very empty unreal feeling like things had completely stopped in a fraction of

a second. The whole world, at least my whole world it was moved to nothing.

Five minutes passed.

And where was Bonnie now? I looked all over the apartment , no dog no woman. This scared me too , as it was also freezing outside.

First I checked the halls , quiet, nothing. I walked outside circling around the building in the light snow ..calling calling ...no Bonnie , no dog ..and strangely no one else either. In just a few moments , I saw a police car slowly approach me in the driveway. It stopped , and I looked inside.

Officer did you get a call regarding a women named Bonnie and a dog?  
Sounded funny really. He looked at me and studied my condition , which apparently seemed normal to him.

He said ; well , yes we did. It's ok she is staying with friends.

I see; can you tell me which friends ? She only had two friends I knew about.

No , I can't but she's ok. Oh ..I am relieved.

Do you mind if we come in ,they said?

No not at all , and I lead them to the apartment.

After talking for 20 minutes or so they seemed relaxed and confident I wasn't a demon or and woman slayer. One cop even asked me if I wanted to have counseling for the trauma I had been through. I said no I'm fine, but I had never heard of cops offering this kind of things to men. Amazing I thought.

After some time they told me , Bonnie would be here to pick up her things tomorrow , and I said ok fine. I couldn't get over how the whole thing just ended flat out like that.

True to form , she was there, and collected whatever she wanted and left, we didn't talk. In about a hour , I got a call from the property managers

office.

This is the property management calling, I am sure you realize Bonnie called us last night about 1 am about some family fight?

Nooooo, I didn't know that.

Well , anyway , we need you in the office pronto , we cannot have the police called to our workers apartment over a matter such as this.

I went over and there sat the property manager , the vice - president and a serious looking security guard complete with gun in holster, beret, and cocky attitude standing next to a chair, I supposed , my chair. After many strange questions and something about my personal conduct and something about reading my rights.

Then there was edict declared ...you must be out of the premises today , not seven days ...today no later than 5 pm, today.

So my trial and conviction more or less ended right at that moment. Took about 10 minutes. No proof required , no questions asked the other party. Whatever I said was thrown out as garbage and the rest was more or less epilogue .

I had no recompense , no road of inquiry , nothing but get your ass moving.

And Bonnie , where did she end up . At one of my relatives.

So she went to the relatives and complained I was crazy. I was on the street. How unbelievably ironic, where does a man go for sanity. What did I do to deserve this.

Don't ask silly questions Mr. , you really don't have the time , pack your stuff, get a storage locker, depend on the angels ... the angels do have a say in this trust me about that.

#22 Brother Bill , one more time

After this strange journey into the world of a working class custodian and losing almost everything to it , I decided that a talk with my pal Brother Bill was in order. It would at least ease my pain I supposed.

Bill welcomed me with a big smile as I walked into his studio apartment complete with Pedro the Parrot, telling me clearly and often to "piss off ...or "go to hell if you know where that is ". Bill's 8 by 10 foot paintings from his New York period hung randomly on the walls, the music from a 20 year old Telefunken radio was as always locked into his favorite jazz station ... and now playing , "A child is born " , the Bill Evans version.

A large home made L - shaped couch welcomed me as did the cold beer, a pilsner honey ale. I smelled something with garlic and ginger cooking . I was definitely in the right apartment. After some of our usual cheap start-up conversation we settled into our chairs. Bill was interested in the entire epic of madness I had recently been living through.

I talked, sometimes dramatically , sometimes outrageously as I ridiculously described the story I have just related. Bill waited , a patient and eager listener, simply allowing himself to take it all in.

"So" , he said , " you were relived of your post and your women done left you ...now you are at once a saved man and a doomed man", he laughed.

But you still have your balls , you can still continue your mission , you remain unscathed except for some scars, and with even more fuel for the fire.

"What fire , shit I am almost burnt right out , I said. I am so pissed off I cannot believe it. You can't continue to get burned down in life without eventually getting to some point - a point of no return. I am dangerously close to that , Bill.

Maybe a real change of course is necessary then?, he said.

"Yes , a complete change is necessary because I don't believe in chasing the normal dream anymore. The so called normal dream can only be lived if one is

willing to pay for it with your life. I cannot devote my life to those ideas anymore. I need to pursue another kind of life ...probably something even more outside the so called normal one people think of. "

Well , he said , have you ever considered another country, another culture completely? I thought about that and realized I had not, because of language differences and other difficulties.

Why don't you try a Latin country, they are warm and can be intoxicating. Think about it , the worst that can happen is you return to what you know.

I'll think about that, I said

### #23 The next move

After six months of mending my wounds and thinking and keeping a low profile I decided a change was in order. A dramatic change, maybe that was what I needed. After a few weeks of planning I was on a plane to South America, to Sao Paulo, Brasil in fact. I am in Brasil's sun , its ocean , its beaches were waiting for me , in fact welcoming me. It felt like home.

I figured I could evolve at least as well somewhere in the third world, with the money exchange and the cultural change, different people , different expectations, ...one never knows until you try.

You know what, I am doing great. One steps out from one kind of old familiar safety zone on to a wobbly sky walkers rope, you take your chances. Sometimes you find out you like the sky walkers rope just fine. South America was the perfect place to learn an entirely new way of life and being.

Fortunately I am learning to stumble through the samba and the meringue and just watching the tango is fantastic, even if its a dream I can only aspire to. The food is great and the people are soft , emanating a ancient understanding of the beat of life. The women here speak a wonderful hidden language of movement and love. I am learning slowly that I speak it too. I guess am a gringo gone south.



I am a long way from that well organized city in the north , where almost everything has become predictable, the equation is known it's known so well it's a complete bore. Its vision is spoken of directly, as a matter of natural fact, as front page news it is reality and there is nothing else that matters. Maybe this is a comfort to most people , but some people need to play the wild man. Sometimes you have reached the end of a road. You cannot go down there anymore. You really do need to do something out of the ordinary next, you need to hear the world's stories first hand, to feel your own hands on the wheel again. Escape can be as good as a rest as long as you are running to something and not away from something.

I am sure the early explorers were thinking the same thoughts as they stood wide eyed behind their full sails heading west into a complete unknown.

Finally and most importantly a man must come home to himself , in full sail and leaving all preconceptions behind , looking straight into the sun, your bones and heart ready.

Home is a small decision away but certainly a large jump. I was ready for that jump.

The End