

SOLO PROJECTS

A Community-Based Theater project

**A collaboration between Roberto Prestigiacomo and the students of
Davidson College.**

Davidson, North Carolina 2004

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A Golfer and a Bum Fight

(Scene opens with four men on the putting green of a local 18 hole golf course. It's a sunny, warm summer afternoon. All four are dressed in typical golf attire: khaki and black pants, polo shirt, visors for some and golf hats for others. All are practicing their putting while conversing.)

(Main character starts his monologue while setting a ball down and lining up for a putt.)

A few years back, I was a senior in high school. I went up to visit one of my brothers who was a junior at Temple University in Philadelphia. (Practices his swing and lines up to take the shot.) He plays football, a bit of a meathead, kinda of a crazy man, in a big frat, all of his friends are big 'roid ragers. So there having a big party one Saturday afternoon. A couple of the guys tell me to come with them. (Hits the shot and watches the path of the ball.) So when we're in the car driving. (Looks directly at the other three men.)

All of a sudden we're out of the nice beautiful campus of Temple and starting to get into some project type looking buildings. All of a sudden they pull under a bridge, and there's five six seven eight bums hanging out. So I'm wondering what these guys are doing, I'm worried we might get mugged. (Walks to retrieve the ball.) So one of the guys gets out and talks to the bums, and then all the bums start walking towards the car and they get in. And I'm thinking what the heck is going on. (Picks up the ball and turns and faces the other three golfers directly.) So they explain to me that they got this idea of having a bum fight match at the fraternity house that afternoon. And they are going to give the winning bum, the last one standing, one hundred dollars, and all the other bums get the all the food they want to eat. (Walks back, and sets the ball down.)

So we get over there and they have a make shift ring set up in the backyard, bunch a frat guys hollering and screaming, drinking beer. Everyone's drunk by this point. (Practices swing and lines up for the shot.) All the bums get all the food and booze they want, they're all liquored up. There were even two girls among the bunch. I'm thinking this is wrong, but I've had a couple beers, I'm starting to feel a little loose in my morals, and I start giggling a little. (Hits the shot and watches it.) The next thing I know is they hit the bell, and the first thing that happens (looks directly at the other three golfers) is one of these big black bums just sticks this girl in the face and cold-cock knocks her out. (Chuckles to himself, looks to see if the others are laughing) So the bums go onto to fighting. A big, a big, I dunno he had a bit of a belly, but a big one of them wins. (Takes the ball back and sets it down)

He comes off the stage. One of my brothers' buddies hands him a hundred dollar bill. (Hits the ball) Then all of a sudden (looks at the others directly, talking with hands and the putter) this big offensive lineman comes up and just knocks the hell out of the bum, (makes a punching motion) takes the hundred dollars, and goes (In a very loud voice, almost yelling, while looking at the others directly) "What were you going to do, open a fucking business? Get the fuck outta here! You're a fucking bum." (Laughs very loudly,

looks to see if the others are laughing too.) (Walks to pick up the ball and sets up for another shot.)

In the Lobby

*Music and party noises drift into a hotel lobby from an adjoining ballroom. An attractive blonde leans against a sofa, looking perturbed. **Robert** enters stage left from the ballroom, and the blonde immediately catches his eye. After vainly attempting to straighten his clothes and hair, **Robert** staggers over to the blonde and leans next to her on the sofa. It becomes clear that **Robert** has had too much to drink.*

Robert: *(with humor)* We went to a small school; it had grades one through eight. It was not unusual to have fifteen- and sixteen-year-olds in your sixth and seventh grades. In the seventh grade I remember in particular we had a boy named Ray Carter who was not the brightest bulb in the chandelier. And he was probably at that time about 16 years old. Big boy, probably about 5'10", 5'11", 150, 170 pounds, and mean as a snake. He was the bully of the entire school. He particularly delighted in picking on me and my best friend Rodney Spencer. Rodney and I had been best friends from about the 2nd grade and you know we had done everything together. We would swim in the river, go hunting with our rifles, and were just best pals and had been for say 5 years *(takes sip from martini, laughs softly to self)*.

Robert: One day the taunting and the bullying by Ray Carter got to be more than I can stand. So Rodney and I were walking home after school and uh I said Rodney I think between you and me we could take Ray Carter and put an end to this bullying that he's giving us. Rodney said "Great plan, great plan, let's do it." I said, "Rodney here's what we'll do. We'll go up to the service station on the corner after school," which was not unusual to sit there at the service station. Had a gravel area where the pumps were and you could get a Pepsi. And the kids would sit around with them on benches and just chat, and you know, do what kids do in the sixth seventh and eighth grades, sitting around, shooting the breeze. So we determined that the plan would be that at the service station, generally ten or fifteen kids standing around, I would, uh, respond to ray when he invariably picked on me, and we'd start a fistfight. At which time, when I was busily engaged with ray, Rodney was to jump him from behind and between the two of us we would really put a licking on old Ray.

Robert: *(sets down martini, which he has managed to almost finish. He is gesturing grandly and really getting into the story)* So that afternoon we were at the service station. Sure enough, Ray started giving it to me. But this time, I started giving it back to him. It stunned everybody in the crowd, and it just got deathly quiet. Nobody, nobody messed with Ray Carter. Particularly, you know, kids in the 7th grade. *(physically portraying the actions that he is describing)* So right away Ray grabbed me by the shirt collar and flung me to the ground and I'm laying on my back on the ground and Ray's on top of me and he's got an ear in each hand and he's slamming my head into the gravel, to the delight of the assembled crowd. But the cruelest fate of all, I heard Rodney in the background, who had lost his nerve, "Give it to 'em, Ray, Give it to 'em Ray!" Well, needless to say that was the end of any attempt to end Ray Carter's bullying. Wasn't the end of my friendship with Rodney. He moved away a year or so later, and I haven't seen him since, but we made up and continued to be friends. *(In the shuffling of his feet, Robert kicks his*

martini glass, knocking it over and spilling what little contents it had left on the floor. Robert looks mortified and embarrassed, looks to the blonde, then looks again at the spilled martini on the floor. Robert makes an awkward, ashamed exit to the opposite side of his entrance.

Mrs. Kennedy

Mary is sitting outside on a bench in the middle of the disheveled garden by the side of a building which used to be the old train station by the railroad tracks. The place was converted into a center for the homeless of Charlotte in 1990, and ever since has been considered a living room for the homeless to gather and receive services. Mary scans a glance over her neighbor and notices the woman sitting closest to her is not someone to mess with. This woman is tough, short, but well-built, sitting with a snarl on her face. Mary is intimidated, but she wants this strong woman as an ally. Mary begins a conversation with the woman to gain her respect. She begins with the everyday, "Damn, it is cold," but it develops into a conversation of respect. This is exert from the conversation occurs 5 minutes into it.

Mary sits with her legs slightly open facing the other woman from the center. There are fabric strips on her thighs which she is tying to make rope.

Uhh, probably about eight years ago, I was a chauffeur and a nurse, at a nursing home. And, it's, it was one-a-those ritzy ones with all the rooms. Like the residents were very well off. So a lot of them were very picky about how they wanted things.

And, there was this one of them, Mrs. Kennedy. And everybody was afraid of her. *She laughs, which is followed by a pause while she regains her thoughts.*

So, I was a wheel chair driver too. Wheel chair van driver.

And she used to sneak cigarettes all up in the back of the van. But, I didn't mind that, because I just let them be on their way. So.

So, they had to have two nurses, just to take her and sit her, because she used to get so ornery and violent and stuff like that. But it is not a disease, just something she does.

HaHa

She turns the rope in her hands with jerky movements for emphasis.

So uh. She started in the one day I was driving. So I was purposefully...I live in New York, so. I used to live in New York, cause there was a lot of pot wholes. You know I'd say, I found a lot of 'em. *Laughs. She takes her rope work in one hand and uses her hands to make the sound of a car going over a pot whole by smashing her palms over one another.* Opps, one right there. Clash.

So, she just kept it on, kept it on and in the middle of traffic it got a little hectic, the driving and stuff. So finally I just slammed on the brakes, and said, "If you think you can do any better, you jump right on the steering wheel, and you drive!" And that is that. That's the end of that see.

And she says, "Now you know I can't drive." (in little old lady voice) Like that. Bu But I said, "Well, you need to let me alone, and let me drive." And that was the last time she ever argued with me again.

Mary and her new ally sit quietly for a moment to soak in the story. Then their conversation resumes with a level of newly found respect.

Rescue Me

Marcia and Todd sit at Marcia's small wooden breakfast table in the corner of the kitchen. Behind them is a white marble countertop, flanked by a row of white cabinets. The stove is in the opposite corner of the room; a pot of water rests on top of it, a few minutes away from boiling. A white refrigerator hums quietly next to the stove. There are no windows but an intensely bright overhead light overcompensates for the lack of natural light. A bright bouquet of yellow and red tulips looks decidedly out of place on the counter. Todd stares absentmindedly at the wall while Marcia sits awkwardly and look at him.

MARCIA: I was a firefighter and we had responded to a house fire and one of the things that you, you always look for when you pull up on a structural fire is sizing up the situation. Uh, how much smoke is coming out, if it's coming out. There's this thing called back-draft that you gotta be really aware of. Well, this house had all the characteristics of being in a back-draft situation, where all, it has a lot of heat trapped inside so you had to be real careful opening the doors to make sure that it did not create a smoke dis... it's called smoke disclosure. *(Pause)* Uh, when it didn't, it didn't blow, uh, then I went in with a line, me and another [firefighter], in the, what was the living room. And started. *(Pause)* And so the house was full of smoke, you can't see anything, just you can detect just a slight red glow somewhere and you hope that's the fire that you're, you're throwing your water on. And when I started throwing water up in the ceiling area where all the heat is then all of a sudden, you know, just, I don't, just crash. And I got pinned to the floor. *(Pause. Looks at Todd)* And what it amounted to, it had a, uh, a stucco type ceiling which had been weakened by the fire and then when I hit it, it got it wet, just the weight of the water that got soaked into it, the whole ceiling collapsed and fell on me. I didn't get hurt but it sure scared the hound of me 'cause I thought my time was up.

As Marcia concludes her story, Todd gives an impressed, "Whoa," under his breath and then continues to sit in silence. Marcia jumps out of her chair and begins fiddling with the pot of boiling water, throws some salt in it and adjusts the heat.

That Six Hours

A warm, plain-furnished study. At stage left, a door stays ajar, leading to a hallway. At stage right, opposite to the door but a little further downstage, there is a light blue window with two pieces of half-transparent white curtains drawn together. Beside the window to its left, stands a desk. Several books, thick and thin, and pens scatter on it. A lamp on the right side of the desk is on. In front of two opened books, there are two plastic glasses, half empty with water. Two chairs stand behind the desk, side by side. LINDA sits in the left chair, APRIL in the right one. They are both in night clothes and slippers. Linda sits sideways in the chair with her right leg pulled up, facing April. She is fuddling with a black pen with her right hand. April sits back in the chair, her head turning to Linda, her body still facing front. Some two meters away from the desk, a little to the left of the stage center, there is a small wooden three-legged table. A pitcher filled with water is on it. The floor is simply carpeted. It is a late spring's evening.

Linda ...So finally I got a call from this kid, named John Jackson. He was like, "Hey, man. I got some ecstasy. You know what ecstasy is. It's drug, very strange drug. " He was like, I got some ecstasy, man. You want it?" I'd never done that before. And we'd been taught in school that you can die from doing it once. That is bullshit. We all find it out. There's a big study done recently show that it's totally not true. It was originally made for psychologists to get the truth out of their patients. They put you to a state of euphoria, and make you very sensitive to everything. It makes you want to talk. And it's called MDMA. I was like, "No, man, no, no, no. But thanks anyway." I hang up and told Matt. He was like, "You know, maybe I can handle doing some of that. Ok, so we go. We called John Jackson. We go meet him, close to here actually in the Food& Lion parking lot. And he gave us two tiny little pills. He was like, "Bring some water with ye. You know, if you don't feel it coming on, just wait. It'll come on. I did this last night. It was great, lots of fun, and blah blah blah."

Drug dealer's talk, trying to make you more comfortable. Ok, got it. We get back to Matt's car and we drive back to Matt's house. And on the way back to Matt's house, we take them at the same time. We get to Matt's house. We get a big bottle of water, two bananas. His house's old. Well, it's not like it's old. It's just been exposed to the weather every day for probably ten to fifteen years. So while it seems new, it feels old. There's a way up to get the very top of the roof, without trying hard at all. So we climbed at the top of the roof, and we just sat there. Already it's 5:30. The sun was bright and low in the sky. We sat there for a few minutes. It hasn't come on yet. We can't feel the drug. But we are talking. We somewhere turned around. There are three people walking up to the house. We were like, "What's up? How's it going?" They were like, "Hey. We saw you car and the house. We want to come up and see what it's like." We were like, "Yeah, yeah, sure." And they came up. This guy was like 20 years old. His name is Clay. He's wearing a Darth Maul shirt. He has a big beard and long blond hair. His sister is 19, whose name I forget. And a 13 year old friend of them, whose name was Carrie and whose was very cute. And they are like talking to us about the stuff. They make zombie movies, called "Come Bring It." They are in the middle of making zombie movie "Come Bring it2". The three of them play all the characters. They played the zombies and they played the hero who was killing the zombies. It's very funny. The most important that we took away from

these people when they left about 20 minutes later was that Clay on his left arm has all around four zodiac signs and a pink one. Four zodiac signs were the zodiac birth signs of his three siblings. The pink one was for his mother who had died of cancer a few months earlier. And something about that make the drug kick in. And Matt and I sort of feeling it at the same moment. It like really moved us. They left and Matt and I started talking. I've had human experiences before with people, you know, talking with girls on the phone for hours into the night, or like sat on a bench with a friend and had a serious conversation about religion, or you know, the future, or whatever. Matt and I sat on the roof, in the same place, for the next six hours and did not stop talking to one another. It was like nothing was not interesting. We were talking about how trees looked. We were talking about ourselves, our relationships. We talked a lot about hip- pop and how like we have our future in it. We talked for six hours about these stuff and by the end of it, we were, I mean, you wouldn't say we were holding one another. But we were close together. We were like holding each other's arms. It wasn't sexual in the least bit. We know, and that makes it Ok to do it. It wasn't even a question of that. It was us, caring about what the other was saying and about our emotional connections. It was the most seriously beautiful moment I've had with any person in my entire life- the six hours with Matt.

Billy

(In a restaurant; Jim and his 5 new colleagues are at a table with food in front of them. Behind the table on one side is the large, front glass window of the restaurant and on the other side is the main counter at which one pays. The restaurant is busy, but not overly crowded. There is a bell on the front door, a clock and memorabilia on the walls.)

One that comes to mind quickly is that uh... my wife and I were on a..on a.. Windjammer barefoot cruise a a number of years ago and uh uh uh visited a number of small islands really so small that even cruise ships couldn't get there. One of the islands we visited was called Saba, S-A-B-A, and uh remote place uh almost impossible to get to...no beaches just this volcanic rock stickin' out of the uh a out of the ocean with tha eh force and what not and uh one of the things to do for uh there is to is to hike up this 2,600 foot um mountain I guess. They have radio towers and stuff on there, so not many people do it, but my wife and I did and we're commin' down and we reach this flat spot that um of course we didn't notice goin' up and its kind of a little place ta to rest and um I notice this guy commin' towards me and its uh its its Billy Crystal and he's one of my favorite, favorite comedians so here he is on this, this island. And were kinda walkin' towards each other...there's no other people around and I get right...about three feet from him and I say..."Billy Joel" and without missin' a beat, he keeps walkin' gets right next to my ear and he says, "Close" and keeps walkin'. Man...so I never got the chance to meet him 'cause I well, misidentified him...

(Jim bites his sandwich and sits back in his chair as the conversation continues...)

Mary's Going to Bethlehem ... Again

December 22, 2005, 9pm; Glenmede Trust Company, 7th floor, Liberty One building, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The annual Christmas Office Party is in full swing. The normally posh, earth-tone colored lobby is swimming in myriad colors of the holiday season - the clash of red, green, and gold most prevalently. There is a long banquet table decked out with food around which people mill to the accompaniment of canned Christmas music playing from invisible speakers in the ceiling. A hush descends upon the crowd as the clanging of a glass introduces CEO John Adams to speak. Adams has given a 'homily' at this party ever since he became Glenmede's CEO in 1999. It has become a tradition. The crowd listens, most of them (Adams' supporters) appreciatively, the rest (his naysayers) with quiet respect at the very least.

JOHN ADAMS: [Enunciated with the gloss of a bit too much alcohol] This story takes place over a period of ten years.

It's about a female client of mine - one who became very important to me. Her husband had died, prematurely, leaving her with 10 children. *(Pause)* She needed our help. And we met, and I met the children. And then I didn't hear from her for some time. *(Pause)*...

[Adjust Temperament for a new line of thought] 6 months passed and she called again, except she had a new name. She had found this *saint* of a man, who had 3 children of his own. They had met at the funeral of a teenager, killed in a motorcycle accident. Both had recently lost their spouses and the funeral touched upon wounds still too fresh. They met while composing themselves outside the service. The ensuing conversation revealed that their spouses had died on the same day...well, it was a match made in *heaven* *(Pause)* ... literally.

Anyway, having settled her life, she was now ready to invest with us. The objective of her portfolio was to fund the education of their 13 children. We devised an investment strategy, invested the money, and that was that. *[Adjust Temperament]* Another year passed...She called me again. The first words out of her mouth (?): 'Mary is going to Bethlehem again.' *[Ironically]* And I knew there was *another* baby on the way. *[As if considering a task further encumbered]* That made 14. Fast forward 3 more years...

[Adjust Temperament] My client's sister had been called to Rome for an audience with the pope. *[Smile]* He became interested in her after learning of the youth ministry program she had begun, which preached chastity to Charlotte public school children... *[Tongue-in-cheek]* The ministry evolved out of her concern for what else the children were learning in high school ... My client's sister was also a widow, but had never remarried. Having no husband to accompany her to Rome, she took my client instead.

[Eyes fall to ground, hand to jaw in thought, pace if appropriate] On the way to Rome, their plane had trouble landing. The front wheel would not come down. After 3 final approaches, the pilot tapped the front of the plane on the runway in a desperate

attempt to coax the wheel's descent. In response to the anxiety which this caused, my client's sister comforted the other passengers by saying, [*As if a prophet delivering the word of God to the people*] 'Don't worry about a thing, we're in God's hands, between the two of us [my client and herself], we have 22 children. He certainly will not let this plane crash.' Low and behold after another time around, the wheel came down and they landed safely.

[*Adjust Temperament*] While the sister had her audience with the pope, my client waited in the antechamber along with a shriveled-up old lady. And low and behold who was it? It was Mother Theresa...who was very interested in my client. She came over to her, tapped her on the shoulder with all her strength, and said, [*Italian accent of old lady*] "I want your child, I want your child." And my client wondered what she was talking about (*Pause*) ... she didn't see how *any* of her children would become a nun or priest, so what could Mother Theresa mean? [*Adjust Temperament*] Well, when she got home, she found out that she was pregnant, once again - number 15. Out of respect for the wishes of the holy mother, the child was named Rosemary Theresa.

[*Adjust Temperament*] I am happy to say that the portfolio succeeded. We were able to fund the secondary and college educations of all 15 children and in spite of two unforeseen additions to the original pool. There are two left in college, but the money for their education is assured. [*As a side note*] Interestingly enough, one of these many, many children, Agnes, graduated from Davidson College several years ago.

My Crazy Ravine Ruckus

(A table is set up in Milan Italian Restaurant, center stage. Four young men have just ordered pizza and are conversing over the craziest adventures they have had in their life)

John: Most I've ever done I went off into a ravine on a bike. Well, umm I'd have to say, I was in , like in the, the tenth grade, probably back in 2000, I was on a bike, I had borrowed my friends bike, but I didn't know it had no brakes on it and when finally, I started going down a steep incline, and I start-I went to go, go to brake, and it didn't stop me, and uhhh you know, there were cars coming down, and I was like oh my my lord, you know, no brakes, so then, so then, so then I started, I proceeded to go off into the grass, well I almost got clothes lined by a clothes line, and uhh so uh so I was still on my bike, and it didn't like knock me off or anything and then went off there's this like layer like where the ground kinda splits and I jumped- I jumped off that and hit the road and I kinda I kinda blacked out lil bit and then I remember waking up right before right before I get to the uhh uhh ravine, and I just, I just rushed I flipped right over it to the woke up in a ravine and I was like, what in the world just happened, and I didn't remember, I mean anything for the last 20 minutes and you know years later I remember it, but at the moment I didn't remember anything I forgot how I got here, I see my bike my bike, my friends bike all crinkled and crushed like a pretzel and then uhh, and then I then I got out, every bone in my body hurt and then I got out and some-some guy stopped and he uh off- he offered help and uhh well when-when my mother found out, cuz I was still living with my mother, when my mother found out, she found out, I never seen a person run faster in my life, I mean bare- I mean barefooted and still in her work clothes I mean everything just running down this 45 degree incline with cars going everywhere, she's just flailing arms and she thinks I'm just deader than or something or uh, I said mama mama I'm ok I'm ok I'm ok I'm ok, she like are you sure are , you - you don't feel anythings broke or do you, I was like no mama I don't I'm fine I'm fine I'm just hurt, just get me to the hospital and I'll be ok, and uh and uh and so a friend of mine, his names uh his names uh Sammy, he used to just live down the street from me, him and his wife, uh they sorta picked me up and said don't you be bleeding on my car now, and he put this big giant towel down, cuz my arm started to swell up like 3 or 4 inches well uhh and uhh and we got in the car and you know I started to get to the point where I couldn't move my arm at all and when we-when we got there, they kinda fixed it my arm-my arm was in a sling for like 2 weeks or something, that's about -that's about as...as craziest thing I've ever done

Colleen here is the edited version of your solo project, I cut out the end of it.
Talk to me about the **she** and the **he**.

Let's see. Story starts off about two years ago, met somebody at a park, and we started talking and blah blah, and we went on to, um, we started seeing, dating each other. And as the years went on, I started realizing that, um, that she had this, this crazy, um, addiction, and she didn't know it, and I started seeing it. I started spending time researching it, and saying, you know, you have this little problem, and it's not a bad problem, but you have a problem with addiction, and you might want to research yourself

on this, understand where it came from, and of course, she's like, "nope, I don't have a problem, and I'm like, mmm, yeah you do." So we went through the whole denial process, for a year over that, and, then, um, before we get through this, you know, those caring feelings start coming out, and those loving feelings start coming out as well, with each other. And then, uh, we start, uh, exploring that aspect along with this addiction of caring for somebody, of, uh, her end of addiction, and, and, then she realizes that yeah, she does have a problem with this, and so she starts getting treatment, and starts dealing with it, starts coping with it, and starts healing herself from the past, of having this addiction and where it came from. Of, um, growing up, and then, we went through that process of healing, of learning about that, uh, to the point, uh, uh, she has a relapse. The addiction, it's not, uh, it has nothing to do with drugs, uh, it has nothing to do with drugs or alcohol, or anything like that, it was more of a, uh, yeah, she had a sexual addiction, is what it was, which people don't realize sometimes, but yeah, you do have a problem, and it can be a problem and it was for her, surprisingly. Was it a bad problem? Probably not, but I was just like uh, but you know, when it comes to it, it is an addictive deal as well, surprisingly. Because when you see the habits, it's the exact same habits of somebody being on drugs or someone who is an alcoholic as well. They wanna hide it, they wanna suppress it and they can't get enough of it as well, yeah, oh yeah, people, uh, yeah, then when I started realizing that, I started researching and doing the background work, and uh, where it came from, through years of uh, you know, like finding out like her past childhood, that's where it started. And so, yeah, that's where it started, and she suppressed it for so long, that she started acting out upon it, thinking that the only way she could be liked is through...sex, and it's not, because, inside of her, is actually a really beautiful person. And we started pulling that out of her, and she started realizing, that yeah, there is more to me than just being liked for being beautiful, and (laughs), having sex.

The Shelter

[Mark and Jason sit at a table in the den of Jason's family's house. There is a deck of cards on the table. A radio is playing in the background. Mark begins to deal a game of Black Jack. The two continue playing the game throughout Mark's monologue.]

MARK: My parents had been married 22 years. And they were having some marital problems. They weren't getting along and decided to separate. They had been separated about... I guess a year and a half. And mom was just really depressed and she had mentioned quite a few times that she just felt like everybody would be better off without her. Well, one night, she called me and she said that uh I should come get Kara. So I drove my car out to Concord where she was living at the time and I picked my sister up. And of course her stuff was packed and I told her "You know, you can call, you can see her whenever you want; you know she's still your daughter." And she said, "No that won't be necessary," that she was "going to go live in a shelter." Three days went by and we didn't hear anything from her. So my father called her apartment complex and said, "Because my wife's a severe diabetic would you please go check on her." A couple more days went by and we hadn't heard anything. So he called back again, you know, "Did you do that check that I asked for." And they said, "No, we didn't get around to it. We'll do it today." Three more days went by, still nothing, so he called again. "No, we'll go do it right now." So by this point it had been about a week and a half and he hadn't heard anything for about three hours so he called back again and they said, "Well, we'll have to call you right back." At this time I was at work, and I came home at about five thirty. And there was a car in my driveway. Well, dad was seeing this one woman, you know, as friends, so I just thought it was her. So I walked in my house as I would normally and there were two men sitting at my kitchen table with my father. And my sister was upstairs in the computer room. Dad said to sit down, that they had something they wanted to tell us about mom. They had some issues. So they questioned both of us separately about the issues that had been going on as far as the separation and everything. And finally they said that they had found her dead in her apartment, that she had overdosed on about twelve different medicines. Things were hard at first. Um, of course the next four days I spent running back and forth to the funeral home, trying to arrange everything. And from then on I have been a part time parent to a seven year old who... my father's a truck driver and works at night and she is in my care 90 per cent of the time. I go to school while she's at school and he watches her in the evening while I go to work. And we sort of... just back and forth from there. Most of the time she's my responsibility. And it can be tough, you know, at 20 years old being, you know, a parent.

He Has Some Unusual Issues

Evening. Kristy Seamier and Lonnie Stalling have just finished a jog, and they are flushed and slightly breathless. Lonnie has just told Kristy that she is interested in Kristy's ex--boyfriend. Kristy has responded that he is not her type at all, and that he has a lot of issues. Lonnie, looking slightly curious as well as a bit dubious, has just questioned Kristy about what on earth she means. Both girls are now sitting on the ground, directly in front of a park bench. Kristy, very engaged, starts to explain the situation. Kristy also stretches, as she has not exercised in awhile and does not want to be sore. Lonnie does some light stretching as she listens.

Let's see. Story starts off about two years ago, met him at a park, and we started talking and blah blah, and we went on to, um, we started seeing, dating each other. And as the years went on, I started realizing that, um, that he had this, this crazy, um, addiction, and he didn't know it, and I started seeing it. I started spending time researching it, and saying, you know, you have this little problem, and it's not a bad problem, but you have a problem with addiction, and you might want to research yourself on this, understand where it came from, and of course, he's like, "nope, I don't have a problem, and I'm like, mmm, yeah you do." So we went through the whole denial process, for a year over that, and, then, um, before we get through this, you know, those caring feelings start coming out, and those loving feelings start coming out as well, with each other. And then, uh, we start, uh, exploring that aspect along with this addiction of caring for somebody, of, uh, his end of addiction, and, and, then he realizes that yeah, he does have a problem with this, and so he starts getting treatment, and starts dealing with it, starts coping with it, and starts healing himself from the past, of having this addiction and where it came from. Of, um, growing up, and then, we went through that process of healing, of learning about that, uh, to the point, uh, uh, he has a relapse.

The addiction, it's not, uh, it has nothing to do with drugs, uh, it has nothing to do with drugs or alcohol, or anything like that, it was more of a, uh, yeah, he had a sexual addiction, is what it was, which people don't realize sometimes, but yeah, you do have a problem, and it can be a problem and it was for him, surprisingly. Was it a bad problem? Probably not, but I was just like uh, but you know, when it comes to it, it is an addictive deal as well, surprisingly. Because when you see the habits, it's the exact same habits of somebody being on drugs or someone who is an alcoholic as well. They wanna hide it, they wanna suppress it and they can't get enough of it as well, yeah, oh yeah, people, uh, yeah, then when I started realizing that, I started researching and doing the background work, and uh, where it came from, through years of uh, you know, like finding out like his past childhood, that's where it started.

Kristy stands and stretches while standing up. Lonnie remains seated. Kristy, getting really worked up, continues looking at Lonnie. Lonnie is engaged in the story, but still looking at Kristy rather dubiously. Kristy is trying her hardest to convince Lonnie of the truth of her ex-boyfriend's problem.

And so, yeah, that's where it started, and he suppressed it for so long, that he started acting out upon it, thinking that the only way he could be liked is through...sex, and it's not, because, inside of him, is actually a really beautiful person. And we started pulling that out of him, and he started realizing, that yeah, there is more to me than just being liked for being good-looking, and (laughs), having sex.

Kristy stops stretching, and Lonnie stands up. Kristy and Lonnie both sip from their water bottles. Both girls walk off together, still talking inaudibly, heading to their respective apartments.

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Meet the Parents

Mary, Lee and his parents are at a table on the patio of McAllister's Deli. Mary wipes the chair off with her hand and sits gingerly on the edge of the seat. She sits properly, and Lee excuses himself to use the restroom.

Mary: *(looking at each parent alternating)*. My great-grandmother and I think that she was born probably about 18... 50...8 or 9, something like that. And, uh, she lived in Virginia, they lived on a farm, and, uh, she and her siblings were uh left alone on the farm in the War Between the States. And so her mother was there. Now, her father happened to be a Mason, uh, I don't know how you call... what you call that exactly, uh, Anyway. He was, uh, I think probably the 32nd degree. He had not, uh, advanced to the Shriner. *(she sips her tea)* But anyway, the Union army was marching through Virginia. Of course, they would march through and they would burn the farms and villages and they would pillage because they needed, you know, the stuff for-for the army. They needed the food they needed the clothing. They needed medicine, they needed uh they needed to take baths. You know there would be creeks and rivers and lakes and all around. And so they took everything from the civilians in order to support the army. *(She sips her tea)* Well, of course, Virginia sympathized with the south, and so they were more or less, uh, I guess you would say, being conquered and the time. And uh, so her mother was very very fearful of what would happen to them and what would happen to the home. Because they did burn a lot of the homes and lots farms and things like that so they would, trying to bring the south to their knees so that they would surrender. So anyway, *(sips tea)* she decided that she would bring out, um, my grand... my great-great-grandfather's- so that would be my great-great- grandmother, so that would be my great-great-grandfather's -- Masonic apron and I think they had uh... pins and they had uh... I don't know what all that they had. But anyway they would have his things they would bring them out and display them in the parlor. And so when the commanding officer came with his unit or his battalion or whatever it was, he came into the house, you know, to take whatever they had, and saw those, and he turned to my great-great grandmother and said, well he said "I will not burn your house. I will leave you a little something to eat. I will leave you alone, I'll go on my way, but I do need to have your pigs and I do need to have some of your chickens I'll need your - your corn and the things that you find on- on a farm. But I will leave enough for you that that, you know, you won't suffer and so he left with his troops. *(sips tea, silence)* And so my great-grandmother would tell us this story. Of course she was so young she probably was maybe about four or five years old, something like that, so she really couldn't remember it except for the fact that her family would, of course, have repeated the story over and over again, you know, through the years. But now, that's all I know about the story except that I don't know, uh, I assume that my great-grandfather was fighting for the south, you know, the-uh, the confederacy.

Very long pause. Lee's parents look at her with expressions of astonishment. Lee returns from the restroom and changes the subject immediately.

Opening Up

Al right so in 5th grade I had a strong case of the intestinal flu so I was out for about a week of school. And then I came back like on a Monday. And everything was going all right I mean I didn't feel good so I didn't eat a whole lot or anything. But uh I still felt a little quezy, and uh we got out of school normally at 3 o'clock and at like 2:15 we were doing social studies and my stomach was starting to feel a little bit bad. So I was like, oh gosh. So I asked the teacher to go to the bathroom and so I as soon I got in the hall I started running down the hall as fast as I could. I eventually get to the toilet nothings happened yet but I have trouble uh unbuckling my pants and then it just all goes to shit! Literally! Like, I uh like everything is covered. I didn't know I had that much shit in me. And so I uh I freak out because like my shorts are covered. Uh my shorts aren't that bad. My underwear are definitely, are disgusting, the stalls disgusting. So are the crap puddles that are creeping over into the other stalls. Luckily no ones in there. And so I uh have no idea what to do. So I uh, I run out with my shorts around my ankles and grab as many paper towels outside the stall as I possibly can and come back and try and clean it up. Uh some kid comes in and uh I freak out and tell him to go away because I will be an hour. And so uh I yelled at him a lot so he left. So uh I get every pretty much cleaned up my underwear are still pretty disgusting. So I put my shorts on without any underwear on and I really don't know what to do with the underwear. Looking back I should've thrown them away but instead I uh took them back to class with me in my hand. And when I got to class I uh ran uh ran immediately to my cubby hole where my backpack was and threw them in my back pack. And uh, and then sat down like sweating profusely from freaking out and such. And three minutes into uh sitting down uh like three kids in the class start doing "oh my god, what's that smell. What is that horrible smell?" And uh so I am really freaking out now, sweating even more so. So I've probably lost like 20 pounds in crap and sweat combined. But uh its luckily the teacher was a economist and uh ecology freak. So he had a giant tub of compost in the actual room. So uh he just blamed that on the smell but I'm pretty sure he knew that it was me. And so uh luckily, luckily I didn't get caught but uh on a side note uh the next week on uh 5th grade graduation I had to uh, I had to read a DARE speech for uh the DARE drug program but I had to read it covered in shit because I uh I'd threw my underwear, my crappy covered underwear onto the speech.

That's my story

I think it was a year and a half ago. It was spring. It was in, like, April or May. It must've been, I guess, it was a little under a year ago, not a year and a half at all. My friend Matthew Nelson came home from college, where he goes in Appalachian University. He's a year older than me. He's your age. Yeah, and he'd had a girlfriend who was very important to him, named Carly. She lives close to my house. And they had been so much emotionally together. But they were bad to one another. They were inconsiderate to one another, didn't treat each other very well. But he loved her so much and she loved him so much. And one day he came back from school. And she hadn't gone with him. They had broken up. But they were still talking all the time. They didn't know how to be with one another and stuff. He came into my house. It was like 12 in the morning. He called me and asked if he could come over. We always hang out. And he came over and he had a shoebox under his arm. And brought up to my room. I was like: "What's in the shoebox?" He was like: "This is everything that I've ever given to Carly. They're in the shoebox and she wants me to keep it." He was crying, and I'd never seen him cry before, or heard him about to cry or anything like that. But he was totally crying. And so I set about immediately trying to cheer him up, and make him feel better. So I was like, "Eh, this is crazy, this is awful, you know. She is crazy and blah blah. What should we do? Let's go out and do something." He was like, "I don't know, man." And I was like, "Look, let's go to Winston- Salem, and go to the rock quarry. Rock quarry is huge, you'll love it. We should just go and it'll take an hour to get there. We should spend all afternoon and come back in an hour, which will be fine." He was, "No, no. I don't want to do that." So finally I got a call from this kid, named John Jackson. He was like, "Hey, man. I got some ecstasy. You know what ecstasy is. It's drug, very strange drug." He was like, "I got some ecstasy, man. You want it?" I'd never done that before. And we'd been taught in school that you can die from doing it once. That is bullshit. We all find it out. There's a big study done recently show that it's totally not true. It was originally made for psychologists to get the truth out of their patients. They put you to a state of euphoria, and make you very sensitive to everything. It makes you want to talk. And it's called MDMA. I was like, "No, man, no, no, no. But thanks anyway." I hang up and told Matt. He was like, "You know, maybe I can handle doing some of that." Ok, so we go. We called John Jackson. We go meet him, close to here actually in the Food& Lion parking lot. And he gave us two tiny little pills. He was like, "Bring some water with ye. You know, if you don't feel it coming on, just wait. It'll come on. I did this last night. It was great, lots of fun, and blah blah blah." Drug dealer's talk, trying to make you more comfortable. Ok, got it. We get back to Matt's car and we drive back to Matt's house. And on the way back to Matt's house, we take them at the same time. We get to Matt's house. We get a big bottle of water, two bananas. His house's old. Well, it's not like it's old. It's just been exposed to the weather every day for probably ten to fifteen years. So while it seems new, it feels old. People have clearly been in there and write shit on the wall like "Kelsey is a bitch. Kelsey is a whore. I love Kelsey." You know. There's a way up to get the very top of the roof, without trying hard at all. So we climbed at the top of the roof, and we just sat there. Already it's 5:30. The sun was bright and low in the sky. We sat there for a few minutes. It hasn't come on yet. We can't feel the drug. But we are

talking. We somewhere turned around. There are three people walking up to the house. We were like, "What's up? How's it going?" They were like, "Hey. We saw you car and the house. We want to come up and see what it's like." We were like, "Yeah, yeah, sure." And they came up. This guy was like 20 years old. His name is Clay. He's wearing a Darth Maul shirt. He has a big beard and long blond hair. His sister is 19, whose name I forget. And a 13 year old friend of them, whose name was Carrie and whose was very cute. And they are like talking to us about the stuff. They make zombie movies, called "Come Bring It". They are in the middle of making zombie movie "Come Bring it2". The three of them play all the characters. They played the zombies and they played the hero who was killing the zombies. It's very funny. And Matt's very judgmental with people. He sees a 20 age year old with beard and Darth Maul shirt. He was kind like, "That guy is a loser. Fuck that guy. I hate that guy. I don't care if that guy dies." He just says stuff like that. The most important that we took away from these people when they left about 20 minutes later was that Clay on his left arm has all around four zodiac signs and a pink one. Four zodiac signs were the zodiac birth signs of his three siblings. The pink one was for his mother who had died of cancer a few months earlier. And something about that make the drug kick in. And Matt and I sort of feeling it at the same moment. It like really moved us. They left and Matt and I started talking. I've had human experiences before with people, you know, talking with girls on the phone for hours into the night, or like sat on a bench with a friend and had a serious conversation about religion, or you know, the future, or whatever. Matt and I sat on the roof, in the same place, for the next six hours and did not stop talking to one another. It was like nothing was not interesting. We were talking about how trees looked. We were talking about ourselves, our relationships. We talked a lot about hip- pop and how like we have our future in it. We talked for six hours about these stuff and by the end of it, we were, I mean, you wouldn't say we were holding one another. But we were close together. We were like holding each other's arms. You cannot really like, guy and girl. You cannot fuck with that kind of love. It was the most seriously beautiful moment I've had with any person in my entire life, was the six hours with Matt. It wasn't sexual in the least bit. We know, and that makes it Ok to do it. It wasn't even a question of that. It was us, caring about what the other was saying and about our emotional connections.

Okay, I guess...

Okay, I guess I'll tell you about when I got hurt in the military. I was in the Persian Gulf. My squad and I, we disassembled bombs, or explosive mines, anything. We were out in the fields and there were eight of us, and I was taking apart a shell that had not exploded, and another person was taking apart some grenades that had not been exploded, in the little area that we were at . . . and, out of no where, a squad of Iraqis came, and we exchanged gunfire, and actually got to where we had hand-to-hand combat.

I got stabbed in the cheek, cut in the chin, got stabbed once on my left side - stomach - and once in my left side back, and another one of the guys in my squad, who was new to the squad, didn't really need to be messing with something he was messing with, actually tripped an explosive, killing 3 of us, 3 of the guys, and throwing shrapnel to my knee.

We actually . . . survived - those of us who survived actually carried the dead bodies of the guys that we had back to the shoreline, where we were supposed to be picked up. I was carrying a gentleman on my back, even though I was wounded, and none knowing that he was dead. I thought that he was alive when I picked him up. We ended up - out of eight guys, four of us were left.

And then I spent four and a half months in a German hospital, an Air force hospital in Germany, rehabilitating my knee and going through recuperation and all those types of things. But we lost four guys. So. I still have scars - one that you can't see close to my spine. If he had gotten me about half an inch over to the right, I wouldn't be able to walk, ever. So in a lot of ways I can say that I'm lucky . . . but that's what ended my military career . . . or I would have stayed in it.

Getting Kicked Out

So ok, I called my dad on a Sunday I was at my boyfriend's house and I told him, I was calling to tell him that I wasn't coming home that night and he told me that I needed to come home right away that my parents, that they needed to talk to me and I was like "well what's wrong?" and he's like, "don't worry about it just come home." I was like "Well what happened?" and he's like, "we haven't seen you all weekend we miss you we want to talk to you," I was like, "no I know that there's something wrong you need to go ahead and tell me before I get down there," and he's like, "No just come on home and we'll see you in an hour and we'll talk about it." When I got home my dad told me to give me my, his car keys and I was like, "ok" and he's like, "and you're gonna sign your car title over to me," and I was like, "for what?" and he's like, "because I'm tired of you running around with your boyfriend all the time," he's like, "all you do is stay out all night and go to your boyfriend's house in hickory," he's like, "you don't do anything," he's like, "you have a part time job," um, "you're not in school this semester," he's like, "And you're taking advantage of everything here," he's like, "so," um, "if you wanna stay with your boyfriend, then you need to get out of my house and you need to sign your car title over to me now," and I said, "Well I'm not gonna sign my car title over to you and I'm not gonna quit seeing my boyfriend," and he's like, "well then you get your stuff and get out now." So I started walking up the road because he wouldn't give me my car keys and he came behind me in my car and asked me to get in the vehicle and I did get in the car and he took me to a store and dropped me off at a gas station and he said, "I hope you have a great life," so I went inside the store and called the police and they came and called my dad because the car's in my name and he told them that he wasn't going to bring me the car that he paid for it and he didn't care what they did to him that they weren't gonna bring them the, that he wasn't going to bring them the car and the cops proceeded to tell him that he would be charged with 2 different felonies if he didn't bring me my car so my dad brought the car to the gas station and when he came there he told me, the cops that they didn't want me in the house to get any of my clothes, that they were gonna throw them all away and that, um, the cops told him that they couldn't keep me out of my house to keep they clothes they couldn't hold my clothes captive or throw them away, that'd be destruction of prop, of private property so I had to have a police escort me to get me my clothes from my dad's house and I haven't spoken to my father in a month and a half since then. And that's it.

Help Me

I used to work at an apartment place in Salisbury and a bunch of us went out to lunch one day, actually it wasn't a bunch of us, it was me and the maintenance guy.

He took me out to lunch, we just worked together.

We went out to eat and everything and I had a really crappy day, you could tell I had been crying. So he took me out to eat to be nice. We went to, I think, the place we went to was called the Barn House in Salisbury.

We didn't really say much throughout lunch and the waitresses were kind of looking at us like, "God, that guy has been mean to that girl, looks like she's been crying," they were eyeballing us.

Well I don't know why, but when we got ready to leave I used my leftover french fries on my dish and I wrote "HELP ME" with my leftover french fries.

So we got up and he went to the bathroom and I went to the bathroom. And you know I took a few minutes and then we went, we got ready to leave.

We go outside to get into his truck and all of a sudden the cops show up and start questioning this guy and giving him the biggest hassle, and he had no idea that I had even took my french fries and wrote "HELP ME" on my dish.

Well the cops thought maybe he had abducted me and maybe I was being held against my will, because I had wrote "HELP ME" with my french fries.

Ok so this is my story: I am on the airplane, thanksgiving time, I am gonna go see my grandmamma, she's sick, uh my dad travels a lot talking to people so he has like a million mile, trillion mile, delta people, you know what I am talking about? So basically im in first class through his hookups and connections and so the stewardess comes up to me and is like wow you know youre a little young for a million mile traveler, you know me and my dad have the same name so I can get on his card and everything.

So she is like

You know you have a lot of miles for such a young person, you know you travel a lot

Im like

Yeah I travel with my dad

So shes like oh you must be in the music business

Annnnnnd im like woah what the fu-, what the heck,

Oh I can say fuck?

What the fuck?

I said no but I sell crack

I don't know she didn't like it, ahhh I don't know

She ended up laughing at the end

I laughed too

It was fun

I don't know that's my stewardess story about me and my stewardess, stewardess friend.

Dad

Alright, well this is a story about my Dad and his best friend, when they were growing up in Davidson, and I'm not sure exactly how old they were but I would say probably about eighteen or nineteen. So they had decided to take a trip down to Myrtle beach for the weekend. So they loaded up the car with two cases of beer, hopped in, and got pulled over for speeding at North Meck High School. Now, I don't know if you know where that is, but it's not too far from here. And, being that Davidson was such a small place (well I guess it's still a small place) the officer actually knew who they were, saw the beer in the back of their car, and just asked them to not drink until they got to the beach, and to slow down. So, they proceed to start drinking almost immediately after they'd been pulled over. By the time they get down to the beach the two of them had already finished off an entire case, which means neither of them is in any shape to be driving, it's only a four hour drive down to the beach, so that's 12 beers a piece in four hours, which you know, that's pretty reasonable.

So they get to their house and they get all set up and they decided they were gonna go out and have a couple more drinks and shoot some pool, and they went to some bar that was a little too crowded, had a beer or something like that, moved on to the next one, got to the next place, decided they were gonna stay there, hung out, shot some pool, proceeded to get terribly intoxicated, so as they're leaving, Wayne, my dad's friend, trips and falls and busts his chin open, so he's bleeding all over the place and so, my dad helps him up and they're getting to the car and opening the door, when a police car pulls up in the parking lot. So my dad quickly decides to come up with this story and he's like, "Wayne just tell em we got in a fight." And Wayne's like, "What?" and he said just tell him we got in a fight, and that I hit you because you didn't want to leave, but everything is cool now and we're going home. So the officer comes over, separates them, gets the stories from both of them. Wayne says my dad hit him. My dad says, yeah I hit him. They both get taken down town. Wayne is put in a cell and told that he's gonna be held over night to sleep it off. My dad is told that he's gonna be put in a cell, that he's gonna have to stay there for two days and he has to pay a like a, two hundred dollar fine or something like that. So my dad was charged with public drunkenness and assault and battery, while Wayne just got public drunkenness. My dad starts saying okay look alright this is not what happened, okay I didn't hit the guy. And he's like, well he said you hit him. He was like I know just ask him, just tell him that I said that you know let the truth out. So they go to Wayne and they're like, he's saying that he didn't hit you. And well Wayne's still drunk and he's like, I gotta stick with the story. So Wayne keeps adamantly saying that my dad hit him. So my dad spent that entire weekend down in jail while Wayne got out the next morning and continued to have fun. I guess that'll teach you not to lie to the police.

Palermo

A pizzeria in North Carolina. The pizzeria is bustling with people and workers; it is lunch time and busy. Antonio Gambino strolls from the store counter with a piece of pizza and an espresso and sits down across from a potential investor in his new restaurant. Antonio is an expressive, proud, hard-working Italian man who is new to English.

“Okay, this ... this is a story about Palermo’s Pizza. I am a pizza man, Antonio Gambino (pronounced ‘Jam-bah-no’), and came here four years ago. I already speak English and, uh, my first business is doing great, now in about a week, we are getting ready to open up another business, much bigger, better and bigger restaurant. We are doing an excellent job in making the pizza, I am a professional now. And...

“I moved to Charlotte. From Italy. Palermo’s opened one year ago.

“I was working in construction before, and have been doing very well.”

“The new restaurant. Exit 28, Cornelius. It’s gonna be called In Giardino’s, which is in former Rosetti’s restaurant.

“Palermo’s will be open. It is sold ... to somebody else. Yeah, we’re moving to Exit 28. Saturday, it opens. Palermo’s, our last day is tomorrow.

“But no, it will not be closed. He will still get the same things. He’s just a new manager.

“I am from Italy, from Sicily. From Palermo, Sicily. I wanted to get something bigger. My friend was here, my family was here, and I wanted to have the opportunity to better myself.”

I'll Have That Stirred Up

(Gives a beautiful girl at the bar a drink, a special drink, one of the most expensive spritzers in the house, on Adam our styling bar tender)

Adam: Bunch my friends an (laughs) an' I went to a party and I didn' really know many people, and I was reall...I was rea....

(Adam hears a bar request and proceeds to pour a drink)

I didn know em and I got jumped by like four of em.... they busted my lip I had a big hole in my lip stick my tongue through it an shit and uh...so I had to go to da emergency room an yea, they put sumptin on my hand, broke my hand, and my face was all naa gotta get stiches in my mouth then my brother came down there and uh so we could go fight em all I guess they left, three of them left and went to Wilmington en then one of them stayed down, beat the hell out of him (laugh)

(Another shout for a beer comes form the end of the bar, Adam responds and shows off his drink pouring ability to this beautiful lady)

Uhhh bout two nights ago we were out a school cause it was a snow day and uhm we all went over to my friend- my friends house and uhh everybody was having a good time an uh drinking a little bit maybe (laugh) and umm this one kid was kinda rowdy around the house and knocking things over so my friend punched him in the face to get him to calm down and uh (laugh) broke his nose and now his eye is completely swollen shut and uh now we just make fun of him all the time

(Things are busy tonight, Adam gets interupted with this story, again for a request for drinks and a new bowl of chips as well)

So I'm uh, ya know we're out on this island fifteen of us were at this party and uh everybody was just wasted and um anyway this ya know these two people get together and uh umm

(Adam acknowledges and delivers another beer for the obnoxious man down at the end of the bar)

and there um fooling around in the tent ya know and um we notice this shit after awhile the tent starts shakin and shakin and comes up out of the stakes and it-it partially, it doesn't collapse all the way ya know just a little bit but it keeps moving closer and we have this big bon fire it keeps moving closer and closer and closer and by the time their done like the flames are about to be lickin' at the corner of the tent

(Again Adam has to make another mixed drink for someone and as he pours this final drink he wraps up his story, or at least this part of the story)

and so anyway uhh so they finish up and uh he gets out of the tent ya know putting his pants back on she crawls out goes off and pukes

(She responds to this story with a story of her own, Adam pays attention)

Lukas

(I am sitting at the table, dragging on my cigarette. I am briefly searching for the right words to begin my story. Once I have found them I am showing a slight smile on my face.)

I guess it was [...] my friend and I were about thirteen, fourteen years old. We were in the backyard of my house, up in New York and we were playing – I don't know if you heard – longjarts.

(I primarily address the person sitting to my right, for he is the one I am dedicating the story to.) You toss like eh, ä, looks like a dart, but bigger. You throw it up in the air and you try to get it to land into a circle. The one who gets closest to the circle is who wins.

And in my backyard was a clothesline that went from the porch to a tree.

So I threw a jart (and they call it a jart instead of a dart, j-a-r-t) threw and it landed in the, in the hole. And my friend Anthony, he threw it, it wrapped around the clothesline and got slung into our pool and put a hole in the line.

So I quick jumped into the pool to see, cause my father would be pretty upset if we ruined the pool and I thought: "No couldn't have done anything, cause the water would've stopped it."

Cause it didn't have a big point on the jart, just kind of a round blank that it would go to the ground. It got slung shot into the pool and pierced at the bottom of the pool and sure enough, there was a hole in the pool and the water was leaking out.

(I look around to see, if the third guy is with me. I am requesting his support)

So needless to say my äh, my mother came out and said: "Your father is gonna kill you, your father is gonna kill you!"

"But I didn't do it, Anthony did it", so äh we said: "What are we gonna do?" So we called Anthony's father, his name was Guss: "Guss before my father gets home – my father's name was Joseph – before Joseph gets home, please", cause we were gonna have it fixed.

They brought Guss over, the father of my friend and my mom, they went down to the bottom of the pool and pulled out a repair – a patch repair- before the pool got draining with all this water and that was funny, *(I get up to support the climax of my story with the appropriate gestures. I am laughing.)* because the gentlemen, who tried to fix it he could see nothing, so my mom's holding him down with her foot, trying to keep him down so, so that ä he can keep down long enough to fix it, otherwise he kept floating to the top. *(I sit down again and carefully look at my friend's face.)*

Needless to say, they fixed the pool and the ä I got out of being grounded for any long period of time. And it turned out to be a pretty funny experience...at least for us. And that's about it. *(I have a satisfied smile on my face.)*

No Title

[Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity House at Western Carolina; a weekend party in October, in preparation for fraternity bids the following weekend. Frank Herman Akers, III, "Trey," a sophomore-transfer from a community college in South Carolina, sits in chair drinking beer out of a plastic cup. He is wearing khakis, a long-sleeved colored shirt and baseball cap on backwards. He is conversing with the Pledge Chair of the house, Bill Rutgers.]

[Trey takes a sip of his beer and sits up in his chair.]

Uh, this is the story of how I missed my grandfather's funeral.

I lived in Columbia, South Carolina. I had a roommate. And... we... happened to come home from work at 10pm at the same time, which was unusual. He worked somewhere else. And, uh, when we got home, we realized that someone had been in the house... because the back door was open. But, our pets were there, so it hadn't been very long 'cause the pets would've been gone if it had been like, a day.

So we discovered that someone had stolen my CD player... and we think that that person was, like, in the apartment when we got home. So we called the police, we panicked, and they came out and of course they couldn't do anything...

[Trey gets up and follows Bill.]

A roommate, TJ...

[Both get in line to gets drinks. Line moves slowly.]

So, it kinda freaked us out and... we went and stayed with a friend 'cause we were too chicken- they'd broken through a window and of course it wasn't fixed.

Oh, I forgot. That morning, my parents had called me to tell me my grandfather had died. So then, that night- that was a Monday- we went and stayed with a friend. And, uh, the window got fixed and then, uh- so, Friday we moved back into our own place and I was kinda- he was, had broken into *my* window so I was too chicken to stay in my room so I stayed in her room with him. And I set his alarm 'cause I was going to go to Wilmington, North Carolina, to the funeral. And, um, I... instead of settin' the alarm for 5 AM, I messed up and set his alarm for 5 PM.

So I woke up at 7 AM, knowin' that I was already late. So I'm rushin' around and I was gonna stay the weekend so the dog, my puppy I had... I started the car to warm it up, I threw 'er in, and I locked the car door. And... didn't have an extra set of keys. So then I tried to like, *[uses hand motions as if jiggling hanger in door.]* use a clothes hanger to... get- it open, which I've done a hundred times, and I couldn't do it.

So I had to call a locksmith, he took forever, he came... Seventy-five dollars later I'm on the road, I'm- flyin', I have a little Ford Festiva – which, could be called a Ford fiasco – and, you know, it- it's shimmyin' at like seventy, shakin'... and, uh, cop pulls me over. And I thought he'd pulled me over for speeding but he didn't he pulled me over 'cause I had an expired tag. ...but I did have the tag in the car so he let me go eventually... 'cause he asked me, you know, 'where you goin'?' and I said 'a funeral' and I think he felt sorry for me. So now I'm even more behind.

And I stop to get gas and the dog had been shut up in the car all- heater on, forty-five minutes waiting it out and never let it 'er go to the bathroom so I stop at a gas station and when I open the door she jumps out- she's a puppy – she runs down some side street.

[They arrive at the bar. Gestures to Bill to see if he wants drink, then holds up two fingers to order them both drinks.]

And this lil' ol' man – here's a character for you – this little ol' man , you know, this is in Florence, South Carolina – he says, *[southern draw]*, 'Honey, does she know where she's at?' And I'm like, 'no...' 'Well don't you think you ought to go get 'er?' 'yeah...' but I was pumpin' gas so he- he wasn't much help.

[Waves off Bill's gesture to pay; pulls out money and throws it on table; takes two beers.]

So I chase her down a neighborhood, grab her and get her in the car... and we head on down the interstate.

[Let's Bill pass him to sit in original chair; Trey offers beer and then sets it at the foot of Bill's chair as he sits down.]

So of course I was late, so by the time I got to the house the funeral was happenin'. So now my whole family, who was at my grandfather's funeral was wonderin' where I was because I shoulda been there- and it was like, back before cell phones, and... all that. And, uh- so I pretty much missed the 'ole, 'n' then when everybody was done they came back to the house.

So that's the, uh, missed-my-grandfather's-funeral-got-my-CD-player-stolen-...apartment story.

[Sits back in chair to complete full circle of events: sit up, get up, walk around and get in line, get beers and circle back to original spot, sit down, sit back.]

Just having a good time . . .

[Francis, 17, but young looking for his age, sits next to a table UC. Facing him is a bed. His roommate, Roger, 19, sits on the bed, facing him. Both are dressed in casual clothing. Francis's clothing is somewhat nicer, like his mom picked it out. Roger is short and somewhat chubby. Francis's hair is slightly mussed. Francis looks up, thinking, then leans forward.]

Well, one time me and . . . lets see it was Kelly and Christi and Drew and Josh and we all went to a cemetery, just for shits and giggles and we're just having a good time and just we're sitting around by this pond just chatting and stuff like that, we'd had a few drinks, nothing superb and we went up over to the mausoleum that was there and it was open and there was this really eerie blue light coming in from the inside of it and it's at like one o'clock in the morning in the middle of Charlotte in this huge long cemetery and so Christi, who's this very, very large [gestures with his hands to describe Christi's largeness]

[Roger frowns slightly. Francis does not notice]

friend of mine who can **not** move quickly is like trailing behind us as we're like speeding around and we get inside this mausoleum and [gets intensely into his story] there is this bug zapper inside the mausoleum and all these weird gnats are like hitting the bug zapper [pantomimes bugs flying and hitting a bugzapper], and that's what the blue light was. So we walked around the mausoleum for a while and the office door is wide open, like someone might be in there are something like that, so I'm like "What the hell", I'm gonna go check it out, so everyone [pause], well, not everyone, my two friends are behind me. Our other three friends are still at the pond, just hanging out there. [pause, waves hand dismissively, moves on] So, I get into the office and there's this like bright fluorescent light and I get inside and I take probably ten steps and this **huge** alarm goes off, like, massive, blaring and there's like red light coming off the building, apparently. I didn't see it, but my friends did. [pause, slightly flustered] So, the alarm is blaring and I just turn around and *bolt* [pantomimes] through this looong hallway in the mausoleum to get out, and we're sprinting, and [pause, half-smile] my fat friend Christi who can not move to save her life and she's like trailing behind us as the alarm is going off and we're like leaping over bushes to get to the car and she's like falling all over herself and [pause. Roger finds it unfunny. Francis notices], [dismissive] I mean, it was pretty funny. [pause, enthusiasm partly returns] So, we wound up getting into the car and driving, literally flying, out of the cemetery *right* as the cops arrived. We were pulling out and the cops were pulling in. Later on there was like [slight pause] five cops there. We would have gotten caught, we would have been in so much trouble.

[shakes head, looks uncomfortably at Roger, sits back in chair]

Mary

“O.K., my name is Mary Alice and I’m going to tell the story of my first day of boarding school. And I was 14 years old, and my parents dropped me off at my boarding school, which is called the Ashville School. We had stayed at a really nice hotel the night before, with, um, another family from my home town. I had been best friends with their daughter since I was really little, and we ended up going to the same boarding school when we were freshman. And, um, so we stayed at this really nice hotel and had dinner together. Um, there was music, so we danced with our dads, and it was a lot of fun.

The next morning they drove us to school, and dropped us off. And, um, we had a lot of meetings to do. And, uh, the first thing they did was try to get us away from our parents basically, so they had us do all kinds of activities. Um, the kind of get to know you activities on the front lawns of the dorms and stuff like that with a couple of upperclassmen, who were running the uh, activities.

And, um, so my parents basically dropped me off and helped me set up my room. And then, while I was out doing all these activities, they were out in this little luncheon, kind of meeting thing. And, uh, (sigh), one of the teachers, his name was Doc Smith. He taught U.S. history. He basically gave this talk about letting go, letting your children grow up and become adults. And, um, my mother cried and it was very sad. They had to take her out back. And then, um, I went back up to Alex’s room. Alex is the friend who I was in school with, and we both just started crying really hard. And it was really sad. And then (laugh) we went to lunch. And, um, we went back up to her room and hung out for awhile. Then we went back downstairs, and did more, uh, sort of get to know you activities. And we had, um, people, who um, sort of had this group of new students, and just to make sure they were doing okay. And so we met with them for awhile and um talked and hung out. And then we were just given the chance to be around for awhile. And I met some really neat people just sitting outside in front of the dining hall. And we went to the student center and played pool. And, um, then we had meetings with our advisors to get to know them.

Then, that night we had a square dance and pig pickin. And that was really interesting, because I don’t eat pig. And the smell was disgusting. And everyone gets all dressed up and you square dance. And um, it was just a lot of fun. And then you have kind of a big bon fire afterwards.

And um, and then you go back to your room. And have, we went back to our dorm, and had big dorm meetings. And, um, talked about the honor council and the honor code, and conduct code, and what they expected of us. And, um, then we had separate hall, sort of hall activities, that we would do. Um, just sort of the get to know you kind of thing again.

And then basically around 9 o’clock everything was done, and there was nothing else to do. So, um, I kind of finished unpacking my room. Sort all odds and ends out. And sort of went out in the hall and talked to people that I’d met earlier that day. And went to bed. And I don’t think I slept the first night I was away from home at all. And it was really sad, very emotional.

And, that was my first day at boarding school.”

MARGOT

(Margot Lane is a woman in her late thirties to early forties. She is dressed up because she and her husband were about to go out to dinner before she came to the bar. She looks around the bar, a bit sad looking when she notices a young man coming towards her. He joins her at the bar and she sits, drinking a margarita, talking to the young man. He is 27 years old and as she begins talking, it is obvious that she is trying to seduce him as the monologue begins. She sits with her legs crossed and makes sure that he looks at her.)

Ok, this is the story of my 20th wedding anniversary trip and when Jerry and I got married, we were both in school so we never did have time to take a real honeymoon. So we decided after we'd been married 20 years that we would go somewhere. So we spent a lot of time and found this really nice resort in the British Virgin Islands, it was called Peter Island. And it was on this island and the only thing that was there was this hotel. So it was a really nice place. So we flew from Memphis to Dallas and then from Dallas to San Juan, Puerto Rico. And then we flew on this really, really, really old plane that looked like Casablanca from San Juan to Tortolla.

We got there and to get to the island after you got to Tortolla you had to take a boat. That was maybe a 20 or 30 minute boat ride. And like I said, this was a really nice place, we had a room that was like you walked out on the balcony onto the, to the sand and the water was just...it was just a beautiful place and you had to eat all your meals there and we were going to go scuba diving and it was, it was going to be a lot of fun. Well the whole theme of this resort was hammocks.

And so like all the little logos had hammocks on them and they had hammocks all over the island. And right outside of our room, on the little grassy area before you got to the beach, they had this hammock there. And so, we were relaxing and I was sitting in the hammock, or lying down in the hammock, reading and Jerry decided to be romantic and come sit on the hammock with me. Well he, the minute he sat down he could tell that something was giving. And he was able to jump up, but I didn't, so I fell on the ground and a four by four (which is about that big) that was holding the hammock up hit me on the head! *(Margot laughs during this part of her monologue, reflecting on the situation and Jerry, it is funny and a fond memory of hers.)*

So, I'm laying on the ground and thinking "I can't believe I haven't passed out!" and then he's all panicky *(Thinking about Jerry here)* and several people that are standing around come over and they're looking at me and talking like "Oh yeah, she's gonna need stitches." It turns out, they were having a plastic surgeon's convention, so all these people that were staying on the island with us were plastic surgeons, but none of them had their little kits with 'em so they sent me into Tortolla.

So, I'm bleeding you know, and I had to get on a boat and ride about 20 minutes to get back to town. Then we went to this little clinic and it was this guy who used to practice in New York and decided he got tired of messing with insurance companies, so he moved to

Tortolla and bought this clinic and he did cosmetic surgery most of the time. So you'd go there, you'd get your face done and just recover while looked at the ocean out of his little clinic. So, it was very nice. So he stitched my head back up, and I had 20 stitches, right here on the top of my head where the four by four hit me and I couldn't wash my hair for two days, so I had to wear a hat. And um, that's about it. It was just funny because I had to spend the rest of my vacation, I couldn't go scuba diving cuz I couldn't get in the water. I had to wear this funky hat and four years later, there's this big indentation in my head and I think I really fractured the outer table of my skull without know it. So now whenever we talk about going on a honeymoon, he, you know we have to careful whether or not he hurts me or not so... (*drinks*)

7.00 PM

ERIC sits with his future employer, STEVE, at a small table in a semi-crowded bar. The two sip drinks and talk mildly. Something that STEVE says sparks ERIC's interest.

ERIC

My brother, John and I have always loved motorcycles. So we've always been in the Goldwing family. We've always – you know – that seemed like a safe, secure bike. And so - anyway - we purchased ours – lets see – back in the 90's, I think, we bought us a new goldwing. And so we're cruising around up in the mountains of one summer day a couple years ago. Anyway – we were ridin along – it was a hot day – we were goin over to North Wilkesboro – we were gonna do this little scenic route - it was called – oh great day – BRUSHY Mountain Road - brushy mountain road was absolutely beautiful – and all of the sudden I told John – I said John “I'm feelin' heat, on my feet” – and john said “oh Eric it's 90 degrees” – you know – “and we're on asphalt – you're bound to feel heat” – so I said “alright” – so I'm not one to grumble – I just put my feet up a little bit higher on the...motorcycle peg bars or whatever the things are called – and so after a while I got curious because my ankle was burning so bad – and I just turned around and I looked down....and the back wheel was on fire! And so I said “JOHN! The Back Wheel's on FIRE!!” and so he stops and we get off – and John's determined to put that fire out – the brakes evidently had got overheated or something – we had just had them realigned – just had two new tires on it and it was our first trip out – so John yanked off his shirt – and he started beatin the thing with all his might, trying to put out the fire – and so that wasn't doin it. And I watched TV and seen all these motorcycles just...blowup! So I was determined to get John away from that motorcycle because it was going to blow up. So after I kept screaming at him and running down the road – he finally followed and we stood, oh 100 yds I guess - away from the motorcycle - and we watched our goldwing just burn to a crisp. And I just stood there waiting for the explosion. And – as soon as the fire got to the gas tank!!... all we heard was a little : Poof!. The whole motorcycle – and this car came up with wonderful lady in there – and she got on the cell phone and she called the fire department. And after a while Moe, Joe and Curly came up on the fire truck and they – you know- we had probably been better off if they'd have just left the bike alone but anyways – they finally got the fire out – the motorcycle had burned – and it looked like a skeleton. The whole motorcycle – just a skeleton!

Please Believe Me

Silence. Grace stares at her grandmother sitting in a chair in the corner of the room. Grace is terrified to begin her story. Her eye twitches uncontrollably and her hands tremble. Except for the fearful shaking, she is perfectly still. She stares at her grandmother thinking about the story she will soon tell her and she thinks about the terrible feelings that she had when the event took place.

Grace: (timidly) Okay, we'll change the names to protect the innocent. Okay, ready?

Looks for conformation to begin the story from her grandmother. A spotlight shines on Grace until she begins speaking again. She stares at her grandmother, looking for a sign to begin her monologue. She begins pacing a small space and the light opens up to the entire scene.

Grace: One particular evening, after I had gotten home from work (*clear throat*), my daughter was 2 years old and (*look around the room, searching for reminders about the event*) she was sitting on my bed and I was, I took my belt off and went into my closet and I was gonna change and (*mime the action*) I left the belt up laying on the bed and (*look at grandmother, frightfully*) I heard this (*resist saying the word*) "whoosh" noise and uh (*begin laughing nervously*) I looked out to see that she was pretending that the belt was a fishing rod, she said and (*sit on couch*) she was throwing it over the end. (*Stand up hurriedly and get close to grandmother*) And you gotta picture this: (*flustered*) we have a huge four-pest poster, Italian, carved-wood bed. A foot in diameter, the carved-post each, rod-iron (*lift hands above head*) all around the top. It's huge. (*Scared of the mental image created*) Her feet are dangling 3 feet from the floor and she's (*terrified, mime the action*) "putsch", pulling it up. (*Angrily*) And I said, "Honey, what are you doing?" And she said, "I'm fishing Mom." And I said, "Are you catching anything?" And she said, (*close in on grandmother as if she is proving something*) "Nope, not yet." I went back in the closet, I was changing looking for something to where, be comfortable in. (*Matter-of-factly*) And I heard it slap down (*close toward grandmother*) a couple of more times. (*Sit on couch, pause letting moment sink in, stand up suddenly*) All of a sudden I heard her, (*in disbelief*) so excited, and (*calm down*) by the way, my husband was standing in our (*lost in her words*), in our a in the master um bathroom (*sit on couch trying to remember*) doing his stuff at this time, we were gonna go someplace I guess that evening. (*Hurriedly get off couch*) She's excited, she's yelling, "Mom! Mom! I caught a fish (*in horror at the memory*). I caught a (*struggle with the word*) fucking fish!" (*Silence, and realization at the magnitude of the event*) And that was the story. (*Pause*) So, I pop my head out of the closet, my husband pops (*move frantically back and forth*) his head out of the bathroom, (*emphatically*) we're looking at each other, speechless. And uh, my husband says to her, (*search for a name*) "Amanda, where did you hear that word?" And she said, (*horrified*) "From the peo, from the fucking people. You know, (*insanely absorbed in the story and word*) they fuck!" (*Pause*) And that was it (*look for a safe place in the room*). (*Lock onto grandmother's eyes*) She was two years old at the time (*repeat several times, horrified at the memory of this event and realizing its significance*).

One light shines on Grace as she falls into silence. She is heaving from the retelling of the traumatic event. Her eyes are locked onto her grandmother's waiting for a sign that her story proved to her grandmother the truth of her daughter. She stares until her grandmother's expression shows that she understands.

No Title n.2

Seated at a restaurant. Scott is telling Robert about his work experience at Wal-mart. The waitress has not brought their food yet, and they are killing time.

So I worked at Wal-Mart this summer and there were a bunch of characters that came in all the time. And this one woman came in one day and she looked like a pretty nice lady. But she comes up to the counter and she's like, "Y'all got any discounts" and I was like, "Ummm for what" and she's like "I don't know" and I was like "You kind of need a reason and then she's like I come up in here enough isn't that reason enough." And I was like well a lot of people come in here and she's like, "Hmmm....don't y'all have a discount" and I was like I have like a ten percent discount, it's not that big." And she's like how about you give me your discount and I was like it's for me. And she's like "hmmm..uumm" and so she's sitting there she got all mad so then she went back and got her stuff. And I was ringing her up. And I'm like thirteen sixty-eight or however much it was and she's like hold on for a second sticks her hand all up in her bra and is all over the place, pulls out her money and she giving me her money and I had to sort it out and I was like, "oh God," and so I put it in the cash register and give her change, she leaves.

Robert gets distracted. Scott looks to see what it is, then looks at Robert to get his attention.

She comes in another time, "Y'all got any discounts" and I was like "no...no we don't." And she's like "Do y'all have some university remotes", And I was like "you mean universal remotes?" And she says, "I know what I'm talking about I don't know what you're talking about." I was like "ummm...yeah we have some of those," and I said "right back here" and I showed her where they were. So she comes back later, she's paying for universal remote and she has a phone and it's like "brrr...brrrr" she flips it open and she's like "Hello, hello...yeah I'm in the back of the store. Don't yell at me...I'm going to be up there in a second. Don't yell at me, Don't yell at me I'm getting what you want me to get..." We're sitting there and its her husband on the phone, and she says "My husband says that this is the wrong"...I said "you saw all of them and you got your pick of which one you want" and she says my husband says the university remote is supposed to be inside the T.V." I was like Ahhhhh...Ahhhh... I don't think we have any of those and she says " you saying my husband is stupid"...Naw Naw Naw...I 'm sure your husband is a really nice man a real nice man, but I never heard of any universe...university remotes inside of the T.V. and she's like "Ummmm...hmmm... whatever." How about you ask them and I was like all my co workers "Do we have universal (university) university remotes inside of a T.V." and they're all looking at me like what...and "We're like no I'm sorry we don't have none of those"...and she was like "whatever, I gonna take this one" and she took off and left.

No Title n.3

(Frank is in his coach's office, which is in Rome, Italy. He is talking to his coach about why he can't play soccer today. Frank had his toenail ripped off of his toe and it had to be stitched back on. Frank is very upset because if his coach thinks he is going to be hurt for a long time, then he will be fired.)

So I was sitting around, watching TV and all of a sudden the phone rang so I jumped up to get it because it was late at night and I didn't want to wake everyone up in the house. Jumped up to get it and I whacked my foot really hard on the coffee table, and fall down to the ground. It hurt so bad. I don't know if it is bleeding. All I know is that it hurts. My mom came out and of course scolded me for not answering the phone and then asked me what the hell I was upset about on the floor until she looked at my foot and you know wanted me to go into the bathroom where I did. And she didn't tell me what was going on exactly but just that I needed to, in her words, to shut up and stop crying. And, um, yeah it turns out there's a whole lot of blood and my entire toe nail on my little middle toe fell off. So my mom was concerned about all of the blood because it just kept bleeding and bleeding and it hurt so bad that she took me to the ER, where they injected my toe with several shots of novacane before the physician's assistant actually put my toe nail back in with about six stitches. And, um, yeah it was pretty painful.

A Flash at the Inn

We had a guest that stayed here that, that turned out to be the only flasher we've ever had at the Village Inn. The way it started is we had some customer walk in the door without a reservation. And this gentleman walked into the front desk and asked if we had rooms available and appeared fairly normal. So we said well yes we do have rooms available and these are the prices and all this kind of stuff and went over the normal routine. And he said well I'd like to take a room and he gave us his American-Express card which always good to know that you have somebody who can pay for their room. And so we started the process of getting his registration ready and...we don't discriminate much here. [*Junior starts to walk around the desk but stops halfway to show some leg*] But I was told that he started to walk around the lobby while we were getting his registration papers ready and he walked over to the bookshelves and he started talking to himself and that was when they said they first got some indications that maybe he was not our normal customer. So we checked him into his room, and went about our business. Well then, later that night, about 2 o'clock in the morning, we got a call from the Davidson Police. They had found a person walking along Main Street in a raging thunderstorm with only his pants on. And he said he was a guest at the Village Inn so they were calling us up, the innkeepers, to tell us that he had lost his key and he was locked out. So my wife had to get out of bed, come down to the inn. We knew who it was. We didn't know what he was doing walking around at 2 o'clock in the morning with only his britches on. The police offer that picked him up was an officer that we know here in town and I think he was just trying to do a good deed. And I don't think the guy was inebriated or anything. So we got him back in his room. Went back to bed and said gee let's hope that's all we hear about him. [*Junior walks all the way around the desk and puts himself in what he believes to be a sensual position. It isn't very effective though.*] But in the morning when I came to work and one of my housekeepers came in soon after, said she wanted to know what all the stuff was out in the road. And I said what do you mean all of this stuff? She said well when she was coming to work a bunch of our stuff was out in the middle of the road. Towels, Kleenexes, so he had apparently opened up the window, taken off the screen, and was throwing things out of the window into the street. So we went out and retrieved all of the stuff out in the street and I said I got to do something about this guy so I call down to the police department to see if there was somebody down there that I could talk to find out what it is that we could do. But nobody answered the phone so I decided to just walk down to see if I could just talk to somebody and when I got down there I was talking with one of the town employees and I was explaining to her all these wonderful things that we were having to deal with. And she said Oh, maybe that's the person I saw standing in the window on my way to work this morning. There was a flasher on my way to work. She was coming down Jackson Street and she said that this man was standing in the window naked. And I said Oh that's wonderful. This must be our one gentleman. And we had seen, we had seen him in the morning. I decided that I needed grab this guy and talk with him. And so finally, strangely enough he had clothes on when I grabbed him and said look, I'm the innkeeper here and I know what happened last night, and you know I really think that it might be better if we find you another place to stay because I don't really think that this is the most appropriate place for you to be staying and I hope you understand. And he seemed to take it very well and seemed rational and he said,

that's fine, I'll get my stuff together and come and check out. And I said well I know I appreciate your understanding and basically he did. He went up, he got whatever his stuff was together, and gave us his key and checked out. We ran his American-Express card and it went through just fine. [*Juniors face lights up indicating some hidden message*] And that was the end of our crazy flasher story.

No Title n.4

We had run out of money. I had traveler's checks, but it was a bank holiday when we were in Tamanrasset, and I talked to the truck driver and I said, uh, listen, we, you know, we haven't got any money here, but when we get to I-n-Salah, the, the bank will be open and I'll cash a traveler's check, and I'll, and I'll pay you. And he said, "Sure, Fine." At least I thought he said, "Sure, fine." Uh, it was illegal for trucks in Algeria to, to carry passengers, so he told us that we would have to meet him outside of town at night, uh, to get on the truck. So sure enough, we hiked a little ways out of town and we waited, and the truck came by and stopped, and we, and we hopped on. So everything was fine, and then, then they stopped for tea at...I don't know what time it was. It was long past dark. And he came around to the back, and he said, uh, he said, "I want my money." He said, "You've got to pay me now," and I said, "I can't pay you." I said, "We've already talked about this and I'm going to pay you tomorrow morning when we get to I-n-Salah. And he said, "No," uh, "I want my money now," and I started to get a little bit worried. Uh, and but he got back in the truck after they had their tea, and we drove on for another couple of hours, and then they, um, stopped for tea again, built a little fire uh out in the desert, and, um, he came to the back of the truck, and he said, uh, he said, "You've got to pay me or you've got to get off." Of course I had no idea where we were or, any, anything, um, and so I told my friend, I said, "You stay here in the truck." And I went with this guy over beside the fire, and there were three or four or five, you know, Arabic guys sitting around the fire, um, and he says, "I gotta have my money," and I said, "Hey, I, you know," I sort of appealed to the group. I said, "I told this guy I was going to pay him in I-n-Salah, and I've got the money," and I had the traveler's checks there to prove it, but they all seemed pretty amused at my plight. Um, and so I went back to the truck and I grabbed my camera, which I had, and I said, "Here. I said, you know, why don't you take the camera and then just keep it as security, and, um, and then we'll cash the traveler's check tomorrow, and he, uh, looked at the camera, and he said, "No," you know, "that's not enough. That's not enough." So I went back to the truck, and I asked my friend, I said, "What do you got that's valuable?" And I came back with her boots. And I was going to give her boots along with the camera. And the guy said, you know, "No," 'cause he wanted, he wanted cash. He wanted money. That was really what he wanted. And so I got, I started to get really desperate. I mean, I was, I was starting to quake in my boots because, see, this guy was obviously going to drop us off in the middle of the desert in the middle of the night and drive off without us. And, um, so things had reached pretty much a crisis point, and all of a sudden in the middle of nowhere, these two white faces walked up into the firelight, and these guys say, "Hey! How ya doin'? What's going on?" And I said, "Halleluiah buddy." I said, "Will you cash a traveler's check?" And the guy said, "Sure, I'll be glad to." And so they were these two guys from Holland, and they were driving across the desert in the other direction, and they just happened upon us at right that moment on a trail where there are not...there, there couldn't have been a dozen trucks a day to go through the desert, and the guy cashed my traveler's check. I paid cash, uh, to the driver, and, um, then he was as happy as a clam...brought us back onto the truck and, uh, and we got onto I-n-Salah, where, um, where we caught a bus. And, and so it was just this vision coming up out of nowhere that, uh, saved us on that night in the middle of, uh, Southern Algeria.

No Title n.5

Last spring I went to a uh party at one of friends apartments house, they had this big party bus and everything so we drove over there. We 're at the party going out had a couple of drinks talk to some girls different things you know it was kinda of a normal party. it wasn't really that big of a deal, but it got real real real late, so we decided to leave. bus takes us home driving on the bus and people are going crazy a couple of people snuck some alcoholic refreshments on the bus people are drinking and I'm kinda of sitting there looking to see where my house is the street across of my house I tell the bus driver to pull over get over get off the bus and cross in front of the bus and WHAM!

I got my legs taken out from me from a car going 35 miles per hour supposedly you know the guy was drunk, drunk driver. I flipped onto the hood uh my back smashed into the hood; my elbow went through the windshield. I went over on top of the car and uh was laying on the street, and these three high school kids I guess who were out at like two three o'clock in the morning called an ambulance on their cell phone and uh picked me up. After that you know I went to the hospital or whatever, and I guess the guy the guy stopped and stopped at the hospital five six seven miles down the road and tried to tell them that there was a dead kid lying on the road or dead guy so they saw his car damaged. And everything but know you, I was in the hospital and uh I got a bunch of tests and you know I was fine. I was in there a couple of hours you know it was real strange. A friend picked me up and they're trying to tell me to stay over night and I just you know decided it was time to leave I got up with my ass hanging out of the hospital gown. And walked out grabbing onto the walls of the intensive care unit and walked out and was in and out in three hours.

The Daze of Hazing

I was in ninth grade in high school and playing J.V. football. And as it turns out I was also involved in the student council. (*Switch crossing of legs*) And one of my functions at, at lunchtime was to sell ice cream sandwiches. So one of the upperclassmen came down, he said, "Give me that ice cream sandwich." I said, "Give me a dime." And he said, (*Push away with hand, affirming position*) "Nah. Just give me the ice cream sandwich." I said, "No! I, I'm not going to do it. You got to pay a dime, I'll give the ice..." He said, (*pointing at the coaches, threatening*) "You'll find out at practice O'Donnell!"

So I get to practice and, ah, the coaches came around, and these are the days of hazing and so forth which was not frowned on as it is today. (*Explain with hand motions*) And, ah, the coaches warned us all during scrimmaging that no underclassmen are allowed in the Varsity locker room. Well, I should've sensed something was coming there, but anyway a friend of mine who was a (*use hands to show size*) big, big guy came across from the varsity ah locker room and said, "Billy wants to see you." Well, (*Signal to a previous time with hand gestures*) that was the guy that was getting the ten cent ice cream sandwich without the ice cream. So I had to go in there with just a towel on. And he pulled (*yank back with hand and arm*) the towel off and started whacking (*hit air with the imaginary paddle*) me with a paddle. In the meantime somebody yelled, "Here comes Brochius!" who was the J.V. coach who was about five-four and he, he always talked like this. And he said all American kids want today is motor cars and big cigars. You know, that was the type of guy. And, he, he came in and I didn't know where to go 'cause I wasn't supposed to be over, so I got into a metal locker and the hooks hit the back of my head, so I couldn't, you know, (*get up and stand sideways, cramped in a small space*) I was like this. (*Sit down, adjust seat*) And he spotted me, the coach did. And he came up and started slamming (*slam an imaginary locker door repeatedly*) the door into me. Now I'm getting it, not only does my backside welted (*point to back*), but my back of my head is getting in it (*hold back of head*). Now I am really upset.

Well I couldn't go home and tell your dad, yeah, you know. He'd say, "Well, what's wrong with you? Go down there and fist it out!" You know. So the whole time the practice and the whole next morning, I said, ahem, (*point in a stern manner*) "I'm gonna, you know, I'm gonna report this. I'm gonna, you know, Coach Brochius, I'm going to have it out with him." You know. And before first class, there was a bridge connecting two buildings in our high school. I was coming across the bridge one way (*motion with hand away from body*), he was coming across the bridge (*motion towards body with other hand*) the other way, Coach Brochius. And I looked at him and he looked at me, he goes, "Good morning Jeffery." (*tense up*) And I said, "Good morning coach." And that was the end of it. (*swipe hands through the air, as if signaling a base runner is safe*)

No Title n. 5

An Italian restaurant on a Saturday evening in April. A young man and woman are sitting at a table for two with a bottle of wine on the table. The restaurant is crowded and bustling. They are both dressed nicely and the man is being very attentive to the woman, listening closely as she is telling him a story. He anxiously awaits his turn to speak and when he senses that the time is right, launches into his story.

Well, ah, I guess I can tell you about my tennis career. *(Pour wine into both glasses)* I, uh, when I was about twelve years old, I took tennis lessons with a couple of my buddies, but my two friends, they were pretty good. And, um, we had, it was like one instructor and then like four students on each court, and there was a range of courts one through five, five was the best.

And, like, I had never played tennis before but because I was like older and a little bit stronger than a lot of the little kids, they put me on court three, or no court two rather, and uh there was all these little puny kids, they were like nine and I was twelve and everyone sucked but I was a lot bigger than them, ya know.

So we used to play this game where the instructor would lob up the ball and I'd overhead slam it and then you'd volley or whatever and so we start playing a game and across from me is just this, like, the most petite nine year-old little skinny girl in the w... you've ever seen, and so the volley goes up and I just I slam it right, and this is like, granted this is the first day, and I slam it and it hits her right in the face.

Blood goes everywhere, she starts crying, everyone's like flipping out and my instructor gets all pissed off at me, he's like ya know he's like "clam down blah blah"

So we have to take a fifteen minute break, go off on the side, comfort her, whatever, get her a soda, blah blah blah, apologize, you know I mean I didn't mean it I don't know what the fuck I'm doing I'm just hitting a ball – so then they're like alright let's go back let's play again.

So the very next play, my instructor hits the ball up again, ya know, it comes to me I slam it – I'm just hitting it as hard as I can I don't know what's going on – I hit her in the exact same spot, I just nail this chick, s'blood everywhere, I just reopen the wound.

My instructor just looks at me and he tells me he's like "kid, get the hell outta here", and that was it and I just left and that was my, that's my tennis career right there, one day.

(Raise wine glass for a toast)

No Title n. 6

A high school classroom where Jason Spencer is teaching Spanish on his first day. He is nervous, and wants to tell his story to the class in order to impress them. He does not want them to know that he is nervous.

(Standing behind a table in the front of a classroom, Jason is dressed in a coat and tie. There is a Spanish book, a small, leather book satchel, and a notebook on the table in front of him.)

Ah, well, I am from Iowa and went to school at the University of Wisconsin and I did my practice teaching in Spanish in Milwaukee and I was staying at a friend's house kind of house sitting while her parents were gone and we had a March blizzard. And I gaily go up to school because I'm used to all that kind of thing only I don't quite get there I get stuck in a drift in my Volkswagen. And I'm sitting there for about forty-five minutes. Finally a plow came by and I was able to rock myself out of the drift. So I go on to school, almost. I get almost to school but there's a real steep hill and my car wouldn't go up that hill. I didn't know what I was going to do. Well, coming the other way was a garbage truck and the men in the garbage truck got out and literally lifted up my Volkswagen, turned it around, and I went back down to the main road to a gas station where they put on chains and I called the school and the janitor came and got me in a jeep and took me to the school where we spent the rest of the day trying to get kids home in the blizzard. I couldn't get my car 'til the next day, I had to ride home with someone. But I could, I have always remembered those men picking up that car and turning it around for me so I could get somewhere.

(Jason unbuttons his jacket and is visibly relieved).

No Title n. 7

I just walked off the training field into the locker room. I sit across from one of the kids on the team.

Five years ago I was working at Mikie Kydie soccer camp back in West Port Connecticut. My head coach had invited me to work with 3 or 4 year olds and teach them to play soccer. It was a Friday, and on Fridays we usually have a big ceremony because those are the last days of camp and there were a lot of parents present. I was coaching some of the kids as their parents watched. I was the centre of attention and it was not easy. I mean 3 or 4 year olds are hard to deal with, but I gave it my best shot.

I start to take off my cleats and shin-guards and get dressed into normal clothes. There was one particular Friday that was just horrendous because the kids were not paying attention, they did not know what they were doing, they were seriously the size of the soccer ball and it was weird. So I was here teaching these kids how to play the game and they were fooling around. I did not want to yell at them because their parents were all over and they would complain to my coach about how bad of a coach I am, so I took charge of the situation.

I huddled them up and in a very serious voice I told them, “ok” you cannot be messing around or anything and I accidentally upset one of the kids and he began to cry, oh I thought I had upset him but it was not because of that, it was because he wanted to go to the bathroom, but at the time I did not know this. So I went to him and started saying “I am sorry I did not mean to yell at you guys, but you guys were just fooling around and he just kept crying and I felt really bad because the parents were all over the place, and there I was in the middle of the field with sixteen 3 or 4 year olds and one kid just crying, the kid for some reason lifted his hands, and I was like “ok” I guess he wants me to pick him up or something.

I shift a bit in my seat as I recall the incident and laugh quietly to myself.

As I picked him up I felt a warm substance sprinkling all over my uniform, little did I know that it was urine. The kid actually had to go to the bathroom, and he was scared to ask me because I was being very serious at the time and I guess it scared him so he peed on me as a result and everyone started laughing. It was indeed the funniest day of my life and I will never forget it.

Miss Lula

(Pour coffee mug of water into pan of grits, stir, glance to right at Mary, stir, glance at Mary, adjust heat on stove from Medium to Low. Stir and taste grits. Turn and look at Mary.)

OK, I've found a lotta money in the students clothes. I've found as high as a hundred and sixty dollars at one time, and I've found 15 dollars, 25 dollars, 50 dollars, But I'm always honest with what I've found. *(Add more water, stir grits)* And we had to call the boy two or three times to come get his 160 dollars, but he finally came, and he just got his money and I don't know if he thanked me or not he could have, but he didn't act like nothing had happened. But the same day, the one I had found the 15 dollars in, he came and got his money, and he was so happy over it to, he hugged me, almost picked me up off the floor. And he wanted to give me five dollars of it, but I didn't want it. He said "I want you to have it" I said "I don't want it, it's your money, I got it out of your pocket. And but he really thanked me for it, and therefore the one had the less money was more proud of it than the one had the lotta money. *(Stir grits)* I was glad to give it to him. I've found telephones, tape recorders, different stuff in their clothes, you'd be surprised what they really leave in their clothes, but I always try to return whatever I found to 'em. So that's that. *(stir and taste grits. Smile. Turn stove to Warm and move pan to side.)*

No Title n. 8

It is 1 AM, Monday late night/Tuesday early morning, April 5/6, 2004 in a small dim-lit pub called the Lizard in Charlotte NC. Vicki Howard, a twenty-three year old young mother with an extremely gregarious, flirty, and talkative personality is closing up the bar. It's close to closing time and there's still one of the regulars left, who happens to be Vicki's boss at one of the restaurants she works at. When the scene starts there had just been a pause in the conversation and was wiping off the counter, and Vicki's boss asked her if she was married and when she answered with no, but I'm getting married, he asked her if I had an engagement story and thus begins her story...

No, it was really sweet though. He went and picked up my son from school and I was all pissed off and like cussed him out from head to toe because he picked my son up at one o'clock vs. six o'clock in the evening which I was like I wanted that rest time you know? Cause I didn't have to work. I did not want the kid there. I wanted to be at home by myself, so I was like raising cane that he picked Jeremiah up so early and he's like wait a second we need to talk and I'm thinking, what do we need to talk about you know? And he looked at Jeremiah and he said "Jeremiah, can I be your daddy?" and he goes "But you are my daddy Ben" and he was like "No, forever and ever and ever," and Jeremiah said, "Yeah," and then Ben looked at me and he got on his knee and he said "Will you marry me" and that was it and I was like "Yeah, I'm so sorry for being so mean just now. I take it back!" And then we weren't going to tell anybody in his family because his mom helps me pay my mortgage right now. She gives me like three hundred dollars a month, so anyways, we didn't want to tell her yet because the ring costed money so like if she's giving us money why should he go and buy a ring for me, you know-that's the way we looked at it. But Christmas day, we went and met his mom at his aunts house and there were like thirty people there I've never met in my whole life ok-Never Ever met. So Jeremiah walks in, looks at Ben's mom, whose name is Brenda and then screams out in front of everyone, "Miss Brenda! My Momma's getting married!" and everybody looks at me and I mean I started crying-I didn't know what to do-my face was blood red and like tears started pouring down and everybody's looking at me and Brenda looks at us and goes "What!?" And then, Jeremiah grabs my hand and goes "My momma's getting married to him!" and everyone in the room was like "Ok, that's the first time they ever met me and we're getting married. So they're all looking at my hand and they were like "Is this true" and I was like "Well, kinda." I mean, I wish we had a camera on when he did that. I mean he screamed it out-he was like "My momma's getting MARRIED" and we were all like (drop jaw). Ben was just like "What do I do now?!" But yeah, that was crazy.

Something Wonderful

(A trendy, new restaurant. The hustle-bustle sounds of waiters and restaurant goers can be heard. RENEE LOWELL, age 35, sits at a table at center. Across from her sits her date, JACK SOUTHERLAND, age 40. The table is dressed with two water glasses, though their food has yet to arrive. RENEE speaks calmly, but with an air of importance.)

Renee Lowell: This is something wonderful that happened in my life. It's about when I was in high school and I got pregnant and adopted my daughter out. And I found her when she was in the 7th grade. And of course I waited...because of her being so young and everything. And then, when she was 19-years-old, through a lot of prayer, I wrote a letter to her mother and her dad and told them who I was and how long that I had waited to you know...meet Kelly and everything...her name's Kelly. And, um, I was real worried about how this would affect her parents and everything. But three days later I received a letter from her mother and her dad saying that she had been searching for me, too. And, uh, we met for the first time...it was on Mother's Day weekend...and she has been part of my life ever since, and it's been going on for about a year now. So...it was wonderful. So, there ya go.

No Title n. 9

(Pat's Coffee Shop on Main Street in Mooresville, North Carolina. Pat's is a shop with veteran's memorabilia, Branson is talking to a reporter, a woman in her early 20s. She's writing an article on veterans. Branson thinks she's beautiful, and doesn't know she's just being friendly because it's her job. She reminds him of the last girlfriend of his pre-Vietnam innocence.) Jeez, this goes back for me. *(Scoots his chair away from the coffee bar he sits at and towards the woman to his left. He leans forward)* I left high school the end of my junior year because of a fact I couldn't run sports in high school my senior year because I was smart enough in eighth grade I had to go through it twice. *(Silly smile, embarrassed light chuckle)* Joined the air force, myself and five other Texans uh, uh was put together with fifty five guys from New York, I don't know why.

But anyways. one of them was named Mariano, Bob Mariano. We, uh, got t-to, uh, basic and went there to Tech's school in Lacklin Air force base. And about a week into Tech school there at the police academy he, uh, was reading the paper one night and it said that President Kennedy was coming down, making a swing through the South. *(He gestures downward, with a swing of his right hand)* And uh, he thought maybe we ought to write him a letter to see if he would come to our graduation which was due, which was due, *(looks upwards, trying to remember)* uh November the *(adds emphasis here)* 20th 1963.

Well he sat and we drafted up a letter, sent it off and he signed it, had we conned a company clerk with a couple carton of cigarettes to type it up for us. *(Conspiratorial smile, ain't we cool?)* We forgot all about it and about ten days before we graduated, pause, he got a letter in the mail from 1900 penn ave, um, with the presidential seal. *(Shifts forward in his seat, here comes the good part)* So theres a bunch of us gathered around and he took the letter out of the envelop and read it and it was *(eyebrows up!)* handwritten from *(slow, emphatic, pronunciation of the name)* John F. Kennedy, saying that he very much wanted to attend our graduation, he appreciated us writing the letter, but his advisors had advised him that it was unsafe for him at that time to come to San Antone. So we took it in stride. *(leans back in seat)* Well we graduate on Nov. 20th and I only lived about 70 miles from San Antone at the time in a little town called Gonzalez. And so I was home that night after graduation. Well two days later uh, my brother and I were around the corner at a pool hall playing pool and the TV was on and needless to say, Kennedy got shot that day. *(right hand supplicates fate whimsically)*

(wistful) I often wondered whatever happened to Mariano 'cause Vietnam come along and we lost track and it was 120 of us in that flight *(realizing they're dead, head sinks a little)*, we kinda lost track, but I'd often wondered what happened to him, *(elbows on knees)* ah, being the fact that Kennedy was his idol, at the time, and most of ours. I wonder what happened to him and what happened to that letter.

I guess I'll get smart enough one of these days to track him down, see if he's still got it. *(self-deprecating smile, offers a cigarette, sees that she declines, remembers Bob Mariano).*

Narrow Escapes

A hot, sunny summer afternoon in Macon, Georgia. Billy sharpens a stick for a fence post. He stands in the shade of a large oak near the road. As he sharpens the stick a young boy walks up the dirt road towards him. Billy starts conversation.

BILLY: This is a story about a little boy. Who...um... who is very...um...he is like a run and gun type of guy all the time. *(Overly excited.)* And he..um...is always doing crazy things that we didn't expect him to. This is one of my sons. And...um...a couple things he did. Like one time we were at the beach and...um...we had a balcony over the pool on the ocean front and we were...kind of standing up on the balcony looking at the ocean. And then I came back in to get a comb so I could comb my hair. And he was about three at the time. And when I was in the bathroom, I heard him say "I think I can climb down from here." *(Disapproving laughter.)* And I knew he was going to go. *(Speeds up.)* So I went runnin' to the balcony, and when I got there he was already over the side of the balcony, and he had his little hands just hanging on to the ledge and he was working his feet down the...side of it. And I just...I walked up real slowly and just like *(Speeds up again.)* grabbed his hands so you know I wouldn't...um...so he wouldn't fall or anything. And...um...and then later on that week, so you know I lectured him about it you know, and he was like "I was going to be ok, I could do it, I could climb down." *(Rolls his eyes.)* You know he was telling me all this stuff. *(Pause.)* And then...um... later on that week, I was on that balcony and I thought the kids, my (husband) was putting them to sleep. And...um...I was looking at the pool kind of beside our balcony and this guy was like waving his arms like he was signaling "No, no, no" So I am wondering who is he talking to, I thought it was his wife upstairs or something. And all of a sudden a screen falls down on the on the deck. You know kind of beside him. And I kind of look, the screen fell, and then it suddenly dawned on me *(Very dramatic.)* And I run back into the house and here is my little son, pushed the screen out of the window (laughs), working on getting out of the window and going down. And I was like "This kid is crazy." *(Pause and looks back at young boy.)* And another time...um...he was...um...this was this was even younger, he couldn't even talk yet. My husband was up on the roof fixing something. And he saw the ladder and climbs all the way up to the, you know, to the, to the gutter. And he was all the way up to the gutter when I heard my husband say "Catherine come out here!" *(Shrill and worried.)* You know I came running out. And there he was all the way up there. And I had to go up real slow so I wouldn't startle him you know, and get a hold of him and get him down. But he's always climbing up things and you know one time he he...um...lit a match under a house, he...um...found a gas tank and he was going to see if he could just light a little bit of gas *(Shakes his head and laughs.)* And uh...he couldn't get the match to light. And we decided an angel was blowing that match out because we don't know how he lived through that one. He's just um... He's a lot smarter now, he's sixteen now. But he would he would always do crazy things like that. *(Plants the stick in the ground, nods to the boy and walks away.)*