

Brandon Gets His Big Break

Chapter Seven

By

John Eisenhauer

It was mid-October of 2008. It was the third month of Amy's seventh grade term which lasted four months.

It was a full month since their first full physical encounter, Amy and Linda were girlfriends and undeniably in love. It was 2008. They still understood the need for discretion.

Amy was really beginning to chafe at a life of restrictions. A month ago, she renounced the God of her mother and Her Pastor...her Shepherd. She now hated it. It was nothing but stupid nonsense that was used to control and torment her. She...like countless other kids her age...was rebellious. Her rebellion did not go the typical route. No drugs or alcohol. No churlishness aimed at mom. Her rebellion took two forms. She was very sexually active with Linda: she doubled down on her studies.

But, unlike most, she had a very clear understanding of what she was rebelling against. Most rebellious young teens were simply feeling the psychological tug-of-war between a structured youth and the realization of limitless possibilities (or, at least, the perception of it). This tension was exasperated by the sudden surge of hormones and desire.

If she had not embraced a passionate belief for an undefinable God – unknowable save for two qualities, loving and nonjudgmental – she would have been a hardcore atheist, a bitter one. While a lifetime of religious indoctrination left her enraged, it did leave her with one conviction: there was Love in the Universe. That Love was God.

It had nothing to do with the repressive and nonsensical scripture that was still being crammed down her throat. And she did take great pleasure in finding the absurdities and contradictions in them (easy to do). While rejection of parental faith is usually characterized by flamboyant apostate posturing, she continued on with Bible study and socializing with idiot kids at the Church. This made Doris happy. Yet – at the same time – Doris was picking up the undercurrent of derisive contempt. Never spoken, because Amy was not stupid, but felt. It troubled Doris. She started to become concerned.

Soon, very soon, Doris would be supplied with reasons to believe that her Amy was pulling away from Jesus: the haircut, the boyish clothing, and the poster.

Linda's mom was a Unitarian minister.

One afternoon, after making love, they were snuggling. Amy said:

“What do Unitarians think about God?”

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“Um...really?”

Amy turned to her side. She sucked on Linda’s earlobe and blew in her ear. She continued in a seductive tone:

“Oh, yeah. Baby...tell me about God.”

Linda broke into laughter.

“Wow...okay. Sure...okay...why not. Well, Unitarians don’t have a single belief in God. There are atheists and agnostics. Some believe in a higher power...like AA but without the nasty addiction.”

“If you guys don’t believe in the same God then why are you a church?”

“We’re really into social justice and environmentalism.”

“What do you believe?”

“The higher power thing.”

“So...the Unitarians don’t have a single God?”

“Well...we emphasize the use of reason and personal experience in the search for personal truth. A person’s opinion about...um...a deity is personal. We talk about it, after a service at the little brunch thing. Some of the church members hold these spiritual club activities. The church lets them use a room. This one guy does a Buddhist thing. These two women do Pagan workshops.”

“Pagan?”, Amy said as she sat bolt upright, the sheet slipping down to her lap. A short time ago, the mention of Paganism would have triggered a violent and fearful response. Now, the response was enthusiastic curiosity.

“Yeah.”

“These two women...are they like us...um...are they...um...”

“In a relationship...a gay relationship? Yeah.”

“Your church is cool with that?”

“Yeah, totally. In 1989, UUA – the central organizing body – wrote this policy called the ‘[Welcoming Congregation Program](#)’ to encourage gays to join.”

“What the fuck!”, Amy exclaimed loudly. She reflexively looked towards the door. She remembered that Linda’s parents were out of the house. She looked down at Linda and spoke in a conversational tone. “Your church welcomes gays?”

“Um...I never heard you use the ‘F-Word’ before.”

“Well...yeah. I never heard anything this fucking nuts before...oh great, now I’m swearing like a sailor...your church welcomes gays...a literal policy?”

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“Yeah...”

“This policy is written down. As in...they actually wrote this down?”

“Yes...sweetie.”

“The church where your mom is the minister?”

“Yeah...actually, it’s the international policy of the Unitarian Universalist Association. The Unitarian Church is part of that.”

Amy slapped Linda on the shoulder. She continued:

“I’m sorry...aren’t I your girlfriend? I mean...hello...we’re lying together naked. We just did some stuff that I used to believe that I’d go to hell for. And...come to think of it...we’ve been deviant a lot together. So...yeah...aren’t I your girl?”

“Of course, sweetie. And I’m your girl.”

“You knew the stuff that I’ve been going I’ve through. Oh...you know...breaking with my life-long beliefs...really anguishing over it. At no point, do you mention this? Really. What the...oh great, I almost said the ‘F-Word’ again...”

“Well...”, Linda sat up and made eye contact with Amy. “I almost did. I swear. I went to mom and dad for advice. But...we don’t preach...um...proselytize. They told me to let you come to me if you wanted.”

After leaving the faith of her mom and her Pastor...her Shephard, Amy thought a lot about various aspects of her childhood. An ongoing activity of her Church was proselytizing. From a very young age, she – along with the other *Stepford Wives* kids and some adults – would canvass a neighborhood or set up shop on some street corner and harass strangers. At the time, she did not think of it as ‘harassment’ but ‘spreading the word’. As she started to develop her own ideas about things, she felt shame over trying to control others.

“Okay...I respect that. But you should have talked to me about it. I mean...I’m your girlfriend. You knew that I might have been into this. Really...you guys have an anti-proselytizing policy?”

“Well, not quite. But the Unitarians feel that we should respect a person’s right to form her own opinions. There’s this thing...um...[*Principles and Purposes Statement*](#)...yeah, that’s it. And, like, it says that we should respect that a person has the right to ‘the free and responsible search for truth and meaning’.”

As Linda said the last phrase, she encased it in air quotes. She continued:

“Anyway...if a person comes across us and likes our stuff, she’s free to join us. But we never force it...um...coerce her. That’s a big deal with us so I went to mom and dad for advice. They told me to answer any questions but not force anything on you.”

When Amy was a kid and went out spreading the word, it would be explained to her that was her obligation. She was often reminded of *Philippians 2:9-11*:

Therefore, God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name, which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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Amy thought:

First, they force me up against the wall with their BS lies. Now...they want to force me to my knees.

“Okay...that’s really cool. Righteous.”, Amy said. Something occurred to her, and she said with panic:
“Wait...wait...wait...you told your parents that we’re...um, like...involved? You told them that I’m gay?”

“No...no. I’d never out you...sweetie.”, Linda said as she gave Amy an encouraging arm rub. “I just explained everything that you’re going through, you know, quitting your beliefs. I mean...they just think that we’re friends. I told them that we were ‘best friends’ and never said ‘girlfriends’. Like I said...they told me to answer any questions that you might have. Oh...they really like you.”

Amy met her parents – Jen and Ron – several times. When she dropped by the house, she’d make some small talk before heading to Linda’s room.

“Do they think I’m gay?”

“No.”

“Do they know that you are?”

“No...I don’t want to tell them...not yet.”

Amy plopped her head back on the pillow.

“I get that.”

Linda settled down and pulled the sheet up.

“I’m not ready for the damn support. Honestly, they can be a bit over the top.”

“Support...over the top.”

“Yeah, they’d probably trot me up in front of the congregation and go on about how proud they are of me.”

“In front of the congregation? Proud of you? Now...you’re playing with my head.”

Linda realized her mistake.

“No...I was being a bit sarcastic...But, yeah, they wouldn’t have a problem.”

“You were being sarcastic when you said that they would be ‘proud’ of you. Right?”

“No...no, sweetie. Not for being gay but for standing up for my authentic self.”

Linda was sitting up: Amy was on her back.

“This is so weird. W-E-I-R-D...weird. You can’t imagine how weird this is.” Amy said as she covered her face with her open palms.

“Would you like to come out to my parents? We’ll come out together.”

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Amy lowered her hands and turned towards Linda.

"No...I don't want to come out to Jen and Ron."

"We can hold hands."

"Let me get this straight.", Amy said. "We walk into your parents' living room and we're holding hands. We tell them...just *tell* them...that we're girlfriends. They don't freak out. They don't start screaming at us...or start hitting us...they don't disown you."

"No!"

"Do we start making out?"

"Well...tongue would be...um...crass. But we could kiss."

"...And they'd like that. Because we would be expressing...how did you put it...our 'authentic selves'."

"Well...yeah."

Amy looked away from Linda. Flat on her back: she stared at the ceiling.

"I am freaking out a little bit. Do you get how different your parents are from my mom?"

"Yeah...sweetie. I really do.", Linda said as she gave her shoulder a squeeze.

"Why can't my mom be like your parents?"

"Well, I guess..."

"No, no.", Amy interrupted, gently but firmly. "This is too much. It really is. I knew that Jen and Ron...and we call your parents by their first names...were different from mom. This different? No. Everyone hates faggots."

"Sweetie...please don't use that word. It's ugly."

"Everyone says it. It's what everyone thinks."

"Not everyone...my parents...the people at church."

"...At church. *At church*. That's your church and not mine. I love what you guys are saying about us. My church is different. They want us dead. They'll say, 'hate the sin but love the sinner'. But, sweetie, they think we're evil. I never even heard of the Unitarians until I met you...It's what almost everyone, practically everyone, thinks. They hate us, Linda. A lot of them want to kill us. We're freaks...perverts...deviants. We can't even hold hands in public."

Linda opened her mouth, and nothing came out. Amy was still lying flat on her back and looking at the ceiling. Linda nestled her head in the nape of Amy's neck. She embraced her with her free arm.

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“My parents don’t think we’re perverts. They don’t think...They don’t think we’re faggots. We can do it. We can do it. We can come out to them. They’ll be supportive...I swear. We both need that.”

“It’s like I said. This is too much. Too...too...much. I really have to think things through. This is a *Through The Looking Glass* stuff. I need to think before I talk about this anymore. So... a ‘no’ on coming out.”

“So...a ‘maybe’?”

“Sure.”

“Um...would you like to talk to them about the Unitarian Church?”

“Yeah...sure.”

Amy got out of bed.

“I’m getting dressed. I’m a little concerned that your parents might come home early. I get that your parents are super-cool. But I don’t want to come out to them...um...*not yet*. If I did, I wouldn’t want it to be like this. Besides, things have gotten super-heavy: we need a change.”

“[Spencer’s Gifts](#)?”

“Okay.”

Later that day, they were at *Spencer’s Gifts*.

The retail chain was arguably at the height of its popularity. It was known for its unique and irreverent merchandise that catered to a wide range of interests and lifestyles. Among the middle-to-high-school crowd in 2008, it was the epicenter of hip. Amy was new at doing anything even remotely cool. She liked the quirky energy and the off-beat merchandise that included novelty and gag gifts, jewelry, and fantasy and horror stuff.

They wandered through the store and made small talk. Linda realized that the conversation was smarter and more interesting than the deepest conversation that she could possibly have with any of her popular friends. A few hours earlier, Amy initiated a conversation about God and the Unitarian Church. It got tense. Still, she could not imagine anything like that with any of the other girls. And that was just the way things were. She had connected with Amy in a way that she previously would not have dreamt possible. If this were platonic, nothing would be different. Amy would be the only one that she with whom she’d want to spend time. She would still love Amy. It would be an inappropriate thing to say. But she would still love her. To hell with the other girls, she was trashing all of those friendships and simply did not care.

This was her first ‘adult relationship’. But Linda long understood, Amy was the first kid that she knew with an adult mind. Except for herself. She was unfair when thinking about her cheerleader friends. She was the different one. They were just 13-year-old girls that were into Hanna Montana and Ugg Boots. She was the one that wanted to talk about [Catcher In The Rye](#). This was explainable by having parents that valued the intellect. That didn’t explain Amy. Her mom, and her entire community, viewed

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literature, music, and art as being bad. If Amy ever heard an opinion about 'Catcher' from her people, it would have been about how the profanity and sexual content was undermining the godly nature of this nation. They wouldn't talk about its portrayal of teenage angst and alienation except, perhaps, to remind her that [Deuteronomy 21:18-21](#) was a cautionary tale.

Linda knew that she was also different from the other 13-year-old girls in that she was fairly biblically literate and knew about things like the [Dhammapada](#) (a Buddhist scripture). That was the doing of her smarty-pants Unitarian parents. But who did Amy? Who made her the girl who liked Salvador Dali and Mort Escher? Was there a subversive black sheep uncle? Some guy, who was belatedly included in family gatherings, that would pull her aside and argue the value of free thought? No, there wasn't.

While they walked around the Spencer's, Linda had a thought that she had had many times before. There was no recrimination or bitterness in the thought but happiness and gratitude:

Amy is better than me.

Linda wanted to take her hand but couldn't. She sighed.

"Something wrong?", Amy asked.

"No...hey, check it out."

The two stopped at the poster display. It was a series of panels that were bolted to the wall and could be flipped through. It was like a big book. There was a sample poster on either side of each panel. In the upper corner, there was a code which corresponded to a cubby beneath the flip display. If you wanted to buy one, you would match the code on the panel to the one above the corresponding cubby.

"I didn't know that you were a poster girl.", Amy said. "You just have that one in your room...that 80's film *Amadeus*."

"Yeah...that reminds me. We have to rent it. Girlfriend, you're so culturally deprived. No...I just like going through these displays. The movie posters...the promotional poster of the new girl Taylor Swift...I get a kick going through it."

Amy nodded and started flipping through it. While the posters were randomized, there were some recurring themes. Movies: *The Dark Knight...Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*. Music: *Lil Wayne...Coldplay*. Television: *American Idol...Grey's Anatomy*. There was fantasy art, from vampires to unicorns.

Amy would flip through the sample posters. She'd pause on this one or that one. And they would talk about it.

"I liked this one.", Amy said. "It was a fun movie."

"Yeah...we have to get you watching the other ones. Like I said, it's the fourth one. Honestly, it's my favorite. I guess that's controversial. Don't care, I preferred the cold war stuff to the nazis. Nazis are obvious villains."

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They were talking about *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*. It had come out that year and the two saw it in a theater. Amy's pop culture education had, in fact, been sadly neglected. Doris restricted her intake to approved films and TV. Prior to Linda, the last movie that she saw in a theater was Mel Gibson's [*The Passion of the Christ*](#) when it came out four years earlier. Doris took her. She was nine at the time and could not get into an R-rated movie without an adult. Doris would have never taken her child to see a restricted movie or almost any movie, as they were machinations of Satan. This film, however, was a spiritual masterpiece. When it came out on Ash Wednesday, February 25, 2004, the movie was marketed to churches and religious organizations as a tool for evangelism. The film's themes were integrated into Doris' church's education initiatives and preaching. Doris, per the instruction that her Pastor...her Shepherd gave in a sermon to his flock, took her to see it so that she could participate in the upcoming Sunday School discussion.

Amy continued flipping. She stopped. The poster featured two characters from what had become her favorite program.

'Buffy The Vampire Slayer' was on the air from 1997 to 2003. In the near future, the advent of streaming would make it easy to find and enjoy programs that had folded. In 2008, the surest way to come across something off air was video tape. A big part of the appeal of video rental outlets, like Blockbusters, was that you could ferret out something a bit older. Sometimes a person would build a library of tapes and share the titles with friends. Linda had such a library.

There was a sweet spot in the relationship where the two were not romantic but closer than friends. It was during this period when Linda initiated the physical with that first kiss.

In her bedroom, Linda dedicated three shelves to her tapes. The selves ran the entire length of the wall and were full of tapes. Amy was eyeballing the collection and said:

"This! I want to watch this!"

She pointed at the desired selection with the uncontrollable enthusiasm that a child would display when coming across the perfect ice cream at Baskin-Robbins.

It was a box set of a show that was one of Linda's favorites. It was in the center of the middle shelf. At either end of the box set was a bookend. She had been taken by the fact that a medieval building, like a Cathedral, was adorned with gargoyles. This was done to throw the fear of God into the hearts of people. She just wanted to draw attention to the crown jewel of her video library. Besides, 'Buffy' had all kinds of evil critters. Made of resin, the bookends featured gothic gargoyles and were finished to give them the look and texture of carved stone.

"Hmmm...'Buffy'? Kinda the centerpiece of my library. I'm surprised that you didn't mention it sooner. You wanna watch them?"

"Yes!", Amy said with a literal squeal.

At this moment, it's important to point out how quickly her beliefs cratered once Amy started hanging out with Linda. She had been teetering on the brink when she met her future girlfriend. When she started

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hanging out with someone with whom she could talk freely, without the fear that she'd be shouted down if she deviated from script, she fell off the cliff easily. It took a little time to develop the hatred that she had for mom's beliefs on that day at Spencer's Gifts. The catalyst wasn't gay sex or watching a show that her mom deemed deviant. The catalyst was simply someone who would listen to her. And, in doing, show her some goddam respect.

Amy pointed at the box set of tapes and asked:

"Can we start watching these...please? Maybe an episode before we study or something?"

"Sure."

They started watching them.

They made it through the first season when that first experience, halting and uncertain, happened. Nothing was said about it the next two times they got together. Each was waiting on the other. On that third time, Amy said:

"I googled 'Buffy' and was reading up on it. In season four, Willow gets a...girlfriend...um...Can we skip ahead?", Amy said.

"Um...sure."

She pointed to the line of dialogue that was beneath two characters from the show.

We're In Love. Lovers. We're Gay Lesbian-Type Lovers.

No one was in ear shot.

"I'm loving this, Tara.", Amy said.

"So do I, Willow."

When they took Amy's advice and skipped ahead to the Willow-Tara storyline, it greatly escalated things towards romance. Linda understood that Amy was not simply making a viewing request but was making a pointed double entendre. They soon took to calling each other 'Willow' and 'Tara'. Linda, as an unspoken courtesy, let Amy have the character played by Alyson Hannigan. Willow was in every episode including the pilot. Aside from the show's titular character, she was the most important. She started off as a second banana to Buffy. But, in later seasons, the Willow storylines sometimes took center stage. Tara was introduced in season four to give Willow a stable lesbian relationship, groundbreaking at the time.

"Tara...", Amy started. She looked Linda in the eyes and recited the line.

"Willow...", And Linda repeated the line.

The two laughed hysterically.

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"#B34", Amy said as looked at the code on the upper corner of the panel. She then located the cubby with corresponding code. Pulling out two of the rolled posters, she said.

"I'm getting it."

"Two?"

"One of them will be for me and the other is for you. It'll be our thing. We'll each have one in our room."

"I love it, Willow. But what about your mom? This seems like something that could trigger her."

"I'll keep my damn door shut." Amy stopped and reiterated: "I'll keep my *damn* door shut. Doris is a controlling bitch but has to show me a crumb of respect."

"I know how you feel...what you're dealing with...but you really shouldn't call your mom a 'bitch'."

"I know.", Amy said with a sigh. "But she has to stop being one. C'mon let's get these rung up."

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It was December 20, 2005.

Jim was fifteen. He was a scrawny kid. His black hair was worn in a mullet. The cut was short at the front, top, and sides: it was longer in the back and just brushed the upper edge of a collar on a dress shirt. He only wore a dress shirt when he and his father went to Sunday mass (or something formal like a wedding.). Normally, he would wear a T-shirt that featured the likeness and logo of a band like *Foo Fighters* and *Nickelback*. The two bands had different styles. *Foo Fighters* were known for their hard-hitting rock'n'roll sound, whereas *Nickelback* had a more post-grunge and alternative rock style. His taste was somewhat eclectic but liked stuff with a punch.

It was 7 PM and a pleasant evening, 65 degrees.

Jim and his dad were finishing up the Christmas shopping. They were at Glendale Galleria. The two had just left *Bloomingtondale's*.

"I need to feed the meter, son.", Jim's dad said as he gave the boy a pat on the back.

As his father left him, Jim heard a voice.

"Hi, man! How's it going!"

He turned to face the voice. It was a girl: Jim guessed that she was ten. A cute brunette, she smiled.

"Yeah. Hi. Can I help you?", He said.

"Well, I was wondering if you knew about Jesus Christ?"

"Um, yeah. My dad and I go to church."

"Cool...which one? I'm sorry...my name's Amy."

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“I’m Jim. Um...yeah... [St. Ann Catholic Parish.](#)”

The young girl was familiar with Catholicism. She, and her mom, attended the [East Valley Pentecostal Church](#). While there was unanimity on practically everything at her church, there was some actual dispute as to whether Catholics were godly. On the one hand, they were righteous on issues like abortion. On the other, there were those who felt that they were not truly born again. A significant portion of the congregation were Papists. They felt that Catholics’ loyalties were with the pope and not Jesus. In Sunday school once, her Pastor told the class that he liked to think that Catholics were ‘pre-sold’ on Jesus. They did not fully embrace the Word – and were being misled – but were so close to being saved. A Catholic just needed to be encouraged to accept the full truth. Remembering this would help the kids when they were street preaching.

“Okay.”, the girl said. “At my church, *East Valley Pentecostal Church*, we hear the true Word of God...”

“Have a nice day.”, Jim said and then walked away. As he left the girl, he felt pity for a child being manipulated by religion.

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It was the Saturday afternoon of the weekend that saw *The 2023 Frogtown Art Walk*.

Rico, as he discussed with Bobby and Dustin yesterday, was picking up the ghost gun kits.

When assembled, the finished Glockes would be used as part of Rico’s plan to draw attention to his manifesto which called for the creation of a Christian Nationalist Government. His focus was the homosexual agenda that he believed was a conspiracy to tear god-fearing American Christians away from their love of Jesus. It was going to do so by imprisoning and killing heterosexuals. While he felt that it was obvious that homosexuality was a disease and a perversion, he also felt that it was clear that homosexuality was caused by demonic possession. It was not enough to cure gays through prayer on an individual basis (but he did see the value of conversion therapy). He believed that the homosexuals were in a cabal with other demonic entities, like the Democratic Party, to destroy the Christian Foundations of the Republic.

He argued in his manifesto that the only way to stop the coming collapse of our nation was to merge Christianity with American civic life and policy. The United States was a Christian nation and should be governed according to biblical principles.

He was willing to kill and die to draw attention to his manifesto that was written with the help of God. In his holy quest, he was able to enlist Dustin and Bobby. They placed their faith in him – as they appreciated that he was the Lord’s messenger – and were also willing to make the ultimate sacrifice.

The guy selling the kits was named Max. He lived in a one bedroom in the El Sereno neighborhood of L.A. It was located approximately 5 miles east of Hollywood. It was an adequate apartment, cheap and clean.

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However, Max was bothered by the presence of people of different languages and cultures. He found special clarity in [Genesis 11:1-9](#) which told the story of the Tower of Babel. According to the story, the people of the earth spoke a single language and decided to build a tower that would reach to Heaven. However, God was angry with the people for trying to reach Him because that meant that his children were acting out of pride and ambition. So, He confused their language so that they could no longer understand each other. As a result, the people were scattered across the earth. So-called 'diversity' was an evil plot to thwart the will of God. As was the UN.

Max answered the knock on his door.

"Brother!", Max enthused upon seeing Rico. He stepped aside and ushered his guest into his living room with a sweeping gesture.

After holding hands and praying, they got down to business.

"Um...can we get the financial part out of the way?", Max asked.

Rico reach behind him and under his t-shirt. He pulled out an envelope that was tucked into his jeans. He handed it to Max, who thumbed through the bills.

"Come into my happy home!", Max said as the two made their way to the couch. As Rico sat down, Max – after cramming the envelope into a cookie jar – grabbed a couple long necks out of the fridge.

"Here you go, brother", Max sat down next to him and opened the locked box that was on the coffee table.

"This is an assembled [Polymer 80 Glock](#). It shoots 9mm ammo and I've included a box of shells. Now, a couple things that I'd like to point out. The Poly 80 frame is simply superior to the Glock OEM frame. For one thing the grip angle is more comfortable and natural...at least I think so. That's subjective but here's a fact. The Poly 80 Glock has a beavertail. There...see it? That feature is designed to protect the shooter's hand from the slide and hammer of the gun. And a problem I run into with Glocks is slide bite. I mean the slide will bite me every round and eventually break the skin. The Poly 80 frame does not deliver nearly the same slide bite.", Max said.

"Can I pick it up?"

"Of course, even though I have the safety on and no ordinance in the weapon, don't touch the trigger."

"Of course...nice feel...good balance."

"Yeah, I think that the frame is simply more ergonomic and makes for an easier handling Glock."

While still not touching the trigger, Rico pointed the weapon at the refrigerator.

"Pew...Pew", Rico said.

He repositioned the gun so that he was holding the grip with his thumb and forefinger. He handed it back to Max who put it back into the lockbox.

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“Something that I need to point out is that the downside with this non-standard frame is the resale. It’s not compatible with many of the popular holsters.”

“Yeah.”, Rico said. “I’m not concerned with resale.”

“Gotcha.”

“Are these things hard to put together?”

“Oh...no. Now, you will need some tools: a lower jig which is used to guide the cutting, a Dremel, and a hand drill. I recommend that you go to this build party that’s going to happen this evening. It’s where we assemble weapons for sale. Sadly, these guys are not godly but know their stuff.”

“Okay.”

“Don’t even bother testifying, brother. Sadly, it would be a waste of time. Remember, *Matthew 7:6*.”, Max said.

“Um...one second.”, Rico pulled out his phone and tapped on the screen. It gave him the verse:

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

“Oh...yeah. I get that and it’s so frustrating that I can’t testify sometimes.”

“Yeah...sometimes I just have to be a good example of a righteous Christian man. I’m pretty confident that a couple of them will end up having a *Road to Damascus* moment. These guys are pretty hard core, but we’ve made a lot of money together.”, Max said.

“Yeah.”

“Are you still in? Do you want to go to this build party tonight?”

“Absolutely.”

“Now...these guys are hardcore. They’re also pros. They don’t want trouble: they just want to do business. Things could become bad if you said the wrong thing. Can you be cool?”

“Yes.”

“Just you? Will anyone else be coming?”

“Just me. Yeah...honestly...one of the reasons that I wanted to go this route is that I wanted the experience of putting these puppies together. I do have a couple friends who...are involved in my project. I’ll get the completed weapons to them tomorrow.”

“I’ll get your merchandise.”

Max returned with two oversized polyurethane shopping bags.

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“Here you go. I jotted the address of the build party on a piece of paper and put it in one of the bags. They’ll be expecting you at 7PM. Destroy the piece of paper...okay?”

“Sure. Is there a door code...a phrase?”

“Gomer Pyle sent me.”

“Really?”

“Yup...I’m Gomer.”

The two men laughed and then Rico left with his merchandise.

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