

## **My Hooter Is Crazier. Introduction. I Meet The Man.**

**He wasn't always known as Hooter, but he may have always been crazy. Not usually "clinically crazy", although he did spend a few stints in a locked mental health facility. Often, but not always, "legally crazy", although the local cops always knew who he was and where he was last seen. But from the time I met him and most of his life before, "socially crazy". As in "Did you see what that dude did. He's cray, cray".**

**The day I met the man in the early in the summer of 1973, he was known as Mike Stevens and I immediately figured him to be one of the biggest asshole's I had ever met. And there was a lot of competition for that distinction.**

**Thanks to my folks I had been able to get a "good" factory job in Cedar Rapids despite my recent legal problems. It was located in a huge open single room building that could have contained a couple of football fields. It was clean and air conditioned. The pay was decent while the work was highly repetitive and deadly boring. I worked the evening shift, four to midnight.**

**After the roller coaster of losing my home and job in Canada, then getting arrested twice and jailed for a**

**total of twenty- three days within a three-month period for cannabis, boring did not seem like the worst thing in the world. At least for the time being. Then out of the gloomy gray of my unstimulating existence, which included being back living with my folks, came a vision. A double vision. Like two shafts of light breaking through on a heavily cloudy day. They were identical twin sisters who also worked the same shift, in the same building, as I did.**

**They were both blond-haired blue-eyed cuties in their early twenties with radiant smiles. The building was so big that I had never spotted them until one day on break. I had absolutely no social life let alone a dating life so I jumped at the chance and approached Jean, then within minutes asked her out. She said “OK” and that night after work, her and Jane and I went out to a nearby bar for a couple of beers. Turned out that her, Jane, and Jane’s hubby Mike lived together in a small house on the far side of town.**

**Jean and I quickly escalated our physical/romantic relationship. At their insistence, my folk’s place was out for physical liaisons, which was super embarrassing for me to have to reveal. When I inquired about going to her bed she replied, “Jane’s husband is a crazy biker. We don’t want to go**

there.” Well shit, I had hung around some crazy dudes in my young life. How bad could he be? So, we ended up consummating our blossoming love on the same stained couch in the basement of my friend’s antique shop that I had slept on when I left my first wife Sue some 15 months previous. It was not ideal. Eventually Jean relented and agreed to take me to meet Jane’s hubby Mike so that we could start hanging out in her bedroom.

It was a sunny summer afternoon when we pulled into their driveway. Jane must have been waiting for us because she came out as soon as I shut the engine off in my green 51 Chevy pick-up in cherry condition. I noticed that she stepped gingerly over some broken glass on the front stoop as she exited their modest but well-maintained single-story home. The first words out of her mouth were, “He got pretty fucked up last night and we got into a big fight. He stormed out and slammed the door which broke the glass in the outside door. I’m leaving it for him to clean up when he gets done crashing.”

I had done some Dexedrine in college and some white crosses after, so I was familiar with the term “crashing”. Maybe this “crazy” guy could hook me up with some good speed. This wasn’t going to be so bad after all. Then we went inside.

Despite the mess on the front porch the rest of the house was tidy and uncluttered. As Jane gave me the nickel tour of their home, I glanced into her and Mike's tiny bedroom. It contained a small single chest of drawers and a mattress on the floor. Next to that was parked Mike's Triumph 650 chopper motorcycle. Dangling from one of the handlebars was a gun-belt with a holster containing a hog-leg (long barreled) .357 Magnum. OK, that accounted for the crazy part and the biker part. Time to meet the man himself.

I had noticed him lying on the couch when we came in, but he had appeared to be sleeping. He sported thick shoulder length kinky black hair with a beard to match. In the middle of the thatch was a large hooked nose and several facial scars. All of that, combined with a large muscular upper body over short thick legs, resulted in a Satyr-like appearance.

After the tour Jane took me over by him and introduced us. He did not open his eyes or acknowledge my presence in any way. Instead, without moving or opening his eyes, he barked at Jane, "Get me a twelve-pack *Fool*. Quick like a fuck." My instant thought was "What a jerk. Jean and I can find somewhere else to spend time. I don't ever want to be around this creep again". "We plan, God laughs"

**(Yiddish proverb). I found out later that Mike had given her the**

**nickname “Fool” after she once lamented “I must have been a fool to marry you”. Still extremely demeaning.**

**A few weeks later, Jean decided to sell her car. She put an ad in the paper and got a call from this goofy-ass semi-truck driver. Lots of crazy guys in her life. He agreed to buy the car, on the spot, for cash, that day. Jean told him that she had to get the tape player out first because that belonged to her brother-in-law Mike. The guy said “Hell, I’m out on the road six days a week driving. Just keep a key and you can get the tape player out whenever you want. When I’m driving semi, the car will be sitting here in front of my apartment. You can even continue to use the it during the week as long as you have it back here by Saturday morning so that I can use it on the weekend.” What a deal. Jean agreed. After that day the guy and the car disappeared.**

**Jean was very unhappy because Mike was extremely unhappy over not getting his car cassette player back. Whenever I was in the area, I would swing by the truck driver’s place to see if the car was there. It never was. Meanwhile, I had been spending a bit of time at Jean,**

Jane, and Mike's place and had even had a few conversations with the "crazy biker". When he wasn't "fucked up on speed" (his words) or crashing after, he wasn't too bad of guy.

So, one night when I went by the trucker's apartment and saw Jean's old car, I went straight to see Mike at his place. Jean and Jane were visiting relatives in Texas, which left it to Mike and I to deal with. We still had a key to the car, so Mike quickly formulated a plan. "We'll just steal the fucker and bring it back here and strip it of anything of value. Then we'll dump it in the quarry. Will you drive me over in your truck?"

I had never been involved in grand theft auto before, or since, but considering the way the trucker guy had been screwing everyone around, it seemed like a reasonable plan. As we were leaving his house, Mike said "Wait a second" and ducked into he and Jane's room. He came out with the .357 stuck down the front of his pants.

"Whoa, why do we need that?" I questioned. "What if he comes out with a gun?" Mike replied.

So, the three of us (me, Mike, and the .357), got in my truck and headed out.

**On the way over we refined the plan a bit. I would drop Mike off about a half block past the car then go to the corner and**

**do a U-turn. I would leave the engine on but turn out the lights. When Mike got the car going, he would drive past me. If there was any kind of pursuit vehicle, I would turn my lights on and lurch into the middle of the street in a blocking maneuver. However, no maneuver was necessary as nary a sound or sight emanated from the guy's place.**

**I made my way back to Mike's and was fascinated watching him quickly and efficiently strip the car in his garage. Then I followed him to the quarry and observed him put a brick on the accelerator and jump out just before the car proceeded off the cliff and drop about thirty feet nose first, splashing into the water. Watching the taillights disappear about forty feet below the waterline was kind of eerie and exciting at the same time. It turned out to be the beginning of a long and unexpected relationship. We had become car-jacking buds.**

**He called me a couple of days later and said he had just obtained some good speed and did I want to come over and do some. I did. The twins were still in Texas and he had a bottle of the same 30 mg "Black**

**Beauty” Dexedrine that my roommate in college had shared with me. I knew they were very potent. He asked how many I wanted. I told him three and stated that I would do two right then and save the other one for later. I figured that would keep me high for the next 20 hours or so.**

**He passed me the three then started opening up ten of the same capsules and dumping the contents of each into a pepper grinder. I was wondering what the hell he was going to do with ten. Once he had all ten in the grinder he proceeded to “grind” the tiny time release orbs (converting them to instant release) into a glass of orange juice. He then chugged the whole thing. Three at once would have been an OD for me. He had just consumed ten without batting an eyelash.**

**As we both started to get off, the conversation became very animated and I couldn’t figure out why I had not realized what a great guy he was before that moment. After about twenty minutes he repeated the process with the grinder and a second glass of OJ, ingesting another ten. Meanwhile, I was getting higher than hell and starting to think that two might have been too much for me. Now, in addition to being car-jacking buddies we were “crankin pals” as well. By the time Jean and Jane returned, they were quite**



**surprised by what great friends that Mike and I had become.**

**When things went south with the landlord at their place and I was financially back on my feet, the four of us rented a nice older house which was the second from the end on a dead-**

**end street that butted up to a huge cemetery. The M Street house. We put in a big garden and grew a significant pot patch in a secluded spot right behind the garage.**

**The next two chapters of this memoir contain the backstory about Mike's life before we met. It is based on the many stories he shared with me through the thousands of hours we spent together over the decades. Some while cranking, some while drinking, and even a few sober. They took place during long road trips, all night speed fueled rants, and years of sharing living arrangements. Even though Mike was a skilled liar when it came to talking to the cops or trying to get prescription stimulants from doctors and pharmacists, I do not believe that he was ever dishonest with me about his history. His frank honesty and his willingness to listen to my thoughts and stories, were some of his most enduring qualities and**

**the basis of our enduring friendship through all of the crazy.**

**I have often contemplated how I went from “I never want to spend another minute around this asshole again” to a four decades long friendship. This is what I came up with: When I was nearing high school graduation there were many folks asking me the same question. My parents, friends, relatives, and guidance counselors. “What are you going to do after you graduate?” I thought about it and thought about it and finally came up with: “I don’t have a clue, but I no longer want to live**

**a life filled with boredom”. Mike aka Hooter was the ultimate antidote to cure me from the dreaded boredom.**

## **My Hooter is Crazier. Chapter One. Mike Graduates The School of Hard Knocks With Highest Honors.**

**Michael Stevens was born on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1948. He had a mom, dad, and an older sister. Two younger brothers came later. Jim and Pat. He grew up on a 100% working farm outside of Garnavillo, Iowa in what is now popularly known as The Driftless area. Back then it was only called that by a few pencil neck geology geeks. It is an area that contains some of the oldest land forms in North America. Both of the last two glaciers that flattened out much of the mid-continent split and went around this unique area of over ten thousand square miles which lie in NE Iowa, SW Wisconsin, and a bit of SE Minnesota. It is comprised of steep hills and valleys with spring fed, cold water, trout streams running through. This resulted in it not being desirable for the large scale, mono-crop farming that afflicted most of the Midwest starting in the 50s and 60s.**

**The 160-acre Stevens spread and most of the other farms in the area were more reminiscent of what farms in Iowa were like in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The main income was the weekly milk check derived from milking the requisite forty or so Holstien cows. They also had pigs, chickens, and grew their own feed**

**crops. When Mike was twelve his father obtained the relatively good paying full-time job as**

**postmaster at the Garnavillo post office. That meant that Mike and his sister were required to get up, milk the cows, clean the barn, and run the herd out to pasture (or feed them baled hay in the winter), before they went to school. Mike reported that he opted for a few minutes of extra sleep in the morning rather than allotting time for a shower and a change of clothes between chores and getting on the school bus. The result was that in addition to often being exhausted during the school day, he was also picked on by his peers for wearing dirty clothes and smelling like cow shit.**

**He attended the local Catholic school. As was often the case, the nuns could be extremely mean and were wont to focus their ire on this twitchy (Mike suffered from Attention Deficit with Hyperactive Disorder before it was ever heard of), disheveled boy, who looked and smelled like he just stepped out of a barn. The kid who ping-ponged back and forth between being extremely disruptive and falling asleep in class.**

**The punishment for sleeping in class consisted of the holy sister sneaking up on him then lashing him across the face with her open palm. This usually**

resulted in his glasses flying off and breaking when they hit the floor. When he got home and reported this to his dad, he received a second dose of corporal punishment from the old man who was irked at having to pay for new glasses once again.

Mike was justifiably angry at the double dose of violence he had been receiving because he was always tired from having to work almost forty hours per week in addition to attending school full time. One fateful day during his 8<sup>th</sup> grade year, his dozing was interrupted by the sound of his classmates laughing. Their glee was inspired by the spectacle of the old nun marching up the aisle about to deliver another blow to the face of a drowsy Michael. But this time Mike woke up before the blow was delivered. He pleaded, "Please don't hit me in the face. My dad gets really mad at me when you break my glasses." The plea fell on "deaf" ears and the nun delivered a round house smack to Mike's face breaking his glasses once again. He could take no more. He stood, then hauled off and delivered a round-house punch right into her face. Down she went. Thus, Mike's stint in the parochial school system came to an abrupt end. Off he went to public school with a growing hostility toward authority.

**At public school he found his social niche. The “trouble makers”, the “hoods”, the guys who snuck out and cadged a smoke during lunch hour. They also shared a strong disregard for all authority figures and the rules they attempted to enforce. This extended to the laws of the state and the officers who attempted to enforce them as well. Small time larceny and road drinking on the narrow hilly roads with his**

**new peers was unprecedented and very exciting for Mike. Another event occurred during this time that was not influenced by his peers or his dislike of authority. It occurred during a hot spring day when his father had tasked him with plowing a field in preparation for spring planting.**

**Mike was out in the field, far from the house, and completely alone. The ancient Ford tractor he was driving was small and had a wide front end, which made it well suited for working the sides of the steep hillsides that comprised much of the farm. It had not come equipped with a gas gauge but the gas tank was right in front of the steering wheel. When Mike felt the gas might be getting low, he turned off the engine, leaned forward over the steering wheel, removed the gas cap, and peered in to assess the fuel level. As usual, he was tired from his grueling schedule. That day, after he saw that he had plenty of remaining gas,**

he lingered while leaning over the steering wheel above the open gas tank. It was a nice break. One minute turned into several as he noticed that the smell of the gas was somewhat appealing.

A few minutes later he realized that he felt very different than he had ever felt before. He was no longer tired. The world seemed brighter and more colorful. Then he looked down at the ground where he had been plowing the dead broken- down stalks of last year's corn into the ground. There he saw

the most beautiful pair of snow shoes he had ever encountered. Thinking "I can use those next winter", he excitedly jumped off the tractor and attempted to pick them up. He was befuddled when he realized that the "beautiful snow shoes" were actually last year's dry, brown corn stalks. Mike's, first hallucination. His first serious break with reality, not counting getting buzzed on cheap beer then defying death and/or dismemberment roaring around twisting roads at unreasonably high speeds with his new pals. Huffing gas became a regular solo activity for him. Meanwhile his buddies at school were evolving into more felonious pursuits.

Although he had never been directly involved in breaking and entering, he had heard it mentioned by a

**couple of his new friends. When his pal Lester asked to borrow Mike's newly obtained first car one day after school, he guessed the nefarious nature of the request, but immediately consented and rode the school bus home. The next morning before school, Lester met him in the HS parking lot and returned his car without mentioning that there were purloined goods in the trunk.**

**Turned out that the police were looking for Mike's car. It, and a couple of unidentified individuals, had been seen outside of the local car repair shop, the night before, about the same time the business had been burglarized for hundreds of**

**dollars' worth of high-end mechanic's tools. Within minutes, that morning, the cops had talked to the principal who identified the owner of the car as Michael Stevens. They then removed him from first hour class, to the delight of his classmates, and took him to stand by the trunk of his car which they ordered him to open. There were the stolen tools that Mike was seeing for the first time. "We know that you and your friends robbed the auto repair shop last night. We already have them down at the city jail and they have made full confessions and have implicated you as the driver and a member of the robbery crew." Mike had had a few minor brushes with the law**



previous to that fateful day, but nothing that rose to the level of felony grand theft. But his hostility and distrust of authority was already that of a hardened criminal. Plus, he possessed critical street smarts. “If they have already told you ‘*everything*’ you don’t need to hear anything from me”. He then refused to utter another word. Even though Lester had put him in the hotseat without a saying a word of what was in his trunk, Mike instinctively had the brass balls to refuse to rat him out and took the full hit himself. The cops were lying. They had no idea who else might have been involved and there were certainly no confessions.

The cops did not appreciate his “code of silence”, and cuffed Mike right there in the school parking lot. He would never

return. All through the arrest, booking, initial hearing, and juvenile court trial, Mike maintained his silence. He was subsequently sentenced to a one-year stint in the Iowa State Detention Facility For Boys at Eldora, starting immediately. That was to be followed by another year of probation upon release.

As with most first timers serving significant sentences amongst fellow inmates with lengthy rap sheets, it was like earning a degree in criminal behavior for

**Mike. He also competed high school there and received a diploma which he immediately threw away. Upon his graduation/release he had reached the following conclusions:**

- 1) The justice system was unfair and stacked against folks like himself with little formal education and money.**
- 2) With some parole officer constantly looking over his shoulder, he would be back in the slammer in no time.**
- 3) That he needed to get the fuck out of small town, small minded, rural Iowa, sooner rather than later.**

**Upon returning to his folk's farm, he refused to do anymore unpaid farmwork, instead picking up several part-time jobs off the farm that paid actual cash. Within a couple of months and a couple visits with his Parole Officer, he had managed to stay**

**out of trouble and had put together a plan with enough money to carry it out. He made one quick call to his aunt and uncle who lived in the San Francisco area to see if he could stay with them for a while. They assented and he left for the coast the next day without informing anyone, especially his parole officer, where**

**he was headed and what his plan was. “Loose lips sink ships”.**

**He would be violating the terms of his parole and would be subject to arrest as soon as he crossed the county line if he encountered any law enforcement officer for any reason. So, he drove straight through and was safely ensconced at his aunt and uncle’s house within 48 hours. The next day he found a full-time job working the graveyard shift at an all-night gas station in San Fran. The year was 1966.**

## **My Hooter Is Crazier. Chapter Two. Seminal Event.**

**As Mike was not a follower of the news in print or TV, he had a very limited awareness that people and activities in San Francisco were generating a social tsunami starting there and spreading across the nation. His focus was on making some money, avoiding the cops, and never going back to Iowa. So, he showed up on time to his job at the gas station, did his assigned tasks, then went home to his aunt and uncle's place, where he spent most of his free time sleeping.**

**Back in Garnavillo, Mike's "disappearance" had generated a great deal of speculation and wild rumors, as gossip is the #1 recreational activity in small towns and rural areas. Was he killed by members of the B & E ring after getting out of lock-up? Was he back in lock-up? Had he run off with one of the criminals he had met in lock-up?**

**Shortly after Mike arrived at her house, his aunt had called her sister, his mom, to let her know that Mike was living with them, had a good job, and was staying out of trouble. Word soon leaked out of Mike's actual whereabouts. One of his "hoodlum" buddies, Larry, managed to get the phone number of where he was staying and gave him a call to inquire if he**

**could come out for a visit. Without asking his hosts, Mike said “Sure come on out”.**

**Mike had noticed that there were a lot of hippies in the low rent area where his workplace was located. He found them neither appealing or appalling, just different, which sparked his curiosity.**

**When his friend Larry arrived, Mike explained to his aunt and uncle that he had told Larry he could stay with them for a few days. They were not thrilled. They consented to let Larry stay for the night and promised that the issue would be resolved the next morning when Mike returned from work.**

**About 3 am while Mike was earnestly fighting to stay awake, one of the local street hippies that had come in the station several times previous, to hang out, stopped by again. He asked Mike if he had trouble staying awake all night. “Fuck yeah, I was nodding out right before you walked in.” The dude replied, “I’ve got some speed that will keep you wide awake all night long”. Mike had heard about speed but had never seen let alone tried it. “Sure, I’d take some of that” was his immediate response. Then the guy said “We better go in the back room in case the cops drive by.”**

**After they were safely tucked away in the back, Mike's new friend pulled out his "kit", consisting of a syringe, burnt spoon, rubber strap, matches, and a small packet of white powdered methamphetamine, and proceeded with the "tweaker's ritual". First, he tapped some of the powder into the spoon, lit a match under said spoon until the meth was liquified. Then he carefully drew the liquid through a bit of cotton (to filter out impurities), then through the needle thus filling the barrel of the syringe. Next he put one end of the rubber strap into his mouth and used his right hand to wrap it tight above his left elbow, which caused the main vein in the front of that elbow to bulge out. He then held the syringe, needle up and gently pushed a tiny amount of the liquid out to make sure no air bubbles would enter his bloodstream. Next he expertly slid the needle into his bulging vein being careful not to go in too deep as to go through the vein and into the muscle. Just deep enough so that the drug would fully discharge into his inter-veinous system. He then slowly pushed down the plunger until all of the speed was coursing thru his body. He released the rubber cord, closed his eyes, and let go a huge sigh of utter contentment. A few minutes later he opened his eyes, looked at Mike and said "Your turn".**

**Young Mike had had his fair share of serious risk taking and/or criminal behavior, but he had never encountered someone jabbing a spike full of meth into their vein, shooting up right in**

**front of him, then offering to hit him up. It seemed like something that had been covered in high school health class which he had paid scant attention to at the time. But he was pretty sure it led to an abbreviated lifetime of miserable addiction before inevitable death. He had finally encountered a risk he was not willing to take.**

**He meekly told the guy that he was going to take a pass. After jabbering away for an hour or so the man finally wandered out and down the street. But the encounter left Mike with a huge adrenaline rush and he had no trouble staying awake the rest of the night.**

**When Mike returned home the next morning with visions of the experience still spinning in his head, he immediately encountered another shocker. His aunt and uncle informed him that they had not only told Larry that he was not welcome to stay with them but they had dropped him off at the bus station earlier that morning and provided him with a return ticket back to Garnavillo, Iowa. Mike was devastated then extremely angry. Even though there was no love lost about**

leaving Iowa, he had been missing his friends, and the thought of having Larry around had been a great comfort to him. All of a sudden that had been ripped away. But he held his temper, just shook his head in disappointment, and went to bed.

After a long night at work, he usually conked out and slept like a log all day. But this day his sleep was fitful as he kept waking up and replaying the events of the past twenty-four hours with equal parts trepidation, anger, and a resolve to lash out. As he trudged off to work that night he had settled on “lashing out” as his preferred option. As fate would have it his new friend, the tweeker dude, showed up in the wee hours of the next morning. “Do you still have that shit you had last night?” Mike inquired. Dude said that he did and Mike rolled up his sleeve, stuck out his arm, and firmly stated “*Now, I’m ready*”.

The tweeker then replicated the previous night’s ritual only this time Mike’s vein was the target. As the methedrine hit his system, he experienced the most pleasurable feeling of his life. “Better than sex”, he later reflected. At that moment, Mike decided that he no longer had to worry about or search for his goal in life. He was going to dedicate everything within his power to get as much of this “magic powder” as he



**could and shoot it up as often as possible. That remained the prime directive for the rest of his life.**

**He and his new best friend jabbered the rest of the night away, breaking only when a car pulled in for gas. Then that customer would receive the best full-service fill-up in all of the**

**Bay Area. Mike was a whirling dervish, topping of the tank, checking the oil, the windshield wiper fluid, and the tire pressure, then washing all of the windows, and inquiring if there was anything else the customer desired. He did not stop working the drive when his morning relief arrived at 7 am sharp. He only went home when his replacement ordered him out at about 9 am.**

**It did not take long for Mike to become immersed in the local meth culture. His experience growing up on a low-income farm had forced him to learn extensive maintenance and repair skills working on old cars, tractors, and various other agricultural machinery. This paired well with his new-found dedication to tweeking. He repaired vehicles for anyone who would pay him in crystal meth. He was soon hooked up with a highly skilled meth cook and a circle of dealers and users, many of who were loosely associated with the San Francisco chapter of the Hell's Angels.**

**Mike soon had enough money to move out of his aunt and uncle's home and into a shithole apartment with some biker/speed freaks as he continued to work at the all-night station. Staying awake was no longer an issue. His share of the rent was minimal and he was bartering repair work for his burgeoning meth habit so he was quickly able to save up enough to buy a Triumph 650 Chopper motorcycle. On**

**occasion, he and his buddies even did some road trips with a few of the Angels on non-club sanctioned forays. The guy who he ended up with the closest relationship to, was a non-affiliated local from Alameda, named Glen. A good guy who was able to balance tweeking, biking, and a sustainable life while avoiding problems with law enforcement. Glen even got a few gigs riding his tricked-out Harley chopper in the background of some of the many biker movies of the late 60s.**

**Mike was set. He had access to all the speed he could do, he had his chopper, he had a likeminded crew to ride with, he had a regular income, and he had a crappy place to crash on the rare occasion when he needed to sleep. Life was grand and his goal of never returning to Iowa seemed a lock. Then he got the news from back home. His mom had contracted a virulent form of cancer and did not have long to live.**

He and his mom had always been close. She was the sweet and nurturing yin to his dad's tough and angry yang. He quickly decided he needed to go back and be with her. He gave his two weeks' notice at the gas station, sold all the meager belongs he had with the exception of his chopper which he stored in a friend's garage. He then put all of his money together, bought a one-way bus ticket to Garnavillo, and invested the rest in top grade meth to take back with him.

Upon his arrival back in Garney he was treated as a returning conquering hero. At least by the bad boys and the girls who found his escape from Iowa fascinating. One of those was Jane. She was several years younger but they had dated a couple of times back in high school. They quickly became a couple and she stayed steadfastly by his side as he spent considerable time consoling, caring for, and comforting his mom. The rest of the time he was turning everyone, who was interested, on to his new-found favorite pastime. Shooting meth. Or snorting it if injecting it was too scary for them. Mike's dedication to speed did no impinge on his inherent generosity. He would not give away his last shot, but if he had two.... Sing along readers: "I've only got one shot. If I had another, I'd give it to you brother, but I've *only* got one shot". (Thanks to Mike C. for the original

lyrics from “I’ve Only Got One Brat” that inspired this adaptation.)

As Thanksgiving approached his mom insisted that, despite her physical decline, they would have the traditional turkey dinner with all of the fixins, served to the entire extended family. With the help of Mike’s sister and Jane, the holiday feast was served without a hitch. Well, there was one hitch. Mike, who always attacked every meal like a starving wolverine was high as a kite on meth and had zero appetite. He reported giving his all to appear normal. He stated that “I

could put it in my mouth, I could chew it, but I just could *not* swallow.” This caused his mom great consternation until he claimed that his loss of appetite was due to the fact that he was coming down with the flu and was feeling nauseous. His mom then ordered him to bed to get some rest. That did not work out well either.

As he was watching his mom waste away, while enjoying his new “conquering hero” status, he was also falling in love with Jane. Mike’s mom had also fallen for Jane. Then his mom told him that her last dying wish was to see them married. Mike had never considered that he would ever want to get married, but the circumstances were exceptional. Mike and

**Jane were quickly wed with his mom, the immediate family, and a few friends in attendance.**

**That was a game changer. Mike had planned on returning to San Fran after his mom passed and resume his preferred lifestyle. Now he had to consider the wishes of his wife and first true love (other than meth). Jane was very close to her family and especially her identical twin Jean. Mike was adamant that he could not/would not live in Garnavillo. They compromised and moved to Cedar Rapids where factory jobs were readily available and methamphetamine was starting to show up in the area. They both obtained full-time work. She at Collins Radio, where I would later meet her and Jean, and he at the Cargill Soybean processing plant. Mike arranged to have his chopper trailered back to CR by one of his Bay Area bike buds.**

**Speed, especially injectable meth, was just starting to become available in CR, and none of the few dealers were interested in bartering their goods for car repair. Mike had to develop a new and lucrative income stream in order to feed his large appetite for meth.**

**Mike's cousin Dave W. had been drafted and was serving his tour in the jungles of Viet Nam. Soon after moving to Cedar Rapids, Mike received a letter from**

**Dave with a business proposition. Dave would ship homemade candles to Mike from Saigon. The candle wax would obscure the smell and sight of the nearly pure heroin sealed in containers within, in order to stymie any drug sniffing dogs or visual inspections. Mike would retail the heroin and they would then split the gross profits. Mike had tried H a few times in San Fran, when it was mixed with meth and injected. A “speedball”, similar to what killed John Belushi years later.**

**By that time, Mike’s younger brother Pat was living with he and Jane in the small but well-maintained rental home. Heroin addicts, aka junkies, were a whole different breed of**

**cat than speed freaks. Coming down from speed was a several day bummer but withdrawing from heroin was hell on earth and junkies were known to literally rob their sweet old grandma to get a fix. Plus, the members of this new clientele were by and large complete and unpredictable strangers to them. Extreme caution would be mandatory.**

**When a prospective buyer knocked on the door, Jane would go hide in their bedroom. Pat would stand behind the front door with a loaded shotgun, safety off, shell racked into the chamber, pointed at the floor,**

**but ready to stick in the back of anyone trying to rip them off. Mike would open the door just enough so the customer could take one step in and the business transaction would take place. Pat only had to bring the scattergun to bear on the back of someone, with ill intentions head, on a couple of occasions. Even though he never had to fire the weapon, word got out. “Don’t fuck with the Stevens brothers.”**

**They made a lot of money and sent half back to Dave. But Mike, Pat, and Jane soon decided it was too stressful and too dangerous. It was also interfering with Mike’s dedication to shooting speed and spending his free time doing fun shit. They let Dave know not to send any more candles. Mike was able to hook up a connection with Glen back in Alameda to supply him with, direct from the cook, pure meth. Compared**

## **My Hooter Is Crazier. Chapter Three. M Street House**

**About the same time that Mike and Jane were kicked out of their house, I had my financial feet back under me, and Jean and I were hankerin to co-habituate. I had gone from never wanting to lay eyes on Mike Stevens for the rest of my days to deciding that the four of us should share a home. Certainly, our mutual affection for speed was part of it, but more pertinent was a vow I had made around the time of my HS graduation about never wanting to be bored again.**

**We agreed that we wanted a house, as opposed to an apartment, with as much privacy as could be found living in an urban area. We wanted room for a big garden, plenty of off- street parking, a garage, and as few close neighbors as possible. With our parameters set we grabbed the first edition of the next afternoon's paper, hot off the press, and immediately spotted what we were looking for.**

**It was a well-worn, but still showing her former class, old dame of a house with a big back yard and lots of privacy as afforded by a place near the terminus of a dead-end street and a last stop cemetery. Perfect for us. We rented it immediately, after a quick walk through, and just before another car load of hopeful renters pulled into the driveway.**



**Our landlords were an ancient couple, at the last house on the street, right next door. They never seemed to take umbrage at our hippie appearance or our out-of-the-ordinary lifestyles. When I noticed the old guy repeatedly staring over the fence into our yard, I feared that he was gazing at my burgeoning marijuana patch. Turned out he was just lusting after our beautiful row of Swiss Chard. After I figured that out, I always gave him some fresh picked Chard when he came to the fence and he always went away happy.**

**Mike and Jane took one of the two upstairs bedrooms, Jean and I the other, and shortly after we moved in, my best old buddy Mick returned from British Columbia and claimed the small room off the living room for his own.**

**Things went pretty smoothly for the first few months. We were all working full time, taking care of our large sweet gardens, and doing a little partying on our off hours. I was schooling Mike on the need for him to pick up his share of the household chores. He was making slow but steady progress on that score.**

**When Mike wasn't speeding or crashing, he and I would do shit together. One time we went to the store to buy some**

beer and there were two cute girls that were under twenty- one but over eighteen, looking for someone to buy them beer. We didn't hesitate. When we came back out of the store and handed it to them, we asked if they wanted to hang out and drink. One of them said "Sure, follow us over to my place." It was only a few minutes away in a clean, modern, and very large apartment complex.

We settled in and started drinking some beers. Mike was never shy and always got right to the point. "Do you want to fuck? He asked. "No, we just want to hang out with you guys" one replied. "Do you mind if we take our clothes off? Said I. "Sure, if you want to". Within minutes Mike and I were sitting in their nice, clean, orderly apartment having a non-sexual, casual conversation, sans clothing. They were taking it completely in stride as if they frequently entertained naked hippies and/or bikers they had just met, in their living room.

After a couple of beers, I indicated that we would be going as we had something to do on the other side of town. One of the gals said "Can I catch a ride over there?" "Certainly", I replied. We all said our goodbyes to the young woman who was staying, and the three of us headed out to my truck which was located in the vast parking lot surrounding the

**complex. Mike and I had not bothered putting our clothes back on and were carrying them under our arms. It was a warm summer evening after dark, and there were a few people in the lot, none of whom seemed to be paying any attention to us.**

**We got into the cab of my old green Chevy pick-up with me driving, our new friend in the middle, and Mike riding shotgun. As we drove across town the three of us were joking and laughing without a care in the world. We were on one of the main one-way arteries in Cedar Rapids heading north. At a stop light, a car pulled up on our left containing four more cute young women. I waved exuberantly, and was rewarded with four equally enthusiastic waves back. We were all laughing and exchanging flirtatious looks. I turned toward Mike and said, “When the light turns green, I am going to gun it and get ahead of their car. After I shift into second, stick your foot over and press gently on the gas pedal”. I did, then he did. We were a couple of car lengths ahead of the gal’s car and in second gear by that point. “Now ease off the gas a little, so that they can catch up” I told him. Which he did. As they pulled alongside, I jumped up on my seat, still steering the truck with my left hand, Mike’s foot on the gas pedal, and stuck my bare ass out the window executing a rare “mooning while driving” or**

**MWD. They were very appreciative and showed it with laughter, smiles, and applause.**

**This was right around the time the movie *The Exorcist* came out. I had had no idea what it was about, but a lot of our friends were saying what a great flick it was. So, Jean and I went. We settled into our seats and started munching popcorn. As the movie devolved into satanic horror, I could no longer swallow the corn. I was too mesmerized and scared shitless to do, say, or think anything. By the time the credits rolled I staggered out of the theater a psychological and emotional basket case which was an almost unprecedented state for me. I had always hated Catholicism, but if there had been a priest available in front of the theater, I would have converted on the spot. It took me decades to be able to walk around in the woods after dark without experiencing the fear of evil lurking in the shadows. And I vowed to never watch another horror movie again. A vow I have absolutely maintained.**

**When I shared my experience with Mike, he didn't get it. "Those horror movies don't scare me. I just laugh because I know it is all fake." Mike obviously didn't believe what our mothers had told us as kids, "Scary movies will give you nightmares".**

**All in all, things were going pretty well.**

## **My Hooter is Crazier. Chapter Four. Showdown at M Street**

**We were living in the house on M St. We had settled into a nice rhythm with our gardens and making our house a home. Mike was going relatively easy on the speed taking mainly the Dexedrine pills. He shared some with me on occasion and everything was copacetic.**

**Then Mike got fired from his job at the soybean plant for several instances of being caught sleeping/crashing during the midnight shift. Since he had been fired, he was able to collect a good unemployment check weekly. Then his cousin Dave W. returned from serving in the jungles of Viet Nam with the bankroll he had set aside from their previous heroin trade. They quickly became “shootin cousins”. Actual genetic cousins that shot a shit ton of meth together. Between their combined financial resources and Mike’s well-developed local speed connections they quickly tracked down and obtained a sizable quantity of Methedrine. They would be out and about for hours until us working folks had gone to bed, then come back to M St., and blast the stereo while Jean, Jane, Mick, and myself were trying to sleep. This was not cool, since we all had to go to work in the**

morning. This caused a lot of friction between Mike and the rest of us.

One weekend all of the folks in the household went up to northwest Iowa together to camp out, try to relax with each other, and re-build our relationships with Mike. He promised not to do speed on the outing. He kept his promise and we returned home with renewed optimism. When we got back everything seemed in order. On closer examination it turned out that our hidden stash of cash and food stamps, hidden in the basement, had been pilfered. There were no signs of forced entry which meant that the thief was someone who knew where we hid our spare key and also knew where we stashed our valuables. It had to be a friend. A trusted friend. We all sat down at the dining room table and made a list of the friends who knew about the key and about the cash/food stamps. That was a loathsome task and one that made me even madder than being robbed. We had to go through the list of these trusted dear friends and picture each of them sneaking into our home and robbing us. Was Pat capable of such a despicable deed? How about Elmer? We went through the half dozen names on the list imagining the worst about each person. Dave W's name didn't make the list. After all, he was family.

**For two days we contacted the folks that were on the list and made subtle conversation without referring to being ripped off, but mentioning that we had been gone over the weekend,**

**and by the way “what did you do over the weekend?” to see if they seemed nervous about the inquiry. None did.**

**We were still scratching our heads two days later when an adolescent girl about fifteen years old, that we had never met before, knocked on our door. She told Mike and I that she was a runaway who Dave and his roommate Pete had taken in. She then went on to explain “I just don’t think that it is right what they did. Dave told me that you guys were cool and that Mike was his cousin when we came over here last weekend. When you guys weren’t home, Dave dug out the hidden key on the front porch and we all came in. Dave was really excited and laughing about knowing where you guys hid your cash. He took us down the basement, then reached up by one of the rafters and brought down a box. He opened up the box and took out the cash and food stamps then returned the container to its hiding place. We then left and Dave put the key back where he had found it”**

**Son-of-a-fuckin-bitch. I was about as mad as I had ever been. I was not a fighter but was ready to go upside of Dave's head with a two-by-four, even though he was significantly bigger than I was. But first we had to find a place for this young lady, with the big moral compass, to stay. She would not have been safe going back to Dave's place because they would quickly connect the dots after we confronted them with proof of their thievery. She made a couple of calls and found a friend who would let her stay for a few days. We gave her some money to tide her over, then took her directly to her friend's place, and made a beeline to Dave's apartment.**

**We knocked on the door and Dave answered with a big smile on his face. "We know that it was you and Pete that ripped us off you fucker" Mike yelled. "I don't know who told you that and I'm very offended that you would accuse me of stealing from you," replied Dave. Mike snapped and started wailing on his cousin who was a half a foot taller and still had his soldier muscles. But Mike was a veteran brawler. They were punching and wrestling and throwing each other into flimsy paneled walls knocking holes and pushing them crooked. At some point Pete came into the room and looked like he was going to jump in on Dave's side. I told him to stay out of it and he did.**



**After about five minutes they were both winded (Meth heads are not known for their cardio-vascular stamina). As they stood there catching their respective breaths, Dave incongruously said “I’ve got to go out for cigarettes” and left. Mike was too winded to stop him so we were left there with Pete. Pete sat on the couch and I approached him. I laid out the evidence against him without specifically naming the young woman, but she was the only other person that was**

**there when they robbed us. Pete continued to deny, deny, deny. “A run-away girl that was staying with us must have done it and is trying to frame us” he lied shamelessly.**

**That was during the time that President Nixon was on TV every day, lying about the Watergate burglary and subsequent cover-up. I hated Tricky Dick and had been growing more and more angry every time I saw his ugly mug on the tube. Suddenly a classic case of transference occurred and all the pent-up rage that I felt toward Nixon was now directed at Pete. He and I were about the same size but I had a ton of adrenaline coursing through my system. I put a quick head lock on him and took him to the floor. “You’re either going to tell us the truth or I’m going to break your scrawny neck” I shouted”. “OK, OK, we did it. Now let me go”. I**

did and he retreated to the bedroom. A few minutes later Dave returned.

**“Pete told us everything you lying son of a bitch” Mike spit out at his cousin upon his return. Dave took a minute to consider this latest development then said “OK, yeah, we did it. But we’ll pay you back as soon as we can. Here, I’ll give you what’s left of the food stamps but the cash is all gone”.**

No one was up for anymore fighting. Dave had ripped us off, he’d lied to us about it, and then tried to lay a guilt trip on us when we accused him. And Pete had tried to lay the blame on the young girl who had the integrity to tell us the truth even though she had never previously known us. As we left, I told Dave **“If you ever set foot in our house again, I will shoot you in the head”**. Dave knew that it was not an empty threat as Mike and I both had handguns and we both kept them loaded.

A few months went by, Dave met up with Mike in a public place, and paid him the money he owed us. I figured that I would never have to deal with the asshole again. Then I found out that he had once again come into a large quantity of meth and had invited Mike to come to his place to get wired. Mike firmly believed that he was born to do speed, so he

never passed up an opportunity to do so. I didn't like that he was be-friending that dirty bastard Dave again, but as long as the guy didn't come to my house I wasn't going to respond.

One Saturday night a pot-head buddy and steady cannabis customer of mine named Danny came over to watch the current hit musical show, The Midnight Special. They had some band on that we were both hot to see, so we tucked in, got stoned, and grooved on the tunes. After the featured band had finished, I was done in. I told Danny that he could stay as long as he wanted to, but that I was going to bed.

Danny asked if I could bring him a bag the next day as he would have the money to pay for it by then.

About noon the next day, while completely sober, I brought an ounce of weed over to Danny's house. He tended towards anxiety and paranoia as his default mode. But on this occasion, he had gone to the next level. "Shit man. I couldn't believe what happened after you went to bed last night. Mike and Dave came into the house high as hell on speed. Dave was waving Mike's .357 Magnum around saying 'Dick's not going to be shooting anyone tonight' then he and Mike laughed and laughed." I immediately went from zero to one-hundred on the paranoia scale myself. Mike

had not only let Dave in the house directly contradicting my decree, but had handed him his loaded canon of a gun so that he could take me out.

I took off from Danny's and raced back to my place. I got my little pea-shooter, a twenty-five caliber semi-auto that held a seven-shot clip. I had about forty bullets on hand. I drove to a secluded spot in the country and set up a target about twenty feet from the side of the road. I put seven rounds aside in order to fully re-fill the clip and shot the other bullets at the target with mixed results. I figured that my only chance at taking out two guys, because Mike was obviously now

aligned with Dave, who had superior fire power, was to ambush them and shoot them in their backs.

I went back to the house. I was highly agitated. My girlfriend Jean was home at this point and asked me what was wrong. "Mike and Dave were threatening to kill me last night and Dave was waving Mike's loaded gun around. You know how fucked up those guys get. That gun could have gone off and killed anyone in the house. I'm going to shoot them before they shoot me or any of the rest of us". Jean shook her head and left the house.

**A short time later her twin sister Jane, Mike's wife, came home and asked me the same question and I gave her the same answer. Thankfully she took the time to try and calm me down. "Dick, I always thought that you were the smart one. That you would not go out and do the same kind of crazy shit that Mike and his running buddies do. Who told you all this anyway?" I told her that Danny had. She said "Are you sure it happened the way Danny explained it? Maybe he misinterpreted what he was seeing." She talked to me for about fifteen minutes. At the beginning of our conversation, I firmly believed that if I didn't kill them, that they were going to kill one or more of us. After our talk I started to think that maybe there was a sliver of a chance that I didn't have to kill them. Just having an itty-bitty doubt about shooting them**

**gave me a great sense of relief. I did not want to kill two guys that I had once considered friends. I did not want to spend the rest of my life in a nasty old prison.**

**Just then, I saw Dave and Mike coming up the front walk. I stuck my fully loaded gun in my back pocket in case I was going to have to shoot them. When they walked in the living room they did not appear to be armed. I confronted them immediately. I told them what Danny had told me. "Oh shit, I'm sorry Dick" Mike stated. "Dave and I were just fucking around. I**

had taken the bullets out of the .357 so he could play with it. He was just joking about you not shooting anyone.” It was a stupid fucking story and it strained the bounds of credibility, but it got my off of the brink.

We sat at the dining room table and I told them that twenty minutes previous, I had been planning on shooting both of them in the back the moment that they walked into the house but that Jane had talked me down. I pulled my gun out of my pocket and showed it to them in order to hammer home the point. There was a string of profuse apologies on their part. They realized how close they had come. We all sincerely thanked Jane for interceding.

We worked out an agreement. Dave promised that he would never set foot in the house again, and I told him that if he did, and he was unarmed, I would figure out some way to deal with it rather than shooting him. If he showed up with a gun, all bets were off.

I learned two lessons from this near-murder experience. One, that paranoia is highly contagious. And two, even when you are completely sober, never be more than 98% certain of anything. Even if you see it with your own two eyes and hear it with your own two ears. Always leave 2% for total insanity.

## **My Hooter Is Crazier. Chapter Five. Stick Up**

**Things were winding down. Dave's heroin money from his Viet Nam days had run out, he was looking to legally change his name, and leave the state in hopes of kicking the meth. Then making a fresh start far far away. Mike's unemployment had ended and he and Dave's long-term high amp run had drained the household of our group energy. Jane had had enough and was talking divorce. Jean and I were over the "honeymoon phase" and exploring other options. Mick was the only one that remained calm, cool, and collected.**

**I was still extremely pissed off at Mike for letting Dave wave his .357 around in our home and his general disregard for anyone or anything that did not involve his getting massively fucked up on speed. But there was something about seeing the once mighty "tweaker outlaw king" broke, filthy, and squirming around on our living room couch, as Jane had banished him from their bedroom. He was suffering through a dreadful crash, and it tugged at my heartstrings. After a day or two of trying to ignore him, I finally gave in. I started bringing him soup and always made sure he had a bottle of water nearby, while encouraging him to drink it frequently. He looked and sounded pitiful. No one else wanted**

**anything to do with him. After about a week he was able to pull**

**himself together, take a shower, and put on some clean clothes that I had washed for him.**

**Then he started to pour his heart out to me. He was not only broke; he was in debt to the tune of about eight hundred bucks to his local meth dealer and the guy had cut him off until he paid up. He understood why Jane wanted a divorce and why we all wanted him out of the house but he had no idea what to do or where to go.**

**I was out and about for a couple of days. When I returned home, I was glad to see that he had been staying off the speed and was regaining his energy and health. I was not so glad to hear about the plan he had come up with to pay off his drug debt. He had decided to stick up a bar. “Never stiff your drug dealer or your lawyer” he offered in the way of an explanation. A young buddy of he and Jane’s, Tom, from Garnavillo had recently moved to CR and was working as a mechanic at the local Ford dealership. That gave him access to a master key that worked on all of the late model Fords in the lot. And right down the street from there was a bar/restaurant called The Ground Round.**



**Mike's plan was simple. Tom would slip him the master key after he got off work. About an hour before the Ground**

**Round closed and the cash register was full, Mike would park his car a block from the Ford lot. He would then steal one of their cars, drive the few blocks over to the restaurant, slip a nylon stocking over his head to obscure his appearance, enter the restaurant waving the .357 at the cashier and demand the contents of the till. Then he would drive back to the lot, park the car where he had taken it from, run over to his car, drive to Tom's and give him back the master key so Tom could return it to his workplace first thing the next morning.**

**Even though I was deeply disturbed by the potential for violence, I still did not want to see him get busted and I knew that there would be no changing his mind. So, I told him that I would help him if he would unload the pistol and only use it as a prop to scare the cashier into doing as told. I also stated that he and I would synchronize watches so that I could call the restaurant from a pay phone three minutes before he entered and ask that they page the name of a fictitious customer to come to the phone. That would effectively keep their line tied up so there would be a delay in**

**them being able to phone the cops. More time for Mike to make his getaway.**

**It all worked out slick as shit. The getaway car was never traced back to Tom's workplace. Mike made away with more than enough to pay off his dealer, and even though there was probably emotional trauma, no one at the Ground Round was**

**physically injured. The unintended consequence that I had failed to foresee, was that Mike was back in the good graces of his dealer with some extra cash for the next purchase. This immediately led him to start back on the meth and getting young Tom started on it as well. Poop on a stick.**

## **My Hooter Is Crazier. Chapter Six. Final Straw**

**The bad news was that Mike was back shooting meth and had gotten Tom hooked too. The good news was that he had gotten the message loud and clear and steered clear of M St while cranking except to stop by, quietly and quickly, to pick up a few necessities being careful not to disturb the rest of us or leave a mess. But even that was no longer acceptable due to Mike's consistent potential for another round of unhinged behavior. Who knew what shit he might pull next. Tom had a one-bedroom apartment to himself. Mike moved in and that became their party headquarters. Jane had contacted an attorney to start divorce proceedings and was informed that Mike would have to legally change his residence with the Department of Motor Vehicles in order to start the 90-day timeline before papers could be filed. Mike went to the DMV and reported his change of address to Tom's place and was issued a new driver's license with the new address. Unfortunately, he did not apply for a change of address on his vehicle registration.**

**I was still doing factory work full-time but had grown my retail pot business to the point that I was making as much from that as my paycheck. I had quickly**

**figured out that working a legit job and dealing cannabis paired well together. No undercover narc was going to work a hard 40 at some shitty factory job in**

**order to bust a few pot smokers. And most of my young co-workers were serious consumers of the wacky tobacky. Plus, they had steady incomes. There was a bar right down the street that cashed paychecks after our four to midnight shift on Friday night. I never had to cash mine right away as my customers would sign theirs over at the bar and immediately buy an ounce or two off me, for cash, in the parking lot. Jean and I were each seeing other folks but had not admitted it to each other. Mick was copacetic, as usual.**

**As must happen with all speed freaks without a trust fund, the party had to come to an end for Mike and Tom. They were out of cash and out of speed. Tom called in sick to work and took a few days off to suffer through his first crash. Mike was determined to find a way to keep his buzz going even though he was broke, coming down hard, and looked it. But he was not going back in debt to his dealer.**

**“I’ve decided to rob a drug store tonight for pills and cash” he explained late one evening while visiting me**

**in the living room at M St. His eyes were dilated from the speed still in his system but the levels were not high enough to keep his breathing from being ragged and his head from bobbing as he verged on nodding out. I made a couple of futile efforts to talk him out of it but he was having none of it. He knew where the drugs were, he still had his hog leg .357, and he was determined to get off right away. “You know most of the drug stores now have silent alarms that the pharmacists can activate under the counter with their finger or on the floor with their foot? The cops will arrive with no lights or sirens withing minutes. You will be lucky if you don’t get shot and will for sure end up doing years in prison” I stated. “I don’t give a fuck if I get killed. It would be better than feeling like this. But I sure as hell don’t want to go to prison” he replied.**

**I mulled it over for a while then presented another option. “Most grade schools have a supply of Dexedrine in the nurse’s office. While it is illegal for adults to choose to take it without a script, they require kids with behavioral issues to take it in order to stay in school.” I had learned this a couple of years earlier when I had volunteered to work with an 8-year-old kid who had been under such a mandate due to his behavioral outbursts in third grade. “Since**

**schools are closed for the night, you could break in and get the speed without any gunplay or threat of silent alarms and cops sneaking up on you”. My information was only half correct.**

**Since he was in no condition to drive, I volunteered to drive his car and drop him off at a nearby school and arranged to pick him up a block away after the heist. I dropped him at the darkest corner of the school, armed only with a 20-ounce framing hammer (I had insisted that he not carry his gun), I**

**then parked a block away from the school which was directly opposite from the designated rendezvous spot on the other side of the building. About five minutes later the first patrol car swooped in without lights or siren. Son of a bitch. Unbeknownst to me, this school just happened to be one of the first in the city to install the same silent alarm systems that the pharmacies had, only theirs were motion activated. Then another silent, lights out, squad car arrived. I made a quick decision.**

**Since the school was between where I was sitting and the designated pick-up spot, I could not tell if Mike had made it there before the cops showed up. Even though Mike had made it a point to not carry an ID with him, I knew that if I was pulled over near “the**

scene of the crime” driving his car, that my driver’s license and the car’s registration in his name and still listing the M St. address, would be duly noted. That would result in me being considered a co-suspect, which in turn could result in our residence being subject to search, if Mike was indeed in custody. So, I decided to take a walk.

As I strolled down the street across from the school, doing my best impression of not having a care in the world. One of the officers immediately honed in on me and waved me over. Despite his aggressive interrogation, I stuck to my story of just visiting a friend in the area and needing to get some fresh air and stretch my legs. He looked at my ID and recorded the info. He then conferred with another cop for quite a long time. Then he said to me; “we have a suspect in a squad car around back and we would like you to take a look to see if you recognize him”. “Sure” I helpfully replied. We started to walk around toward the back of the school. As we approached the squad car with back door open, I could see Mike’s legs laying across the backseat and hear him gasping for breath.

The cop waiting for us, by the car, stepped forward and waved the officer who had been accompanying me over for a private confab. They must have decided

**that it was not in their best interest for me to witness a suspect in their custody who was struggling to breathe and could possibly expire. So, I never saw any more than his legs. The original cop then walked me back to the front of the school and told me to head directly home. On this occasion I did just what the officer ordered me to.**

**I went M St. and cleaned out any and all illegal contraband that I or any of my roommates possessed while informing them that Mike was in custody and that it could result in a search warrant for our home as that was the address on his car registration. I knew that Mike would not give the cops any info willingly but that they would eventually run his prints, find out his name, and get the M St address listed on his**

**vehicle registration from the DMV. By sunrise the next morning, everything was stashed with a 100% trustworthy friend and our home was squeaky clean.**

**After two days of no contact from Mike or the authorities, I called the police station and inquired as to the status of the man who had been arrested two nights before for breaking into the local grade school. They informed me that he was in the locked psych ward at the local hospital and had refused to give his name (temporarily protecting us from them finding**



and searching our home) or any bit of information about anything. He had essentially remained mute. “Never tell the cops shit” was part of his brief but ironclad code. He did however have “Mike” tattooed on his right bicep. The police had taken to referring to him as “Mike X”.

Jane and I marched right down to the hospital and found the psych unit’s locked door. There was a window in the door and we immediately spotted Mike standing nearby. We explained to the charge nurse that I was Mike’s friend and Jane was his wife. She kindly let us in to visit and locked the door behind us. The three of us stepped off to one side for privacy and conversed in whispers. Mike, who had barely spoke in two days, started right in. “I broke the glass on that back window of the school and got right in. But when I got to the nurse’s office, the door had a heavy-duty lock and was made of two-

inch-thick solid oak. I started hacking away with the claw end of the framing hammer and I was just about through when I saw the first cop car pull in with lights and siren off. I ran back and jumped out the window and started running. Since I was coming down, I was immediately winded and the cop’s legs were about twice as long as mine. He ran me down in about three seconds, tackled me, cuffed me, then threw me in the

**back of the cop car. I heard them talking to you Dick, and then let you go. I wouldn't tell them shit so they brought me here. The nurses strapped me down for 24 hours with a saline IV. After that they asked me if I would "be good" if they took off the restraints, and I said "sure". It hasn't been bad since then. They have me on a 72 hour psych evaluation hold. Once they release me from here, I will be booked into county jail on felony B & E."**

**I replied "OK, I will get you the same good lawyer who helped me out a while back. He will meet you as soon as you are booked and will get a judge to set bail. I will be at the bail hearing and bail you out immediately."**

**"Sounds great. Thanks"**

**"Sure, thanks for keeping my name and our address out of it"**

**Mike was turned over to the cops the next day. The day after that the lawyer I hired for \$300 non-refundable retainer (which would cover his bail hearing and plea appearance but not a trial), got the judge to set bail at \$500 which I immediately paid in cash. The bail would be refundable if Mike returned for his plea and trial if he plead not guilty. I was fully cognizant that I might never see any of that money again. You don't let your buddy who was "stand up"**

**as shown by his refusal to talk, sit in jail after he protected you. My code.**

**Upon release, Mike realized that his life was going to change irrevocably and that he needed to prepare for that. He showed up for his plea hearing and pled not guilty. The lawyer wanted another thousand for a trial but Mike told him to delay the trial as long as possible and that he would pay him the thousand when the trial date approached. While he had not formulated a complete plan, he had decided that he was not going to jail or risk a trial for felony B & E which carried a 1-to-5-year sentence in state prison.**

**Once he was over the crash and the trauma of lock-up he got himself cleaned up. Since the divorce clock had been running from the time he had moved in with Tom, the court date for he and Jane to end their marriage was approaching. We decided to celebrate the upcoming event. The original five M**

**St residents and a few close friends had a little “divorce party” in the back yard with grilled meat, veggies from our garden, and plenty of cold beer. Very convivial.**

**Jane had decided she wanted to put factory work in her rearview mirror and started taking a state-of-the-art Graphics Arts class at the local**

**community college. Mick remained Mr. Cool. For the rest of the gang at M St., changes were blowing in like a spring storm.**

## **My Hooter Is Crazier. Chapter Seven. Beyond M St**

**Someone had given Mick a big gray and chrome 58 Buick that didn't run and was sitting in front of our house at M St. I had rudimentary car repair skills and Mick had zero. He asked me if I could "take a look at it", as Mike was no longer living there and not readily available for mechanical assistance. I said "Sure but I get to take it out for a cruise if I get it running". It was overcast with low iron gray clouds, but warm enough to work outside. I gave it what the old timers referred to as a "matchbook tune up". It consisted of using the sandpaper on the striking surface to clean the points and plugs, then using the thickness of the cover to set the point gap.**

**While I was working on the car, Jean came out and sauntered over, wondering whose car I was working on. I explained the situation and asked her if she wanted to go for a ride if I got it running. She said "Sure, I've got a few errands to run and I'll be back in about an hour".**

**After I'd done the tune-up, I wanted to put some fresh gas in the tank and prime the carburetor. I grabbed a gas can and took my green 51 Chevy truck over to the nearest gas station. On the way I *happened* by the**

house where one of Jean's "friends" lived. There was Jean's big red Chevy pick-up sitting

in the drive-way. Her truck looked kind of proud to be there. I went ahead and got the gas and went back home. I splashed some in the carb and put the rest in the tank. It fired right up. I was feeling good that I had been able to complete the project without having Mike for guidance. Despite his legal problems, he was once again speeding his brains out with Tom at their place.

I waited for the rest of the hour for Jean to return. Then I waited another half hour. Then I drove the Buick over to the guy's place where her truck was. I knocked on the door and after a minute he answered. He was a fashionable hippie with native jewelry, suede fringe jacket, and leather headband. His hair was nicely coiffed and hung loose around his shoulders. I was a working-class hippie with grease-stained bibs over a flannel shirt. My hair was tied back with a rubber band and a backwards ball cap (before that was cool) kept the stragglers out of my face while I worked. He was a good-looking guy and knew it. I tried to avoid looking in the mirror. It was easy to understand why she wanted to hang with him. I asked to speak to Jean.

**She came to the door looking like a lamb being led to slaughter. I had yelled and sworn a few times around her, but had never been violent. She appeared to be on the verge of tears. I was being very calm, so I didn't understand her**

**reaction until later she told me that her and the dude had been tripping on acid when I showed up. I asked her if we were still going for that ride. She said no she was staying there. I said "Fine" and left.**

**I tried to tell myself that I didn't care and had plenty of other females I could spend time with. But there is just something about seeing the person, that you were about to break up with, on the arms of another. They become the most desirable person in the world and you can't dream of anyone who you would rather be with. I felt sick as I drove away into my bleak future without Jean. Gray car, gray day, gray feelings.**

**I decided to swing by and see my buddy and former roommate, Greg. He always had a very down to earth way of cutting through the drama of life. He did not let me down. When I arrived, he was taking everything out of his basement and setting it on the lawn in order to do a thorough spring cleaning. As I went on to describe how my day was going so far, I noticed that he had reversed his routine and was putting the items**

back into the basement. When I asked him about it, he said, “I can clean the basement later. We need to take a road trip in that big old Buick.”

Greg directed me to the far side of town where his friend Robin lived. I had known Robin for a while and enjoyed his mischievous grin and offbeat sense of humor. From Robin’s place we headed north out of Cedar Rapids on hi-way 13, talking of maybe visiting Greg’s cousin Gary up by Harper’s Ferry, Iowa. The Buick ran like a champ on the open road and there was plenty of room for the three of us to spread out and get comfy. We stopped and picked up a twelve pack of cold cheap beer at the first small town. As we downed some beers and passed around a joint, Greg explained to Robin about my romantic setback. This led to Robin and Greg relating their own tales of broken hearts. It soon transformed from tragedy into comedy. Just what I needed.

Somewhere along the way we started to climb into the hill country of NE Iowa. Even though I had lived in Iowa all of my life, I hadn’t really explored this area. On top of that, hi-way 13 was under construction and we were detoured onto back gravel roads. On top of that it was getting dark. On top of that I was getting pretty fucked up. About that time, I saw the flashing red lights in the rear-view mirror. Shit.



**As the officer approached our stopped car, we tried to kick the empties under the seat and stash the pot out of sight. I may have been endangering us and everyone else on the road by driving impaired, but I sure as hell wasn't guilty of littering. As**

**he shined his flashlight in my face, he inquired as to where we were going. "We are going to visit Gary Damon" I blurted instinctively. He shined Greg and Robin. The car reeked of pot and we had all obviously been drinking. He just said "I think you should let one of your buddies drive", I replied "sure". He turned, walked back to his car, and drove away. Kids, don't try this today, things have changed. I rotated out of the driver's seat and Greg slid over and took the wheel while robin moved into the "shotgun" position. I crawled into the back seat and immediately passed out.**

**I woke up on the floor of a small house that I had never been in before, with the morning sun beating un-mercifully down on my face. And I had one king hell of a hang-over. A splitting headache, roiling stomach, and an overflowing bladder. After a quick look around, I was unable to spot a bathroom, or Greg, or Robin, or any other human. Time was running out, so I shot out the back door, unzipped, and let it rip. Then I began to take stock of my location. A**

neighborhood sparsely populated with small trailers and thankfully no people in sight to watch me pee. I was surrounded by steep majestic hills interspersed with many visible limestone bluffs four to five hundred feet high. The hillsides were covered with an intoxicating mix of conifers and hardwoods. Through the fog in my head cut a single, clear, undeniable thought. "This is the kind of place I

have been fantasizing about moving to". All of a sudden it seemed that the fantasy could possibly become a reality.

I stood there for quite a while just soaking in the gorgeous day, the fantastic place, and completely forgot about the hang-over. Until I started to get really cold. I went back inside and found the boys sleeping in actual beds in actual bedrooms. I woke them up and started babbling about how beautiful it was outside. They didn't mind being woken up and were soon teasing me about how drunk I'd been the night before and how they'd basically carried me in from the car. I found out that we were in Harper's Ferry, Iowa at Gary Damon's dad's summer cabin, and we had the place to ourselves. After a run to the local convenience store for some crappy food and more crappy beer we

headed out of town to find the farm house where Gary was living.

Harper's is situated in the broad valley of the Mississippi river. As we drove out of town and headed north, the big river, which was miles wide at that point, was on our immediate right and the towering bluffs on our left. Harper's Ferry is a town of summer residents so most of the small trailers and a few cabins that comprised the bulk of the settlement were closed up for at least another month. We went about a mile on the gravel and took a left on Whippoorwill Lane. In about one more mile we pulled up in front of a ramshackle farm

house. It was a dirty white two-story place with a half dozen dogs running out to greet us. It had a couple of old cars parked by the road and a wheel chair ramp up to the front porch.

Gary greeted us at the front door with hugs and a big grin on his blue-eyed, boyishly handsome face, framed by long curly blond hair. He took us right in and introduced us to Jim, who was encamped off the living room in a small bedroom. Jim was lying on a waterbed set up to accommodate his needs as a quadriplegic. I didn't think that I had ever met a "quad" before. But Jim had intelligent eyes and

**seemed thrilled to have company. He wasn't shy about giving instructions on how to include him in the beer drinking and joint sharing. We settled in around his bed and started to party.**

**Jim was in his early thirties and had been paralyzed from the neck down, for about three years. After he had earned his Master's Degree in Nuclear Engineering down in Knoxville, Tennessee, he had bought the 180-acre farm with family money, and moved in with his girlfriend Pam and her two kids from a previous marriage. He had then applied for a job at the nearby Genoa Boiling Water nuclear energy plant. The day of his job interview, his girlfriend, her kids, and a bunch of others were planning on going swimming at the local sand quarry. He called the nuclear plant and asked if he could re-schedule the interview for the next day and they said he could. They all went to the quarry, where they had swum many times before and he dove into a spot where he had dove into many times before. But the overflow of water into the quarry from the nearby Mississippi had moved the sand around on the floor of the swimming hole. What had been deep was now shallow. His head hit the bottom and his neck snapped. No more engineering job, no more running the hills with his**

**dogs, no more making love to his girlfriend. No more life as he knew it.**

**But he seemed to be enjoying what he had. I would find out about the depression and suicidal ideation later. He was very intelligent and had a wicked sense of humor. Those characteristics were not impaired. I also met the other folks living there including his brother Tom, Tom's wife Vicki, Jim's girlfriend and her two kids Albert and Margaret. It functioned as a little commune with Jim paying the bills and everyone chipping in on helping with his personal cares and doing a taking care of a horse and a cow.**

**As the day wore on, I took a long walk up and down the hills, checked out the creek, and flirted with the women. It seemed like paradise to me. At some point later in the day, as I was telling Jim how much I loved his place, he said "You can come live here too, if you will help take care of me". Upon returning to CR, I immediately broke things off with Jean, and let her,**

**Jane, and Mick know that I was off to fulfill my dream of living in the county. I invited them all to come visit me once I got settled in at the commune and they seemed eager to do so. I also wound up other loose ends in Cedar Rapids. I notified my cannabis customers that I would be delivering on an every-**

other-week schedule then packed all of my worldly possessions into my pick-up truck, and was back in Jim's room within a week. I hadn't unpacked anything yet and still wasn't sure which room I would be crashing in.

We were just smoking the ceremonial first joint and drinking a few beers. A newer pick-up came sliding into the parking area and an older, very attractive woman whose name turned out to be Patsy, rushed into the house without knocking, and into Jim's room. Out of breath, she exclaimed "One of my cows is giving birth and the calf is stuck halfway. I need someone to help me pull it out". I thought "This is it. *I'm living in the country now.*" I told her that I would help. Without any introductions being made, we jumped in her truck and raced back to her place. She tied a rope around the calf's fore legs, handed me the other end, and told me to pull on her signal. I did, and that calf popped right out. And just like that I had started my metamorphosis from city boy to country man.

I was assigned a mattress on the floor of one of the upstairs bedrooms that I shared with Gary, Tom, and Vicki. Pam and

**her kids occupied the other upstairs bedroom. The numbers fluctuated as new people came and went. I had also kept a spot with a mattress in the basement of M St to crash on when business brought me back to CR.**

**Meanwhile Mike was developing a plan to flee Iowa and the law for good.**

## **My Hooter Is Crazier. Chapter Eight. Mike Visits The Commune**

**On my bi-weekly visits to CR to service my pot customers I would also visit Jean, Jane, and Mick, often sleeping on the mattress in the basement. Mick had taken my place in Jean's bed and Jane had started dating her Graphic Arts instructor Ken T.**

**I would also stop over at Mike and Tom's place. They were staying relatively clean, eschewing intravenous meth but popping a few dexies or white crosses on occasion. Mike's trial was scheduled for a couple of months in the future and his plan was to be long gone before the court date. He just had not worked out the details.**

**I told him how much I loved living in the country at the commune. Since he had loathed living in the country and working his ass off on the farm from a young age it was hard for him to imagine the idyllic life I was describing. I invited him to come up for a visit and he accepted. He was soon sitting in Jim's room and getting the lay of the land. We found him a serviceable used mattress that he plopped down next to mine. The guy I had once vowed that I never wanted to lay eyes on again was bunking about eighteen inches away.**



The chores that had to be accomplished daily were mainly those associated with taking care of Jim's medical needs and his personal cares like wiping his ass, frequently changing his position in bed in the constant battle against bedsores, and feeding him. We also had a cow to milk and a horse suitable for riding. Mike was well versed in the animal husbandry tasks but needed thorough training in Jim's cares and was soon helping with all of them except inserting catheters in Jim's penis and suppositories up his poop shoot. I handled those exclusively. We (with the exception of Mike) smoked pot in the morning and drank beer in the afternoon Thank you Mr. Charlie Daniels.

Pot was the one drug that Mike hated. But he did enjoy the drinking of the brewskis. He and Jim hit it off immediately. I had given Jim a detailed and open account of Mike's predilections for speed and criminal behavior. He had not batted an eyelash at welcoming a felonious, meth devotee into his home. I had told Mike that shooting drugs or getting overly fucked up on speed, in pill form, at the commune would not be tolerated. No such limit was placed on getting drunk.

Mike's visit was originally planned to only last a couple of days, but he liked everyone and everyone

**liked him. His frank approach to non-judgmentally asking women if they would**

**like to fuck was well received by the free-spirited ladies who lived and visited the commune.**

**Mike and I began to spend time discussing his future. I had lost a good portion of my pot customers due to my only being available every other weekend. In Cedar Rapids, Mike had gotten work at the local meat packing plant in CR but hated it and had only lasted a month. So, neither of us had a legal job and funds were running low.**

**Mike had decided to once again flee his legal problems by heading to the Bay Area in California before his court date. To that end he had gotten back in touch with his old biker buddy in Alameda, Glen. He had told him the whole story, including his soon to be fugitive status, but Glen was still amenable and told Mike to let him know when he would be arriving. This led to us deciding that he should ask Glen about sending us some white cross amphetamines that were rapidly gaining popularity with the new friends I was making in the country. Since the commune was only about 45 miles north of where Jean, Jane, and Mike had grown up there were a lot of Mike's old pals there**

who were also potential customers for the little white pills.

Mike did contact Glen about sending us some “whites” and Glen said “Sure, just send me \$600 cash, and I will mail you back 1000 good pills.” We had to do a little scrounging and borrowing but we made the nut and got the money in the mail.

We were looking at a 10 day to two week turn around, so Mike continued to help out as he and I covered the bulk of the daily cares for Jim and the chores around the farm. Every evening, we hung out with Jim in his room. Jim and I smoked much pot and the three of us consumed many beers. One night, I was getting very sleepy, so I said my good nights and headed upstairs and crashed. In the middle of the night, I heard a terrible racket that sounded like a bag of rocks bouncing down the stairs followed by pained hollering. Mike had woken up to take a pee, got disoriented, staggered to his left and walked off the top step instead of into the bathroom straight across the hall. I went down and checked on him. He was still very drunk but had not sustained serious injury. I helped him back up to the bathroom and went back to bed.

The next morning upon awaking he went down to Jim's room. Jim had heard the middle-of-the-night commotion and cussing. He inquired as to the cause. "Oh, that was me falling down the stairs when I meant to go to the bathroom. I was drunker than a Hooter" (Mike's bastardization of the old saw 'I

was drunker than a Hoot Owl). From that moment forward, he was known to new friends and old as "Hooter".

Jim and I had agreed that having a very unforgettable guy named "Mike" in residence, who was soon to become a wanted fugitive, was not ideal. Mike switching over to the moniker of Hooter was great timing. We made sure to correct anyone who still tried to call him Mike. "Oh, you mean Hooter, right?".

A few days later 1000 pure amphetamine white crosses arrived in the mail courtesy of the United States Postal System. There had begun to be a lot of bogus white crosses circulating that only had caffeine as the active ingredient.

Ours were the real deal. Jim and I had thought that we were getting Hooter a bit under the radar with his new handle. Then the Hoot and I started quickly becoming the most popular dudes in the tri-county area due to our high-quality stimulate goodies. Even though his

**new nickname was quickly catching on, there were a lot of his old friends, who had then become customers, who still called him Mike no matter how many times we insisted that they address him as Hooter.**

## **My Hooter Is Crazier. Chapter Nine. Branching Out**

**Ever since Jane had mentioned that she was dating her Graphic Arts instructor, Ken T., and that the course was being taught in a new, state of the art, Graphic Arts lab, the little hamster wheel in my brain had been spinning.**

**Back in my freshman year at the U of Iowa, while living in the dorm, I had made a pretty decent fake driver's license for myself so that I could buy booze. The legal age to buy alcohol in Iowa was 21, which my fake stated I was. I was actually all of 18 and looked about 16. But I was never turned down while using it. When I had showed it to my roommates and a few dozen "close" buddies, they all wanted one. A cottage industry was born. I was making some extra cash and the local state-run liquor store was recording record sales.**

**By the time I made my next trip to CR and M St. house to service my dwindling batch of pot customers, I had connected the remaining dots in my brain and had a proposition for Jane to pass on to her boyfriend/instructor. If they could produce high quality fake IDs in the lab, I would market them and we could split the profits.**

The next day Jane got back to me. Ken was all in, and in his position of Graphic Arts Instructor, was able to order the exact same security paper that the state of Iowa used to print the real licenses, using the rationale that it was needed for student projects. He had also expanded on my original idea and was planning on printing social security cards, draft cards, and security guard IDs. A man after my own heart. I would later find out that he had bigger things in mind than me selling a few fake IDs. He had realized that the stellar quality IDs could be used by the students he was recruiting to go with Jane and he to buy all of the equipment needed to outfit a soon to be stolen sailboat. A sailboat that they would sail down the Gulf of Mexico and onward along the Mexican coast. He also figured that they could also use the IDs to kite some bad checks in order to finance the trip.

Hooter and I were selling the hell out of the white crosses. As soon as we amassed another \$600, we immediately sent it out to Glen hoping we would be restocked before we ran out of the first shipment of our popular product. Within two weeks we had the next thousand. Also, top shelf quality.

Hooter was uncharacteristically squirreling away most of his share of the profits for his move out west. Of course, he and I were consuming a portion of the pills

**under the guise of “quality control”. I had always been good at stashing my cash,**

**so between the two of us we were able to place another order with Glen. Since we were flush and sales were through the roof, we decided to go big and up our order to two thousand whites. We scraped together all the cash we had plus got a few of our best customers to front us some more in exchange for a discount when the next 2000 arrived.**

**Meanwhile the first of the ID sets were rolling off of the presses. Jane had explained Hooter’s intention to “go fugitive” instead of appearing in court, to her new boyfriend/instructor. Consequently, Hooter was gifted with the first full set. They were very high quality. Put my little dorm project to shame. Hooter had given them the name he wanted to assume and they had used a Selectric brand typewriter, that they stole from the school lab, to enter the info onto the phony “State of Iowa Driver’s License”. The exact same make and model machine that the DMV used. Hooter’s new pseudonym was Dave Adams.**

**Hoot now had the pertinent details figured and necessary documents needed to formulate his plan and the timeline he would use. After we sold the next 2000 pills, he would have plenty of dough to buy a**



decent car, then use his new identity documents to safely drive it out to Glen's place in Alameda with cash left over to live on. He was planning to immediately obtain a legit job with his new ID and quickly have enough

money to get his own place. He would limit his speed use to the pills and attempt to fly under the radar to avoid contact with the law out in Cali. I told him that it was an excellent plan and I would do whatever he needed me to do, while I stayed at the commune, in order to launch it.

Then the first hitch occurred. It was a biggie. The 2000 whites arrived and they were bogus. It took about 10 minutes after he and I ingested our test dose to realize that this batch contained caffeine instead of amphetamine. Shit! He immediately called Glen who had a serious sit-down with the dealer he had been using. The dealer apologized and said that he would "make it right", but it would take a while as he had invested all most of the money, we had sent to obtain the 2000 bogus pills. So, he was now screwed as well, since the guy he had bought them from was not willing to make a refund. He was not able to give us an exact date for when he would give us either a cash refund or quality product paid for out of his own pocket.

**Hooter's trial date was approaching and his lawyer was demanding another \$1000 to start with trial prep. Hoot had a couple hundred in cash, I had a few hundred more, and we still had a few dozen of the full-strength white crosses. It was time for him to get the fuck out of Dodge. Once again, my heartstrings were being tugged by this guy who was very**

**capable of annoying the hell out of me if not majorly pissing me off. I followed my heart and told him: "Buy the cheapest car you can find and I will go with you to make sure that you get to Glen's. Then we will get our money or pills, split them, and I will return to the commune."**

**Within a week, for a mere \$20, Mr. Dave Adams aka Hooter, had obtained a dirty white (actual dirt) 62 Mercury sedan, with 4 bald tires, and leaking fluids from every reservoir and/or line that contained the juices necessary for running a car. We bought a case of 50 weight motor oil and placed it in the trunk along with a fully stocked tool box, and a couple of meager bags of clothes and toiletries.**

**I let Jim and the others at the commune know that I would be gone for a week or two without revealing where or the fact that I would be traveling with Hooter. Jim alone, was privy to the who and where. Hoot made**

**a couple more calls to Glen in hopes that our refund was or would soon be in hand. He was informed that it was not going to happen any time in the near future. We decided that we would get it straightened out in person when we got to California. Hooter's trusty .357 was discreetly hidden in the nether regions of the trunk. A few days later we pulled out of Cedar Rapids on a wing and a prayer plus a handful of the remaining full-strength amphetamines.**

## **My Hooter Is Crazier. Chapter Ten. Crossing Over Donner's Pass**

**As we arrived at the top of Donner's Pass, we pulled onto the wide shoulder designed for travelers who were interested in digesting a bit of the infamous historical locale. We shut off the car, got out, and shared our feelings of exhilaration. The trip had been touch and go all the way. In addition to the legal precariousness, we'd had to deal with various and sundry car problems. There had been major leaks in the power steering fluid and the tranny. Turned out that the fifty-weight crank case oil also slowed down the leaks in both of those systems as well. At one point in Wyoming, the car was missing so badly that we knew it would never make it through the mountains. So, we stopped on the side of the road, and after about an hour, found a loose wire from the coil to the distributor that was causing the problem. Easy fix once diagnosed.**

**After a few minutes to enjoy the view and get a renewed confidence that we might actually complete the journey, we fired the old Merc up and pulled back onto I-80 heading west. Once over the pass it was downhill all the way to the Bay Area and Hooter's old biker buddy Glen. We cruised down the mountain and**

arrived in Alameda with a grand feeling of having accomplished a harrowing feat. When we knocked on Glen's door a huge German Shepard started barking ferociously and jumping on the door from the other side with enough force that I seriously considered that the door might not hold. It did, but Glen did not answer. The dog eventually settled down and we did not knock again. We waited in the car until Glen eventually showed up and let us in. He introduced us to the dog, Damien, who weighed in at one- thirty-five and was an un-neutered male. Pure alpha. Damien did not seem interested in making new friends. Glen told us that his white cross contact was still planning to replace the bogus speed with quality product, but had to make a few sales to cover his loss on the bad pills first. Glen showed us the guest room and we settled in.

There was a dearth of entertainment options at Glen's place. No TV, no stereo, just a little box radio that did not work. The next day I took the radio to a repair shop and got it fixed so we could at least listen to the many great Bay Area rock stations.

Glen's house was half a block from the Bay. There was a little rock-strewn beach there that was not very inviting but we checked it out on the second day

anyway. Being by the ocean was a huge novelty for us boys from Eye-Oh-Way. Low and behold the only people on the beach, besides us, were an absolutely stunning young woman named Candy in a small

bikini, and her friend who I have no memory of. Candy was very friendly and gave us her phone number. She said that she lived with a bunch of friends and we should come by and hang out. Perfect.

We were damn near broke so we were reluctant to go hang with our new friend since we could not afford to bring anything to the party and still have money left for daily living expenses. We sat at Glen's, day in and day out, listening to the radio, and taking long walks on the beach hoping to run into gorgeous Candy. We not only did not see her, but the beach was pretty much deserted every day. Day six was a Saturday and we decided to pool what little cash we had left and go to Frisco for some night life. Screw being on a self-imposed budget. What kind of exciting nightlife could one partake of in early 70s San Fran for thirty bucks? Not much in the legal realm which was OK with us. The twelve pack of cheap-ass Brown Derby sixteen-ounce cans of beer that we bought for four bucks was legal. Drinking them in the car while driving into San Francisco was not. We headed for the

**Fillmore district which was known as a popular retail area for those in need of sex for pay and drugs.**

**We checked in with a couple of ladies working the street but were not able to negotiate anything in the fifteen-dollar range as we were saving the other eleven for drugs. Some took**

**umbrage at our low-ball offer. Hooter had ten of what we had brought along for the night stashed in a money belt that he was wearing. It looked to the world like a normal belt.**

**We were two cars back at a red light discussing what to do next when the light turned green. The car ahead of us did not move. We had no place to be so we waited patiently but the car behind us did not. They started to lay on the horn in a very persistent fashion. After about thirty seconds of that, four or five young black guys jumped out of the stalled car in front of us and came at our car very aggressively. “Quit honkin that fuckin horn or we’re gonna kick your fuckin ass”. “We weren’t honkin the fuckin horn. It’s the guy behind us”, Hooter cheekily replied. “Oh, sorry” the young men meekly intoned and turned their anger toward the car behind us who quickly threw it in reverse and backed away down the street at high speed.**

**“What’s wrong with your car?” we inquired. “We’re out of gas”.**

**“Want some help?”**

**“Sure, thanks”.**

**Hooter and I got out and helped them hand push their car through the intersection and into a parking spot. We then pulled our car up behind them. We asked if they had a gas can which they did not. They put together a few bucks and two of them came with us to the nearest gas station. We bought gas and I borrowed the station's can using my Iowa driver's license as a deposit for return of said can. When we got back to their car Hooter primed the carburetor and put the rest into the tank. It fired right up. They were amazed at how quickly we had gotten them back on the road. They asked if there was anything they could do for us. “Sure”, we chimed in unison. “I want speed.” Hooter said. “I want a hooker” I added. “We can fix you up with some working girlfriends for free but you will have to pay for the drugs as we have no cash.” Cool. It looked like the remaining twenty-six bucks was going to cover all of our wants and needs.**

**The guys told us to follow them, so we did. They drove a crazy zig zag route up and down steep San Fran hills, stopped to vandalize the car of a driver who**



had committed some minor infraction in their minds. We then ended up driving the wrong way up a steep one lane street where they finally pulled over and got out. We were drunk enough to ignore the glaring danger signals that they were putting out, so we pulled in behind them.

One guy came to Hooter's window and another came to mine. We both rolled down our windows. Hooter's guy said "Give me the cash and I'll go score the speed, then we'll go party with some girls we know". Hoot pulled his bill fold out, opened it up in plain sight, and asked how much. The dude snatched his wallet then reached into the back seat and grabbed the crappy stereo speakers we had installed for the trip. Hooter said "I don't give a shit about the money and speakers, but I really need that ID. I am on the run from a felony drug bust and if I don't get that fake driver's license back, I'm fucked." The guy took the cash and speakers and threw the wallet, with ID, back into Hoot's lap. Meanwhile the guy on my side said "Give me all your money". I chuckled which was probably a mistake. I said "Your welcome to it". He said "get out of the car" which I did. That was *definitely* a mistake. I didn't even have a billfold on me just some loose coins. I dug them out of my pocket, still chuckling, and said "Here you go". At that point I

**was staring at the change in my open hand and counting it so when I told the story back home, I could give an accurate account of the great haul that my mugger made off with. Thirty-seven cents. My mistakes just kept compounding themselves. Focusing on my hand, I did not see the round house punch coming. It landed right on my**

**nose with enough momentum to re-arrange my schnoz and create a starboard list that exists to this day. I then flew backwards down the steep hill and rolled completely over a full revolution. I ended up ingloriously perched on my hands and knees on the dirty sidewalk bleeding profusely. For a few seconds I was so stunned that I did not know what I was doing down there. Then I looked up at the guy towering over me, and I remembered. Even though I was in about the most vulnerable position possible my temper exploded. “You fucking assholes. We fucking helped you get your fucking car going and you do this shit.” They could have easily stomped me into the pavement but they apparently had some conscience because they jumped into their car and took off.**

**Hooter was more upset than I was. “If I would have had my .357, I would have blown their shit away” (I had thankfully insisted he leave it at Glen’s for our trip into the city). I was just relieved that they were gone**

and was starting to calm down as the bleeding slowed. “They’re just some young guys trying to show off for each other. Hopefully they will grow out of it. Let’s get some more beer.”

Hoot got the ten out of his money belt and we stopped at the first convenience store and scored another twelve of Brown Derby sixteen-ounce beers. My nose was obviously broken and there was a wide swath of blood from the middle of my

face down to the toes of my shoes. Even in that tough part of San Fran, folks were giving me a wide berth. By that point I was finding it kind of amusing. Back in the car, I chugged a quick couple of the large cans of Brown Derby. Soon I was starting to feel pretty good again as we headed back to Glen’s

A few days later the replacement speed finally arrived late one night. But it was not the white crosses we were expecting. It was a half an ounce of pure crystal meth and a couple hundred bucks. I was glad to get the cash but the customer base for meth and white crosses was very different. My customers back in Iowa, were working class folks that liked to do a pill or two to get through the work day. Then do a few more on week-end nights so that they could party late and drink loads of beer. Whereas crystal meth users were

usually hard-core speed freaks who often mainlined the meth and stayed wired day and night until it was all gone. They were almost invariably unemployed and paid for the drugs through stealing, conning, and/or ripping off their dealer. Hooter, on the other hand, was thrilled. He immediately put together a “rig” and started shooting it directly into the vein of his left arm while I snorted much smaller doses at much less frequent intervals. Glen was joining in the fun and was snorting it as well. The plan was that we would *do* seven grams and *sell* seven grams. Ha-fucking-ha.

It had been less than stimulating to hang out at Glen’s with virtually no entertainment before, but high on speed it was torturous. At two am on the second night of cranking, we headed out to an all-night bookstore in Oakland that Glen wanted to visit. Hooter had never read a book in his life so he just twitched around up and down the aisles for a few minutes then went out on the street to size up the action.

I was looking for Carlos Castaneda’s “The Teachings of Don Juan”, which I was really into at the time. I thought that it would be a nice thank you gift to Glen for putting us up and making things right on the speed deal.

About the time that I spied the book I was looking for, a semi-attractive young woman sporting an obvious “hooker look” approached. She started up a conversation asking me how I was doing while she giggled and fanned her right boob with the pages of the current bestselling paperback “The Happy Hooker”. I said “Great” and she came back with “Do you want to party?” I knew what that meant from my truck driving days. I replied “Let me ask my friends what *they* want to do.” She asked “Is that them in front of the store?” “Yep, that’s them”. We made our way over to the check-out area so that I could pay for my book. While I was waiting for the cashier to show up, my new friend slid her hand along the edge of the counter, then on to my crotch, and gave it a

friendly squeeze. I was a bit self-conscious but it did feel pretty damn good.

When we were all gathered out front of the bookstore, we negotiated a deal. She offered three blow jobs for twenty-five bucks. Glen and Hoot were amenable but I said “How much for two BJ’s and a fuck?” She came back with “Don’t be difficult. It will be a lot quicker, easier, and cheaper if I don’t have to take off my clothes then put them back on.” Being the people pleaser that I am, I went along with her proposal. She stated that she had a room nearby that we could go to.

**So, we all piled into Glen's car where his gigantic German Shepard, Damien was waiting impatiently in the back seat. I had been making a daily effort to gain the dog's trust and friendship ever since we had arrived but was making scant progress. Still, Damien liked me better than Hoot, so I got in the back with him, while the working gal sat between Glen and Hooter in the front. The dog took an immediate dislike to her, emitting a very menacing low growl from the back of his throat. I was trying to calm him by talking to him and petting him but that just seemed to piss him off more and I was getting very worried about a scenario where he went after me in that confined space. Glen was also attempting to talk him down to no avail. Meanwhile Hoot was trying to see how far he could stick his tongue down the gal's throat and she was returning the favor.**

**Thankfully we soon arrived at the hotel where she had her room. Then she gave us the news. "I'm not supposed to be doing business out of my room, so only one of you can come up at a time". That felt like a potential set up to me, exacerbated by the fact that I had recently been mugged.**

**Glen said "I'll go first and make sure it is safe". Glen had a black belt in some form of martial art so it made sense. We all chipped in until the gal had the agreed**

upon twenty-five bucks in hand. Then away her and Glen went. The dog immediately calmed down which surprised me, as I thought that having Glen leave might be a problem.

Hooter and I settled in for a bit of a wait but low and behold Glen was back within a few minutes. He got in the car and laid the twenty-five on the front seat and said "That was not a woman". Apparently, he had been suspicious, so when they were in the room he reached down to "her" crotch area and felt male genitalia concealed under a tight wrap. I was a bit shocked but Hooter was completely unruffled. "Could have fooled me". "Yeah, *he* sure as shit did fool you", I cracked.

We went back to Glen's and wiled the rest of the night doing more speed and jabbering incessantly. By the time the sun came up, Hooter and I decided that since we now had

something to "bring to the party", we would go visit lovely Candy and her roommates later that night. We called her to make sure it was OK for us to show up and she assured us that it was.

Their place was a nice but funky old house set up for five or six folks to co-habitate in. It was reminiscent of the house on M St. that Hooter and I had lived in back

**in CR. Right away we received the bad news when Candy introduced us to her boyfriend Matt. He was a nice enough guy but not so nice that he would be OK with either of us dating his girlfriend.**

**We also met several other of her roommates. Our offer to turn any or all of the residents on to our meth was met with mixed results. Candy and Matt demurred, then quickly split, but a couple of the other guys took us up on our offer and soon we were cruising down the methedrine hi-way with our new friends. They had a great stereo and lots of albums which made their place a big upgrade over Glen's. And no menacing German Shepard.**

**About three am Hooter ran out of smokes and left to find some. He was gone a very long time and I started to worry. When he finally returned, morning light was starting to fill the sky. What he told me served to elevate my anxiety. He had been stopped by a cop for having a tail light out and the officer had detained him for about half an hour. The officer**

**had his shift supervisor call back to Iowa to verify his driver's license and find out if there were any warrants out for Dave Adams. While he was waiting for the reply, the cop asked Hoot where he was staying in the area. He drew a blank, panicked, and gave him Glen's**



actual name and address. There was no one on duty overnight back in Iowa to check on the driver's license and there were no warrants pending for Dave Adams. So, Hooter was eventually released and told to "get that taillight fixed right away".

Hooter did not seem very concerned but I was scared shitless. Once the Iowa authorities learned that the license was fake, they would be looking to track him down. If the cops apprehended us at Glen's place, we would be charged with possession with intent to deliver methamphetamine, Hoot would be remanded on bail jumping, and I could be charged with aiding a fugitive. Serious fucking shit. We decided to go back to Glen's and pick up all of our stuff then figure out where to go, as I no longer felt safe there. The guys we had been up all night, doing speed with, offered to let us come back and stay with them for a few days but not much longer as they already had a full house. We called Glen to let him know we were on the way.

Our timing was unfortunate. Glen had also been up all night, speeding with his girlfriend and they had just started making

love. He halted the festivities and took her home so that she would not be collateral damage if the cops showed up. He was pissed off about the coitus

**interruptus and the fact that Hooter had given the cops his name and address. When we got there and realized how badly we had fucked up his day, we tried to figure out what to do next. Glen left to go be with his girlfriend at her place, but gave us her number “just in case”.**

**Shortly after that a county cop car turned down Glen’s Street and did a slow crawl past the house. It then stopped in the cul-de-sac at end of the street for about ten minutes. I figured he had spotted our car and was calling for back-up. He then made a U-turn, gunned it, and sped past Glen’s house and away. After that we quickly gathered up our meager belongings and fled back to the house where Candy and her friends lived.**

**When we got there, we soon found out that the two guys who had offered to let us stay for a few days had left without imparting that information to any of their roomies. Plus, it was still early enough in the day that we had woken up the folks who had passed on the all-night speed fest the night before. Awkward. The guy who had let us in went back to bed and left us standing in the living room alone, not knowing whether we should stay or go.**

**After about an hour we hatched a plan. Since the cops had Hooter’s license plate number and Glen’s**

address, we did not want to take that vehicle back to his place. We figured that if the car was not anywhere near Glen's, the cops would have a hard time getting a search warrant when and if they followed up with the Iowa DMV. So, we called Glen once again and once again interrupted him making love to his girlfriend.

He was super pissed at that point, but he again left his girlfriend and came to pick us up at our new friends place so we could leave the car there. I was officially approaching full- fledged freak out mode. Most all freak outs are caused by a drug induced hallucination that scares the shit out of the person who is high, leading to a severe anxiety attack. That in turn causes the body to dump all available adrenaline into their system. There is no man-made drug that can give a human enough strength to lift a car off of their young child, but adrenaline can. Adrenaline can also serve to elevate the anxiety attack to a point that it makes the person believe they are about to die or suffer the most extreme consequences. The higher the anxiety becomes the more adrenaline continues to pump into their system. It does not matter whether or not the person is in any actual danger. Regardless of the level of any real danger or lack thereof, it makes them feel like they are totally and irrevocably doomed. That is where I had found myself.

**When we got back to Glen's, he seriously chewed us out and left to try to repair things with his girlfriend. I was losing my shit and felt like the walls were closing in on me. Hooter, on the other hand seemed unphased. I told him that I had to get out of the house and go for a walk. He went with me. We went over to the nearby beach and walked for over a mile until we got to a small park. I was starting to calm down a bit until I saw the patrol car enter the park. We were walking along the side of the road and the cop car was coming up behind us. As much as I wanted to make a run for it, I knew that it would get the cops on us quicker than anything. My adrenaline continued to build and my feeling of doom escalated along with it. When the cop car got right behind us, I could hear it slow until it was almost at a stop. I could barely continue to stand let alone keep walking but somehow I did. After a few seconds the car accelerated and went on by.**

**At that point I just wanted to get as far from California and Hooter and meth as I could and never do anything illegal ever again. We went back to Glen's and I got into bed, pulled the covers over my head, and assumed the fetal position for the next forty-eight hours. I maintained that position until I had come down enough to buy a bus ticket back to Iowa. During**

that time Hoot had somehow hooked up with a gal that also loved shooting speed as much as he did. From the noises coming into my bedroom, it sounded as if they were making a serious effort to fuck each other's brains out on the couch in the living room, while simultaneously finishing off the rest of the half ounce of meth. At one point Hoot came into the room and asked me if I wanted to join in the fucking because she was willing to do us both at the same time. I took a hard pass. A sure indicator of the extreme level of distress that I was experiencing.

I finally got on the bus and had a grueling two-day trip back to Iowa. It took me quite a few weeks to return to my usual "fuck authority" outlaw self. But I did. I was one of only a couple folks that knew Hooter's whereabouts and what he was up to. The "privy" few were all completely tight lipped. But lots of other folks were very curious. One time right in the middle of a party at the farm, some visitor from where Hoot had grown up, and had known him for decades said "What is Mike up to these days". Everyone at the party suddenly froze and became stone silent. Some eager to hear an update, others wondering how the awkward query would be handled. The oldest and most respected member of Hooter's hommies, Hank, intoned "Those that know don't say and those that

**say don't know". Hank's words immediately extinguished that line of conversation.**

**By the time they had shot all of the meth, the young woman had departed. He was broke and crashing, and was no longer welcome at Glen's house. He called Jane and asked if there was still room on the boat for one more. She said there was, but he would have to be back to M St within five days as that was when they were leaving for the Gulf. He caught the next Greyhound heading east. He was dirty, stinky, and in mid- crash. But he did arrive back at M St. in time for departure.**

## **My Hooter Is Crazier. Chapter Eleven. Graphic Arts Gang Makes Their Move.**

**Ken was giving up a decent job at an up-and-coming community college to become a full-time outlaw leaving behind his wife Diane and whatever family and friends he had in the Cedar Rapids area. None of crew were planning on ever returning to Iowa. What the rest of the gang had not yet realized was that Ken had higher aspirations than El Capitan, and was packing his own .357.**

**A couple of days before they were scheduled to leave, Jane got a call from Hooter stating that he needed to get out of California and could he join in the sailing trip to Mexico. Ken agreed and gave him a strict five-day time line to show up. After that they would be leaving with or without him. He made it, but just barely. Broke, and in bad shape. Ken insisted he leave *his* .357 at M St. with Mick.**

**Since Roger had a slightly bigger SUV, which was also capable of towing the sailboat with trailer, which he and Ken had stolen in the middle of the night. They had stashed the boat in a garage that Ken had rented and made some changes to the exterior in order to disguise it. As the big day approached, Ken sold his vehicle, and they packed all of the sailing gear**

into the boat, while they and their personal effects were jammed into Roger's rig. They left the next day and drove through the night. They arrived at Lake Louise, Louisiana the next morning. Lake Louise is connected to the Mississippi River which then dumps into the Gulf of Mexico. That made it the ideal launch point for the gang. That also made it an ideal launch point for a wide range of drug dealers and/or smugglers. That in turn made it an ideal observation and interdiction spot for drug cops. DEA. Ken was very aware of this and warned the gang not to say shit to anyone hanging around the launch area. Ken had also issued a strict warning to all members when they were in the process of running the check kiting scams prior to leaving town. "Never go through the drive through window when conducting your bogus banking transactions. The tellers will sometimes jot your license plate number down on the cashed check. Always do your business in side at the teller's window." On at least one occasion, Roger had failed to heed this warning and cashed a bad check at the drive through window.

As Ken had expected, there were a passel of undercover DEA cops surveilling the scene, and one quickly honed in on the gang. He came over real friendly like and started asking questions about who



**they were and where they were from. They shined him on and quickly got the boat in the water, loaded up the gear, and prepared to sail away. Meantime**

**Roger found a secluded spot to remove the license plates and abandon his car. But it was too late. Even though he had failed to get any other identifying info from the gang, the DEA agent had written down Roger's license plate while they were unloading.**

**By the time the agent was able to run the plate and find that there was a Be On the Look Out for (BOLO in cop parlance), for Roger, in connection to a counterfeit check charge, back in CR, the gang was well on their way to the Gulf and international waters. But soon an arrest warrant was issued for Roger originating in Iowa but also on the FBI list of wanted individuals due to the interstate aspect of the crimes. The Cedar Rapids police contacted Roger's mom. She innocently gave him the first names of Jane and Ken which was all she knew them by. She also mentioned that Ken taught the Graphics Art class that Jane and Roger had attended. The cops immediately figured out what Ken and Jane's last names were from the college records and started an investigation.**

**Once the sailboat had departed US jurisdiction the gang felt a huge common sigh of relief and relaxation.**

**It was not to be long lasting. Once on the open waters, Ken as the Captain of *His Ship* had asserted his authority with pistol strapped on his hip. He dictated that Jane and Cindy would be bunking with him in the main stateroom while Roger and Hooter would**

**sleep on pull-out single cots located in the galley. He assured the other two men that of course the women would still be free to engage with them sexually when and if they chose to. The funny thing was, that if either Jane or Cindy (usually Cindy) started to retreat to a corner of the ship with Roger or Hooter, Ken would fall to the floor and appear to have an extended Grand Mall epileptic seizure right at that very moment. This would result in both of the women immediately helping him to the their bed and comforting him for the remainder of the day and night. After the third time this occurred, Hooter was getting mighty suspicious. He and Roger conferred privately about Ken's authoritarian behavior, fake seizures, and the fact that he had the only firearm on board. The were also concerned that Jane and Cindy seemed to be acquiescing to his machinations.**

**Every three or four days the gang would drop anchor near a coastal village in Mexico and take the dingy in for drinking water, fresh produce, canned goods or anything else they needed. Roger was included in one**

of the forays and snuck around the corner to call home. He was getting increasingly uncomfortable with Ken's behavior and the whole "outlaws in a confined space" scene. When he talked to his mom, his discomfort immediately spiked to five alarm anxiety. He had never previously been in trouble with the law but had then learned that there was a warrant out for his arrest.

Furthmore, *he* was the main target of a burgeoning investigation into a counterfeit ID and fraudulent check kiting scheme run out of the Graphic Arts Department of the Community College in his home town.

As soon as he returned to the boat, he took Hooter aside. "I just talked to my mom and there is a warrant out for my arrest charging me with cashing bogus checks back home. And the cops have linked it to the Graphic Arts department. They got the college's permission to search the print room and found remnants of the security paper we used to produce the driver's licenses in the printers. So, they will soon have Ken and Jane's names as well. "I can't take it. I am going to jump ship next time we stop for supplies. Even if I have to swim to shore" he confided to Hoot.

**“Listen to me” Hooter responded. “Don’t say a word about this to any of the others. Ken is definitely nuts and may use that pistol on anyone who he feels threatened by, including you. Jane and Cindy seem to be under his spell and might tell him anything you mention to them. Just wait until we are ready to drop anchor at the next place we plan to go to shore. Tell Ken that you are starting to get sick with the shits and pukes and need to get off the boat for a while and find some Pepto Bismo. He won’t want you stinking up the ship, so he will probably take you along on the dingy. As soon as his back**

**is turned, run away and hide for a few hours until you see that the dingy is gone. Then call your mom and have her wire you some money so you can fly back to her place. Before you turn yourself in, GET A LAWYER. If they are any good, they won’t let you say a word to the cops and will negotiate a plea agreement. Feel free to give them Ken’s name as he is dangerous nut. But please do not tell them anything about Cindy, Jane, or me.”**

**Roger followed the first part of Hooter’s advice and was soon back to the safe confines of his mother’s home. She then insisted that he immediately turn himself into the cops and make a clean breast of it. He folded like a cheap tent in a hurricane, went to the**

**police station sans attorney, and spilled his guts about everyone and everything. Fortunately, he only knew Hooter as Hooter and only knew my first name and that I had once lived on M St. He did not know my current address, or what role I had played in conceiving the idea of manufacturing the bogus IDs. This news did not filter back to the rest of the crew for many weeks.**

**After Roger's disappearance, Ken became paranoid and further unhinged. He started brandishing the gun frequently. Hooter informed Jane of his plan to also jump ship at the next opportunity and warned her that it was his belief that Ken was capable of killing anyone he thought was "in his way" and**

**dumping their body overboard in the high seas. Jane thought that the best way for Hooter to depart was to reveal his plan to Ken the next time they dropped anchor and to assure Ken that since he was on the lamb himself, there was no chance he would ever be going back to Iowa or spilling his guts to the cops or anyone else.**

**Hooter took her advice and was able to depart the boat without being shot, as Ken loved the idea of just, he and the two women, who appeared to be under his control, remaining on board.**

**Hooter soon found himself in a small seaside town in which he could not speak the language and had no money. Guess who he made his first collect call to? Yours truly. Could I wire him some money and could he come back to the Jim's little communal farm?**

**I was still emotionally recovering from the west coast disaster and was pretty broke. But I talked to Jim about Hooter coming back to the commune which he quickly agreed to if Hooter agreed to play it low key, under the radar. Jim and I scraped up a \$100 which I immediately wired to Hooter in Mexico via Western Union. When he called collect again the next day, I informed him that the money was on its way, he was welcome**

**to come back, and that Jim's ex-girlfriend Pam, had left the commune and was now residing in Denver with her two kids. And that another frequent visitor to the commune, Teri G. from Chicago, was living with them. Hooter figured that would be a good stopping off point on his journey back to the commune. He and Pam had had a little something going during his most recent stay at Jim's place.**

## **My Hooter Is Crazier. Chapter Twelve. Hooter Flees Mexico.**

**Through all the years, all the crazy antics, and the financial ups and downs, Hooter had always held on to his Triumph 650 chopper motorcycle. He had hardly ever ridden it while living at M St. It just sadly sat in the back of the garage with a tarp over it. When he “legally” and physically moved to Tom’s place, he had stashed it in the back of *his* garage with the same tarp covering it. Before he had gone on the lamb with me to Glen’s in Alameda, he had the foresight to sign the title over to Tom.**

**When I wired Hooter the hundred to get out of Mexico and return to the commune, I also informed him that he was welcome back, but that Jim and I were tapped out financially. I further stated that he would have to figure out how to pay for incidentals such as cigmos and booze without dealing. I also stated that he would absolutely have to keep a very low profile including not getting super drunk or wired on speed. Not an easy ask for a man with the moniker of Hooter.**

**On the long slog of a bus ride from the Mexican Gulf coast to the bright lights of Denver, Hooter did a lot of thinking. Going back to the commune with no money,**

limited fun, and little hope of finding a job did not seem sustainable. He had called

his favorite squeeze, Pam who was then living in Denver, and she had told him that he could stay with them for a few days, but that the landlord lived on site and would not approve of adding an additional roommate. The household already included her, her two young kids, and Teri. Hooter figured that the only way he could raise quick cash, to keep him solvent for the next few weeks, was to call Tom and have him sell the chopper and forward him the money to Pam in Denver.

When Hooter arrived in Denver, Pam immediately proposed a night on the town, her treat. Since Teri was under 21, Pam had gotten in the habit of using her as her live-in, free baby sitter when she went out. So, Teri stayed home and Hooter and Pam went bar hopping with him driving her car. After the stress of being on Ken's little dictatorship of a sailboat, then staring down the prospect of living a low profile, financially bereft lifestyle, Hooter was ready to let his *kinky* hair down. He and Pam were the life of the party at every bar they visited. Drinking, dancing, and playing a lot of tongue hockey to the amusement of their fellow patrons. Finally quitting time had arrived. "You don't have to go home, but you can't stay here."



**As they got in the car, Hooter asked Pam if she wanted to get something to eat. She said she did and she also needed to**

**pee. Hooter figured they would stop at an all-night fast-food place and cover both bases. But all they could find was a place that only had the drive-through open overnight. Since the bars had just closed, there was a long line of cars waiting to make their selections. They finally got to the speaker and placed their order for a couple of burgers and two orders of fries. When they pulled up to the pick-up window, Hooter realized that he had forgot to order sodas. When he informed the person handing him his order that he also wanted two sodas, she refused. "You will have to go back, get in the end of the line, and order the two sodas when it is your turn". Hooter politely tried to reason with her, but she would not budge. Hooter then put the car in park and shut off the engine. He left the headlights on. He turned to Pam and said "You still have to pee right?" "Hell yes, I'm just about ready to piss myself" she replied. "Get out and follow my lead" he stated. Pam was conveniently wearing a loose dress that had been well suited for dancing. They both walked to a spot directly in front of Pam's car. Between the headlights and the lights of the drive-thru window they were very well illuminated.**

Hooter lay on his back face up and told Pam, “Pull your panties off, your dress up, and pee into my mouth.” Pam was well versed in Hooter’s crazy behavior. It was one of the things that attracted her to him. But this was pretty far out there, even for him. With only a moment’s hesitation, she complied. She was going to have to pee somewhere in the

next minute or else. Hooter opened wide, she squatted low, and filled his mouth. He eagerly swallowed it all.

When she had finished, she stood, let her dress down as Hooter got to his feet, and they calmly got back in the car and drove off. Hooter reported that he watched the rearview mirror until they hit the end of the block and turned the corner. None of the stunned customers or employees had moved an inch.

The next day Hooter was able to track down a distant friend of mine who was living in Orange, California and had a reasonably well-paying factory job. He called the guy, introduced himself using the name on his fake ID, Dave Adams, and said he was a friend of mine. The man’s name was Kenton O and he remembered me well as his big brother and I had been roommates for a year. He was a fairly naïve, trusting individual from my hometown of Cedar Rapids, and quickly invited Hoot to come out. He also said that he

would talk to the boss at the factory about hiring him as well.

Hooter called and let me know the new plan. The money from his chopper arrived the next day and he once again boarded the bus. This time heading west to meet his new roommate

and hope that Kenton had lined him up a job in the city of Orange. Hope springs eternal.

## **My Hooter Is Crazier. Chapter Thirteen. New Directions**

**In late December of 75, Jim's brother Tom had noticed that when he walked through the kitchen at the commune, the floor had kind of a bouncy feel to it. He went down in the basement, which was only under the kitchen, and quickly ascertained the cause. Almost all of the floor joists were rotted out right at the point where they sat on the basement/foundation walls.**

**Moister had migrated from the soil around the base of the house, through the ancient porous stone walls of the basement, and up into the ends of the joists. He took me down for a look as well. I was immediately alarmed. "Shit, it looks like the 50-year-old linoleum on the kitchen floor is the only thing holding up the fridge, stove, sink, cupboards, kitchen table, and anyone in the kitchen at the time." Tom agreed and said he would gather materials for installing new joists if I would commit to helping with what would be, a major project. I assured him that I would, never expecting that he would have the necessary materials assembled in the basement by the very next morning.**

**When I got up early the following frigid but sunny day, with no thought about the basement project, I decided that it would be a wonderful opportunity for eating a handful of magic mushrooms. Then spending the day**

**outdoors exploring the woods and scoping out the micro-environment. Nothing like a**

**good dose of hallucinogens to get you down on your hands and knees, rooting around in order to find out what was still alive under the snow, dead sticks and leaves. After consuming the shrooms, I was putting on several layers of warm clothing including a sturdy stocking hat and thick gloves, while just starting to get off, when Tom approached.**

**“Are you ready to help me replace the floor joists in the kitchen?” I have all of the materials ready.**

**“Uh, well, I was kind of..., oh, a, sure, OK.”**

**We spent the next eight hours in that tiny, dark, dank, and dingey basement which was illuminated by a couple of trouble lights that Tom had set up. Tom took the lead as he was an experienced carpenter and I was not. Plus, I was tripping my brains out. We’d take a measurement, then he would cut a replacement joist the exact length as the one it was to replace.**

**Then I would use a gas-powered chain saw to cut out the old rotten joist (to keep the existing moist rot on each of its ends from seeping into the new joist that we would be immediately installing). This produced a**

**lot of noise and exhaust, while we lived in constant fear that the kitchen floor might collapse**

**upon us as we had not bothered to remove the stove or refrigerator. We had however, warned everyone to stay out of the kitchen and moved the lighter items out.**

**As we worked our way from one end to the other, we found our rhythm and became more efficient. Except for one little hiccup, where I brought the still running saw down after cutting through an old joist and sliced the insulation off one of the live wires that powered a trouble light. I had come within millimeters of electrocuting myself. Other than that, things went remarkably smooth.**

**As we finished the project, we both experienced a profound sense of satisfaction as well as great relief from having survived the dangerous situation. As New Year's Eve was soon approaching, we decided on the spot, that we would celebrate with a big party, in the kitchen, dancing and drinking. It would provide the ultimate test for the newly re-enforced floor.**

**Along with residents Tom, Jim, Cindy, Vicki, Gary, and myself, we invited the usual folks that frequented the commune. Included were many friends from near and far. One of them was Teri, recently back from living**

**with Pam in Denver, and then in her own apartment back in her hometown of Chicago.**

**I was already becoming the “party-meister”, so as the new year approached, I moved my great stereo system into the kitchen, built speaker stands to best flood the room with sound, and cleared out as much stuff as I could to create the largest possible dancing space. We were going to see how the new floor performed with a dozen or so folks doing some spirited dancing on it. I also ordered a keg of beer which would reside in a tub full of ice in the living room.**

**A good crowd showed up on that sub-zero final day of 75. I cranked the stereo, tapped the keg and set up a stack of plastic cups. It quickly shook out that the kitchen was for dancing only and the sitters and the talkers hung out in the living room. I got Jim into his wheel chair so that he could roll back and forth and partake in either.**

**I only remember a few things from that night: Feverishly dancing to some of my favorite Commander Cody & The Lost Planet Airmen albums, peeling off layer after layer of my winter outfit until I had to go upstairs, to my former bedroom, in order to shed the underlayer of waffle weave. Just before**

**starting up the stairs, I casually invited Teri, who was dancing near the bottom of the stairs, to join me. She casually accepted.**

**About ten weeks later in March 1976, the very same Teri called and told me she wanted to come up to the commune for a face-to-face meeting in order to tell me “Something important”. We set it up for the next Sunday at 3 pm.**

**Then on the agreed day, she had driven five hours from her home in Chicago to Jim’s farm in order to meet with me. But, in spite of the fact that I was expecting a visit from her that day, I was not there.**

**I had ended up having to go into work that day. I had resumed my previous job driving semi. I was originally scheduled to pick up my load on Monday, the next morning. But I had been forced to change my plans as the boss had called at 11 am and told me to come in right away for a noon run that very day. The Sunday she was scheduled to arrive. To make it to the Jim’s farm by 3 pm she had left at 10 am, so it was too late to call her and reschedule. So, I was unfortunately not going to be there when she showed up. But I did call the commune, at the time of our scheduled meeting.**



**Whoever answered the phone handed it to Teri, as per my request. That phone call, from a woman who I still barely knew, changed my life forever. Without a lot of preamble, she got right to the main event. “I’m pregnant and you’re the**

**father”. I fell silent, stunned at the enormity of what I had just heard.**

**“See, this is why I wanted to tell you in person. So that I could see the expression on your face *right now*”, she exclaimed, somewhat exasperated.**

**“I’m smiling” I weakly replied, but immediately went mute again.**

**“Listen” I finally stammered. “You caught me by surprise here. Let me think about this and call you back in an hour.”**

**“Fine. It caught me by surprise too”, she huffed.**

**As soon as I hung up, I knew with crystal clarity that I wanted to be the father to this baby from this woman I hardly knew despite the fact that I was living with Cindy in an “open romantic relationship”. Teri was best friends with one of the married women that lived on the commune, Vicki, and a frequent visitor. I had talked briefly to Teri on a few occasions before having been intimate with her during the big New Year’s Eve**

party when we ushered in 1976. But my desire to be a father went back to my late-teen years.

I was very close to my cousin Barb who had four kids by the time she was in her early twenties. Fortunately, she was hard working, smart, and very mature for her age. Her hubby was a great guy, but was in the army and often deployed overseas for a year at a time. He managed to get home just long enough to get his young Catholic wife pregnant every year during his annual leave. So, I spent a lot of time with Barb and her brood of kids, who was temporarily single parenting while her hubby was stationed in Fiji for a year. I quickly realized how much I loved the little tikes. I loved reading stories to them, playing games together, and wrestling on the floor. I even liked changing the younger one's stinky diapers, which was pretty unheard of for a teenage boy. Plus, I was similarly close to Pam's kids, Albert and Margaret.

I called Teri back within the allotted hour and said "I want to, and will be, the father of this baby. I don't know how our relationship is going to work but we have six months to figure that part out. When can I see you?" Soon we met up in person and developed a basic plan. She would continue working at the Social Security Administration, and saving money living in Chicago while I continued living at the commune with

**Cindy, working as a long-haul truck driver, and saving money. When she hit seven months, she would move to where I was residing. At eight months I would quit working**

**as a truck driver and spend time bonding with my her and the “baby on board”. That way we could work together on preparing to co-parent the child to be, and take our time seeing how our personal relationship would develop.**

**One of the first big things that we agreed upon was our mutual desire to have a home birth. We didn't know of any mid-wives in our area but had heard about a larger commune, of over one hundred folks, that let people come live at their place, have a home birth with their mid-wife, then leave shortly after. One Sunday, when Teri was up, we traveled about two and a half hours north and a little east up into South-west Wisconsin for our initial visit with the mid-wife, Carol Nelson. We were there to see if we would be found acceptable to move in for a couple of months and have our baby at their commune, simply called, The Farm. It was the Wisconsin satellite of the main Farm in Summerville, Tennessee, which billed itself as the “world's largest hippie commune”. Around fourteen hundred folks lived at the Tennessee farm at the time.**

**As winter turned to spring, then summer, Teri's belly continued to swell. When Teri felt she was too pregnant to work, she quit her job in Chicago and moved into the large, old, yet immaculate farm house, that Cindy, Donnie B., who made his living hunting and trapping. Donnie, Cindy, and I**

**had recently rented it as things were changing at the commune and Cindy and I were ready to move on. It was large enough that we could each have our own bedroom. Teri and I felt that it was the perfect place to return to after the baby was born, except for one thing. Teri was not thrilled that Cindy would be occupying one of the bedrooms and Cindy was not thrilled that Teri and I were having a child together.**

**Hooter was still hard at work in So Cal and keeping his head down. Jean had decided to move to northern California in order to avoid any more midwestern winters, Jane decided to stay in the NE Iowa area. Mick was finding that being the "responsible party" at M St was much more cumbersome than just kicking in his share of the rent every month and staying mellow.**

## **My Hooter Is Crazier. Chapter Fourteen. Far and Wide**

**The original M St crew and the Graphic Arts gang were splintering, fracturing, and scattering in swirling winds of change. Hooter was couch-surfing at Kenton O's place in the city of Orange, CA and working the factory job that his new friend and roommate had arranged. And he was keeping his head down for a change. The crew of the SS Ken's Dictatorship was down to just Ken and Jane. Cindy K. had seen enough and departed amicably at another port village further south in Mexico. She had returned to the commune in the summer of 75, where her and I entered into an "open" romantic relationship while co-habiting, on Jims's land in a small travel trailer that I had purchased from Gary Damon's dad for \$200.**

**Eventually Ken and Jane agreed to throw in the towel. They sold the boat and all the gear for a low-ball cash deal further down the Gulf Coast. Ken uncharacteristically split the proceeds with Jane who then returned to a farmhouse her folks owned near Garnavillo, to figure out her legal liabilities, and consider her future options. Jean left M St. and moved in with her sister. Mick, the last remaining original member, was recruiting roommates to fill the beds and share the rent at M St. Ken was in the wind.**

**The rest of the folk's that were involved in the community college fake ID manufacturing, check kiting, and stolen boat activities, except Roger, had yet to be contacted by the police.**

**The whole experience had been relegated to the back of my mind as summer had passed thru into fall. I had moved on to other adventures and was focused on those. Until one day when I made a trip down to CR to visit friends and conduct some marijuana business. I had key privileges at a goodbuddy's (Kenton's brother Greg) house, so I was able to let myself in when no one was home. I grabbed a cold beer, shook off my heavy coat, and turned on the tube. The news happened to be on and the story that was being broadcast at that exact moment was about a newly formed task force. It had been created by the Cedar Rapids Police Department and was investigating a fake ID ring being run out of the local community college. They mentioned that two full time detectives were assigned the case as the IDs had turned up all over the country. Apparently, some Native American activists and supporters of Wounded Knee leaders, had really gotten around. The previous summer they had been in Cedar Rapids attending the trial of four of the leaders who were on trial in federal court for conspiracy (Read "Carter Camp Day" in the short**

story section on this site for more exciting details). I had met with them then and found out that many of them lacked drivers' licenses and IDs. Since I had just come into possession

of a copious quantity of blank IDs, courtesy of Ken and Jane, I was happy to pass on thirty sets to them. The quality of the blank IDs was top notch, so I suspected that the Natives had not filled them out with the same Selectric typewriters that had been used at the Iowa DMV and also used by the Graphic Arts Gang and myself. That had to have been what led to the cops across the nation to seize a significant quantity of them. As I crunched the numbers, I was getting a very sick feeling. The task force was headed by two detectives who were assigned full time to the case. Roger was already in police custody, and no one knew for sure what he might have told the cops. Everyone else was hunkered down and hiding out far from good old Cedar Rapids. Meanwhile I was sitting there at ground zero where two *full time* swinging dicks were reported to be conducting "an in depth investigation". I poured the beer out, indicating that this was not a drill. I put on my coat, hat, and gloves then headed back to my vehicle, which thankfully had not had time to cool off. I drove straight back to the farm, no

**smoking, no drinking, no exceeding the speed limit. This was serious shit with a capital S.**

**I stashed the remaining IDs with a friend from off the farm who was very low key, then warned Jim that I might be hot and could potentially bring the cops to our door. He insisted that I stay and we brainstormed some safeguards that would make us fairly impervious to a police raid, such as getting all**

**vehicles off of the property that were not legally registered and keeping the weight of our pot stash under what was considered “possession with intent to sell”. I implemented all safeguards on the farm and stayed the hell out of CR. The cops never showed up and my adrenaline levels eventually returned to normal.**



**My Hooter Is Crazier. Chapter Fifteen. Next Big Things**

**Autumn-Star was born at The Wisconsin Farm at 1:14 am October 1<sup>st</sup>. It was and always would be the highlight of my life. The day I became a father. During the month that Teri and I had spent together at The Farm prior to Autumn's arrival, we had fallen in love. Not the mature long-term kind of love that takes more than a month to achieve, but a genuine romantic bond. Teri had also decided that she wanted to join me in my long-held goal to buy a piece of secluded land in the country and build a home with our own hands.**

**When the three of us returned to The Green House a week or so after Autumn's birth we were bathed in the sweet bliss of being a newly minted family. We joined Donny B. and Cindy who had moved there with me a few months previous. Teri and Cindy were trying to take the unconventional living arrangement in stride. Teri seemed much more gracious about it than Cindy. Between Cindy's unpleasant attitude, the fact that I had fallen into "puppy love" with Teri, and because we now had a beautiful baby together, I was gravitating more and more toward Teri. I still wanted an open relationship, but at that point my priority was to continue to bond with Autumn and Teri. Cindy soon figured out what direction things were headed and left the household.**

**After taking off a month before and a month after the birth, I went back to driving semi as we were still a bit short of our goal of having \$2500 saved up for the down payment, we hoped would be adequate to purchase our “dream piece of land”. Donnie’s hunting and trapping kept him busy during the day but he was home every night. Teri and I felt comfortable with her and Autumn being home alone him working days and being there, keeping the home-front safe, at night. Donnie was a “man’s man” and we could not have asked for a better person to keep the household safe.**

**By early December we had found the place. Upon first arrival, we immediately liked what we saw as we pulled up. It was an unimproved, wooded, thirty-three-acre pasture that started with a small strip of flat land, in a narrow valley, which ran alongside the road. The land then quickly began to climb steeply up a hillside covered with hardwood trees. A creek meandered on and off, through the valley, then back onto the property. It looked perfect. I said to Teri “Let’s walk around and see what the rest of it looks like”. Teri was still recovering from significant tearing she experienced when Autumn-Star was born. Even though I volunteered to carry the baby, she replied “I can’t do it. Hike around and check it out. If you like it, that’s good enough for me”.**

**So, hike it I did. The main things that we were looking for in our ideal spot were seclusion, a waterway, lots of trees, a flat area to garden vegetables, and a hidey hole to grow marijuana. The first four were visible before I even got out of the green Chevy panel truck we were driving. I walked straight up the hill even though it was steep, rocky, and thick with big trees. When the ground started to level out somewhat near the top, I walked right into a small open area surrounded by woods for a several hundred yards in every direction. The hidey hole.**

**When I got back in the truck, I was overflowing with enthusiasm. Teri picked up on it and we immediately agreed that we would make an offer on the place ASAP. They were asking \$2500 for a down payment with a total price of thirteen five for the thirty-three acres. They were also offering to sell on a land contract which meant they would finance it. No bank involvement would be needed which was crucial as no bank would have approved us. While Jean, Jane, Mick, and Hooter had all expressed interest in buying land together, none of them had ponied up any bucks to make it happen. Between what Teri had saved working at the Social Security Administration, and what I had saved driving semi, we were just shy of having the amount for the down payment set aside. We submitted**

**an offer for thirteen even and it was accepted. A closing date of January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1977 was designated.**

**When the closing date arrived, it was fifteen below zero at 10 am, *without* the windchill factored in. Due to my big heart and naïve world view, I had loaned our panel truck to an irresponsible asshole who had promptly left it broke down along side of a busy road. It had then been towed and was currently sitting in a storage lot accruing daily storage charges in addition to the tow fee. Consequently, I was hitching back and forth, 60 miles each way, to the trucking terminal that I drove out of. By then, we just barely had enough money for the \$2500 down payment and nothing left over to get the truck fixed. The panel truck repair and tow charges would have to wait until I received my next paycheck a week after the closing date.**

**I started hitching mid-morning 1/4/77, with 2500 cash in my pocket, as I wanted to make sure that I was on time for the one o'clock meeting twenty miles away. I knew how to dress for the weather but I was still very cold. I think that the extreme weather worked in my favor in terms of getting rides and I arrived in Viroqua with over an hour to spare.**

**The closing was carefully choreographed by the real estate agent. They don't like the buyer and seller to**

**interact until they have their commission check firmly in hand. The sellers**

**were a retired farmer and his wife. They were in their late eighties and looked every year of it. The old guy was skinny and bent over from decades of hard farm work, but he kept looking up at me with a warm smile. Guess he didn't have any problem with long haired hippies. Once all the paper work was signed and the agent had his check, Mr. Troy Fish, the seller, limped over with a beatific smile on his face. He looked up me from his stooped position and said in a reedy voice, "You go down there and build yourself a cabin. Of all the land I owned that was my favorite spot. I would always start my day going down there and checking on the cattle because it was so beautiful and peaceful." I replied "That is just what we intend to do. It is a very beautiful and peaceful place". I saw Troy Fish every month after that, when I knocked on his back door, then sat at his kitchen table, and counted out the monthly payment of \$150 cash. He had bought that parcel in the mid-thirties and over the years, as I sat at his kitchen table, he told me many great tales about that land and his lifetime of farming experiences.**

**After the closing, the real estate agent took pity on me and gave me a ride home. It got down to 34 below that**

**night. The coldest weather I have ever experienced, but we was nestled in in the warmth of our new family and we had our dream piece of land waiting for us just over the horizon.**

## **My Hooter Is Crazier. Chapter Sixteen. Poverty Gulch**

**Hooter and I had been keeping each other apprised about what was going on in our respective lives, which was not easy. I had no phone and Hoot was barely able to effectively read or write. When I had access and privileges to a friend or family's phone, and I figured he was off work, I would give him a call.**

**Kenton's original roommate had moved on and Hooter had taken the vacant room for his own. He was making decent money and saving it up like a squirrel prepping for a long winter. He and Kenton were pretty much opposite personalities but seemed to be getting on quite well. He had even introduced Kenton to the joys of methamphetamine. They were only doing it on the weekends and Kenton was not injecting it. Hooter had hooked up with a local lady named Ada who lived nearby and enjoyed a direct connection with the meth cook for the San Berdo Chapter of The Hell's Angels. Club affiliated bikers seemed to excel at motorcycle mechanics and methamphetamine manufacturing. She loved to do massive doses of speed and fuck. It was a match made in Hooter's heavenly fantasy.**

**But Hooter was missing the old gang back in the Midwest and was very curious about my new relationship, our new baby,**

and our new piece of land, which we had named Poverty Gulch after we moved onto it in the spring of 1977. The land was situated in a very narrow little valley, a gulch per se. And we were dirt poor, so “poverty” also fit. As usual, I gave him the straight unvarnished truth. Teri and I were getting along and working our asses off tearing down a couple of buildings in order to get free lumber we could re-purpose to build our cabin. I also explained that the main sticking point was that I wanted to maintain an open relationship and she wanted a monogamous one. She had actually used “I will move back to Chicago with Autumn if you go out with anyone else” as leverage to get me to agree to a temporary “cease fire”. I sure as hell did not want my darling Autumn-Star being raised in a big city two hundred miles away, so I caved. I swore to be monogamous until we could work out some compromise model that would work for both of us. We were so busy living on the land, gardening, keeping our beater cars and trucks running, parenting Autumn-Star, and preparing to build the cabin, that there was not really any time for extracurricular dating anyway.

I described to him how becoming a father was the most exciting thing I had ever experienced. He had a hard time getting that, as shooting meth and fucking



for hours was his most favored exciting endeavor. When I described the wonders of our new place, Poverty Gulch, he worked hard to

get past his own less than joyous experiences growing up on a working farm with him doing much of the work, in order to understand what we were so jazzed about. He quickly decided that he would soon take a few weeks off of work and drive his newly acquired, mint condition, 1960 Rambler sedan back for a visit. I told him he was more than welcome but it would all have to be on the down low since he was still a wanted fugitive. No one else could know that he would be visiting us and he would have to stay close to the land, and absolutely no getting fucked up on meth. He agreed and a date was set, early summer of 77.

I was down in the secluded valley unloading lumber from the tear-downs, on a warm sunny day, when a sweet looking sky blue over dark blue 1960 Rambler came rolling slowly down our road with Hooter at the wheel. I got a good laugh when I spied the lone bumper sticker on the back. "Onward Through The Fog". Perfect.

I dropped what I was doing and came out to show him where to pull in. He jumped out of the car and we

**hugged and danced around like we hadn't been sure we would ever see each other again, which we hadn't. Then we walked over to the 8 X 30-foot travel trailer, that I had previously lived in with Cindy on Jim's commune. We had recently moved it to The Gulch as soon as winter had ended. Teri, Autumn, and I were living in until we got the cabin far enough along to move into. At that point we had not even figured out exactly where that cabin was going to sit.**

**Teri and Hoot knew each other from commune days at Jim's and his visit to Denver when she was living there with Pam and her two kids. I introduced him to my very favorite human on the planet, Autumn-Star. She was about 9 months old and just starting her first efforts at walking and talking. It was obvious that he had little to no understanding or appreciation of a gurgling, fat cheeked, bald infant.**

**After a bit, I took Hoot up the "drive-way", which was a remnant of the logging road established 20 years previous when the mature hardwoods were last harvested. I showed him his "guest quarters" which was an old blue fiberglass pick-up camper that resembled the shape of a mushroom. It had long ago been dubbed "The Blue Mushroom". It was far enough up the road, and the tree cover had filled in to the**

point that it was not visible from the valley. Hoot brought his stuff up and settled in. That night Teri cooked supper and we topped off the evening drinking beer around the campfire.

We were all in a great mood with growing visions of a fabulous futures ahead.

Hoot was keeping his word concerning the rules I had imposed on his visit. But he really wanted to see the surrounding area and asked me if he could take a cruise around in the Rambler and scope the nearby vicinity. I told him sure, just no drinking or interacting with the locals. Teri and I were too busy working to go along.

As he was cruising the backroads, he came upon a hippie looking couple with their thumbs out, that did not appear to be locals as they were sporting large backpacks. So, he picked them up. They told him that they had hitched in from New York to visit an old friend in the area and were thinking about renting a place and staying awhile. Hoot said "You have to meet these friends of mine that I am staying with". When he pulled into the Gulch, I happened to be up by the potential future cabin site, half way up the hill. I was finally getting around to pounding in stakes to indicate where the sides of the cabin would be and in

which direction they would be orientated. When I saw two strangers, male and female, get out of Hoot's car, I was instantly a bit wary and a lot curious, so down I went.

When I approached, Hooter introduced me to his new pals Jeff and Rikki. They were young, attractive looking folks with huge smiles. Jeff with long blond hair and Rikki with long brown. Hooter got the conversation going by stating "Rick is

going to build a cabin up there on the side of the hill". This initiated many questions, from Jeff, as to what type of construction was planned (stick and frame), what type of materials (tear down some buildings and repurpose the lumber) and who was going to help (some friends from back in Iowa said they would chip in when necessary).

A few minutes later, Jeff piped up and said "If we decide to get a place around here, I will help you build your cabin." "Yeah right", I've known you for all of ten minutes and you're going to help me", I thought sarcastically. Within a week Jeff and Rikki had found an abandoned house. The farmer who owned it was willing to let them live there for free. Six miles from the Gulch. And sure enough, Jeff and Rikki started coming over almost every day and helping.

The six of us formed an immediate bond. Hooter even started to hold Autumn and talk baby talk to her. It was not far off from the verbiage he would frequently use to carry on out-loud conversations with himself. She responded in kind. We also started a tradition that would last long after Hoot went back to So Cal a few weeks later. Campfires in the valley with food, my homegrown pot (Hooter abstaining from the only drug he did not care for), drinking cheap Kingsbury beer, with Jeff & Rikki playing instruments, and all of us joining in on the vocals.

On a trip into town for groceries, Hoot managed to hook up with a very attractive, diminutive red haired 19-year-old named Suze. Of course, he brought her straight out to the Gulch and took her up to the Blue Mushroom for some hot and heavy. That served to renew my lust for getting back to the type of open relationship that I was in before Teri had put the kay-bosh on it. After the lovemaking he brought her down and introduced her to Teri, Rikki, Jeff, and I.

A few days later, Hooter was helping me get the final load of re-purposed lumber and clean the site when his new squeeze Suze showed up “to help”. She quickly offered to take the two of us over to her nearby apartment and fuck up both “tag team” style. This was a veritable wet dream come true for me. My

throat was constricted and as did the front of my pants. But I put off committing to it. I said hoarsely “once we finish loading all the lumber in my pick-up and finish cleaning the site, (as it was the final load) we will come over”. Suze agreed, pulled on a pair of work gloves from her car, and pitched in with the work in order to speed up the process. Since her place was only a few blocks away we walked over once the truck was loaded to capacity and the site was spotless. I still did not know if I wanted to break my vow to Teri. My mind said no, no, no, but my penis said “Go, go, go”. I told Hoot to go first while I watched. By the time he finished

up, wild horses could not hold me back. I took my turn and it was spectacular. Afterwards the three of us were just sitting on Suze’s bed laughing and enjoying the tremendous afterglow, when there was a knock on her door.

It was Jeff and Rikki. She invited them in and we all sat on the bed or floor as she had very little furniture in her pad. It took J & R about sixty seconds to suss out the situation. They started laughing and I started to fill up with guilt and anxiety. “Shit, I may have just screwed up the relationship with my partner on the land and the mother of my precious daughter”, I realized. I begged all four of them to never say a word

about what I had done to *anyone*. But the seal of my promise to Teri had been broken and the line had been crossed.

After his two-week visit, Hooter left for his drive back to Orange County. He, Teri, and I agreed that once he got his legal troubles taken care of, and saved enough money to buy a share of the land, he would join us living at Poverty Gulch as a landed partner. He spent the next year working at the factory, pulling as much OT as was available, while living with Kenton. He was keeping his meth usage at a sustainable level. He had also contacted a lawyer back in CR with the goal of clearing up his original breaking and entering charge and his fugitive warrant for fleeing prosecution of the first charge.

Most every day of that summer our new friends would show up. Jeff and I would work on the cabin and Rikki and Teri would work on our huge survival garden. When we needed extra hands for carrying cement for the footers or moving support beams, the women would pitch in on those duties as well. But the part I remember best is after Jeff and I put down the tools for the day and walked down the hill to our little trailer. We would then pull a couple of Kingsbury beers (\$2.79 a case if you returned the bottles) out of our propane powered fridge, as we still did not have electrical

**service. Teri and Rikki would have a delicious vegetarian meal ready, prepared mostly with our own garden produce. We would sit around the stone campfire ring and dine while small sticks caught fire, then we all took turns chucking in some bigger pieces. Once supper was finished, and Autumn-Star had nursed, Teri put her to bed while I rolled up a joint of my excellent Poverty Gulch pot.**

**After we all had a good buzz going, for eleven cents per beer and free ganga, Jeff and Rikki pulled out their instruments with Jeff on guitar and Rikki on mandolin. They sang many songs that Jeff had written as well as many great cover tunes which Teri and I knew and loved. They were really good and they were playing just for us. As we sat in that mile and a half long narrow valley, knowing that we were the only humans**

**for miles around, we would watch as the steam started to rise off the creek and wetlands which comingled with wisps of fog, drifting toward us. And with our precious Autumn sleeping a few feet away in the trailer, no matter what stress or strain or brutally hard work the day had brought, nor the fact that we were dirt poor, ever me kept from thinking “I am the luckiest guy in the world.”**



**Hooter and I kept in touch and he was steadfast in working toward his goal of moving to the Gulch. The lawyer he hired in Cedar Rapids contacted the Linn County district attorney about a plea agreement. At that point it had been several years since Hooter had fled and the DA's office just wanted to get the open case off of their books. They agreed to a several thousand dollar fine and no jail time or probation for the original B & E charge, and would drop the fleeing prosecution charge contingent on Hooter staying the fuck out of Iowa. Hoot forwarded the money to his attorney who turned it over to the DA and the requisite dox were executed. Hoot was no longer a wanted man.**

**As soon as he had enough to buy a six acre share at the same per acre price that Teri and I had paid the place, he would join us living at the Gulch.**

## **My Hooter Is Crazier. Chapter Seventeen. Hooter Returns to Cali**

**After Teri, Hooter, and I had decided our future course of a three-way ownership/partnership of Poverty Gulch, Hoot returned, in his 1960 Rambler, to his room at Kenton O's apartment back in Orange, CA. He continued to focus on saving up for the amount he would need to buy a six-acre share. Approximately \$2500. He and Kenton continued to do meth "recreationally" so as not to interfere with making and saving money while he and Ada enjoyed their meth transactions with benefits. Ada had also gotten into dressing Hoot up in her dresses and applying some of her make-up to his craggy face. He took to the dresses but not the make-up.**

**Jeff and Rikki continued to help us most every day with whatever was at the top of that day's priority list. I cannot imagine how we would have pulled it off without their support. Both as contributors to the tasks at hand as well as their presence around the campfire every evening. Their music and joy at being there, empowered Teri and I every night and day.**

**As winter approached, Teri declared that the virtually un-insulated 30 X 8 travel trailer was not big enough or warm**

enough for her and Autumn and I, as the outdoor kitchen we had been using was no longer viable. We agreed that she would take Autumn-Star and live at her folk's house in Chicago for the winter. She would take a job waiting tables at a nearby restaurant, then send money to me for materials so that I could stay at the Gulch and continue to work on the cabin.

Jeff and Rikki had also deemed their place unfit for winter habitation and moved in with some friends in a warmer abode many miles from the Gulch. By the time everyone split, the concrete footers were in, the floor joists were set, a sub floor had been laid, and Jeff and I had done a great job installing the 100-year-old maple, tongue and groove flooring. All thanks to Jeff's previous experience with similar projects. The next step was to build the side walls and hoist them into position. I had already drawn up plans for each wall and felt confident that I could do them by myself, using the finished floor as my work space, with the materials already on hand.

That left me, alone with our dog Yaku in the 8 X 30. We had been using a modified "trash burner" stove as our heat source. Even with an expanded burn box it would only hold a fire for 2 to 3 hours. I set up a permanent, off the floor, bed in the living room with the stove right by the foot. When I tucked in for the night, I would

**stoke it with as much wood as it would hold, get a good fire roaring then shut it down. I**

**would sleep with my clothes on and many blankets covering my body, except for my toes. They had on heavy wool socks but stuck out from under the blankets right by the stove. That way, when the heater cooled off my cold toes would alert me and I would wake up. I had a pile of nicely dried and thinly split oak chunks tight next to the bed. I would sit up, lean over, grab a few pieces and toss them into the stove until they caught fire, then go back to sleep without ever getting out of bed.**

**It turned out to be a record cold winter and by mid-November there was two feet of snow on everything and temps were below zero for at least part of every day. I was spending the mornings bringing in firewood for several days ahead so it could dry, then spending the rest of the days drinking a lot of rum and smoking a lot of my homegrown. Visitors had trickled down to none.**

**By about November 20<sup>th</sup> I was missing Teri and Autumn-Star fiercely. I drove to a nearby bar and called Teri to see if I could come visit for Thanksgiving. She gave me an immediate “yes”. Since I did not have a vehicle that I felt confident about**

driving into the city, I walked a couple miles to the nearest hi-way and stuck out my thumb. It was one of my best Thanksgivings ever. I was nestled in the loving embrace of her huge family, who all seemed to be glad for my company (even her dad was warming up to me), and enjoyed the traditional turkey dinner with all of the fixins.

Teri treated for my bus ticket back, but the bus only got to withing seven miles of the Gulch and dropped me off late at night. It was about 10 below with a steady wind. From the pack boots over heavy wool socks on my feet, to a waffle weave union suit under insulated coveralls covering my body, to wool stocking cap under hooded sweatshirt and bandana over my lower face I was dressed for the task. There was little traffic on the road and none of them saw fit to stop so I hiked the whole seven miles back to the travel trailer which was 10 below in doors. After a couple of hours, I had it warmed up enough to go to sleep.

The next day I woke up determined to get the place fixed up so it would be suitable enough for Teri and Autumn to move back in with me. I replaced the trash burner with our big, whole house, Warm Morning wood stove which had been in storage, insulated the

**inside of the walls, and covered the insulation with wall hangings and drapes that I had obtained from Salvation Army. Then I arranged things so that the three of us had room to eat, sleep, and cook indoors in comfort. Teri agreed to move back after the start of the new year so that her and Autumn could be back with me. I decided to take the ensuing time to visit Uncle Hoot in warm and sunny So Cal**

**before returning to Chicago for the Xmas holidays and bringing Teri and Autumn back to The Gulch. I had upgraded my station wagon enough to drive it to Chicago, stashed it at Teri's folks place, then rode from there to California on the Union Pacific railroad (Hoot's treat round trip). Hooter picked me up at Union Station in LA.**

**I was pleased to see that between my coaching at M St, further tutoring at the commune, and Kenton's stringent housekeeping standards, Hoot had become very capable of holding up his end of the cleaning chores. Their apartment was modest but very clean and well organized. And on the weekend, we all consumed meth. Kenton and I snorted reasonable amounts and Hooter mainlined enough to kill several ordinary humans. I also got to meet Ada for the first time.**

**When we visited her home, I was surprised to see that she was balancing her considerable methamphetamine business with single-parenting three girls who ranged from grade school to high school. Ada was using a lot of her own product, but kept it on the down low from her kids. To my trained eye she seemed a bit hyper and squirrely, but I had never seen her sober, so I had nothing to compare her demeanor to. But she was friendly and her kids appeared to be doing well. No harm, no foul.**

**Before I returned to Chicago for Christmas holidays with Autumn, Teri, and her fam, Hooter and I re-affirmed our agreement that he would move into the Gulch once he had enough dough to purchase a six-acre partner share, and some money to tide him over until he could find a job. Things were looking good for 1978.**

## **My Hooter Is Crazier. Chapter Eighteen. 1978**

**By January 15<sup>th</sup> Teri and Autumn were moved back into the 8 X 30 travel trailer at the bottom of the hill. I had a fat stack of dry hardwood, cut and split, under a tarp, right by the door. Thanks to my creative interior design skills we were able to shoehorn our lives into this tiny space. The Warm Morning wood heater was more than up to the task of keeping the space toasty. We often had to open a window when it got too roasty.**

**After they were settled in, I went up to the cabin site and shoveled the two-foot-deep snow off of the tarp covering the hardwood maple flooring. I then peeled it back in order to build the four first story walls. Once completed, Teri helped me set them in place so I could nail them together. It was starting to look like a cabin.**

**As spring blossomed, so did Teri. We met with a local mid- wife named Leri who Rikki had put us in contact with. Her and her husband Jim had delivered many a hippie infant in the area. The four of us hit it off immediately. The arrival date was estimated to be mid-October, exactly nine months after Teri had returned to the Gulch.**

**Despite my slip with Suze, I was trying to re-dedicate my life to Teri and monogamy. I really did not want my kids to grow up in Chicago. In that vein, I proposed to**



**Teri and she accepted. We planned for a wedding on June 10<sup>th</sup>, outdoors in front of the cabin that we hoped to be moved into by then. We planned for the wedding party one week before the wedding on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. That way our folks would be there for the nuptials but not for the kick-ass party.**

**Before Jeff and Rikki had moved out of the neighborhood, they had introduced us to some old friends from where Jeff had grown up in Twin Lakes, Wisconsin. They had a four-piece bluegrass/rock band called Northern Comfort. I asked them if they would play for Teri and I's wedding party, even though we had no money to pay them, and they immediately agreed although they just met us minutes before. They just ask that Jeff and I book them some gigs on the weekends before and after the party and the night before and the day after. Jeff and I were able to lock in 5 weekends worth of gigs for them.**

**Jeff had also introduced me to Stuart F. who he was working for as a hired hand. I knew barely anything about farm work but Stuart agreed to hire me on as well. The pay was \$1.60/hour and all of the fresh milk my family could use. Later, after we moved into the cabin, Stuart also let me use his 4-wheel drive pick-up with a dump box to collect firewood and**

drop it off right behind our new home. This was a huge benefit as my two-wheel drive pick-up could not navigate the driveway when it was muddy or snow covered.

Hooter had gotten his legal troubles squared away and the fugitive warrant had been quashed. Just before the beginning of June he sent us a certified check for his six-acre-share. I cashed the check then went to the county courthouse and filed an addendum to the title listing he, Teri, and I as owners. He still wanted to have a healthy bankroll when he moved back, so he passed on coming back for the wedding and the party. He was keeping his nose to the grindstone.

An old buddy from high school and neighbor from where I had last lived with my folks in CR, Greg W., showed up a week before the party. He, along with a few other less dogged volunteers, got us over the hump. On moving day, we put the larger items in the back of the truck and hauled them up. The smaller and more fragile items were hand carried. Autumn was already the gamer that she would always be, and at seventeen months of age, was carrying pint-sized loads herself.

**Our valley had been secretly selected (to discourage poaching) as one of a half dozen areas to re-stock wild turkeys that had**

**previously been hunted to extinction in Wisconsin. With a strict ban on hunting them, and with few folks knowing of their existence, they were making a remarkable comeback. On one of our “hand-carry” trips up the hill, I was in the lead followed by Yaku, with tiny Autumn carrying her tiny load in the rear. We were about half way up the driveway, trudging on the right side, when we encountered a large mother-hen Turkey leading her brood of about eight chicks down the center. Her and I exchanged identical warning looks. “Don’t mess with my offspring”. Yaku peeled off and skulked back down the hill in retreat, I slowed down so that Autumn was right behind me, momma hen grudgingly moved to the far side of the drive-way. Her and I passed in an uneasy truce as Autumn babbled in friendship at the chicks and they babbled back.**

**We slept in the cabin, for the first time, the night before the party. The two doors had been installed thanks to Greg. We had stapled Visqueen plastic over the windows and fiberglass insulation on the inside of the walls. Electric lines had finally been run and the cabin wired by our new friend Walter M., who would**

**also be officiating our wedding. As a result, we had lights and a working electric fridge. We had moved the gas range with propane tank up from the spot at the bottom of the hill. The Warm Morning wood heater sat proudly in the**

**middle of our living space and would prove adequate for keeping us warm many a frigid night.**

**The party of June 3<sup>rd</sup> was transformational. There was no charge for the entertainment or the beer. The four-piece Northern Comfort Band consisting of Hans, his brother Kit, Jimmy G, and Harris T. Bull played a blistering, non-stop, four- hour set. During their break, Vicki E., who I met for the first time that day, took the stage and kept the energy going with a solo performance of her own material. Then the NC boys came back for another four-hour set.**

**I had taken a chunk of the money we had received from Hooter and invested in 8, 15 & 1/2 gallon kegs of Kingsberry beer. The party started shortly after noon and by late afternoon, when those eight were almost depleted, I passed the hat to buy more kegs. That resulted in enough to buy 8 more and pay for the original 8. Over one hundred folks ended up enjoying a long day of drinking, dancing, and listening to a top-notch band plus top-notch Vicki, with no cover,**

free beer, and only whatever free-will donation that worked for them. Most of the attendees had camped on the land at our encouragement. The next morning as they awoke, many of them fanned out and made sure that all trash was cleaned up and the place was left as they found it. Thus, the tradition of the free Poverty Gulch Party was established.

The next week-end, the wedding also went off with nary a hitch except for a brief moment when I had a crushing moment of stage fright anxiety, left my body for a few seconds, and was staring down at the ceremony from tree top level (completely sober). Hans, who I had only known for a week, intuitively knew what was going on and drew my attention to his smiling face. I immediately returned to my corporeal body and completed the ceremony with no one except he and I being the wiser.

After the ceremony we enjoyed a homemade cake from our new friend and Jim's current caretaker Graig S. The guests including my folks and grandma, as well as Teri's folks and all of her siblings stayed for a couple of hours before departing to their various hotel rooms in the area. Then Teri and I switched out of our informal wedding duds to something even less formal and headed across the mighty Mississippi to a wedding party that Northern Comfort was playing at that night.

**When we congratulated the bride and groom and informed them of how we had scheduled our party then vows a week later, they confessed that our plan was brilliant and they wished they would have done it the same way.**

**The rest of the summer consisted of more strenuous work on the cabin, tending my pot patch, keeping the junker cars running, and attending the pre-natal sessions with Leri and Jim. Casey Comfort (named after the band) Carnal was born in our cozy cabin on 5:15 am October 15<sup>th</sup> with Leri, Jim, and myself in attendance. Hooter was named as his godfather and one of Teri's sisters as his godmother.**

**Windows had been installed all around thanks to the Community Action Program low-income housing project. Several crews worked simultaneously to install windows that had been donated by one of our neighbors, while laying down hundreds of yards of caulk and other materials around all seams where wind might enter. All while drinking lots of beer and smoking much of my homegrown ganga.**

**The pot crop was abundant. I had enough that I was able to start retailing the product to Teri's siblings and our friends. Ten bucks for a full ounce of top-quality seedless weed and a hundo for one pound.**

**Something else interesting started to take place. Folks that I barely knew, who were musicians, began to approach me and ask if we would be having another party next year and if they could play. I told them that we would not have money to pay**

**them, but that they would be welcome to take the stage. By the end of 78 we had four more bands in addition to Northern Comfort lined up for the next year's party. And Hooter would be back by then to join in the fun. Yippie!**

## **My Hooter Is Crazier: Chapter Nineteen. Hooter Moves To The Gulch**

**After the transformational year in 78 and the first Gulch Party, we were ready for another big one in 79. Hooter had joined us in the spring of that year, so this would be his first full-on Gulch Party. He still had his classic 60 Rambler, and we had moved the travel trailer that Teri, Autumn, and I had initially lived in at the bottom, to a spot nestled in the woods about a hundred yards above the cabin. He was touched that we had done so and had also chosen him to be Casey's godfather, although I had to explain to him what duties and responsibilities went with that. The confused look on his face while I was doing so, caused me a bit of consternation about his willingness and/or ability to carry them out. I discussed my unease with Teri and we agreed to let the situation percolate while Hooter got to know Casey and interacted with our two kids in general. Another endearing characteristic of "Uncle Hoot" was his willingness to absorb information and situations that he had never thought about before.**

**Hoot was thrilled to have a ready-made place to move into and immediately set out to add an addition. We had run an extension cord and a phone line (we had**



**finally had a phone installed in preparation for Casey's birth) up to his trailer out**

**of our cabin. He had a little box out back to poop in and 33 acres to urinate on.**

**He was able to scrounge up some re-purpose worthy lumber, then using some of the myriad of skills learned on his folk's farm, hammer together an addition on the front of the trailer. It included spare bedroom room and a front porch suitable for sitting on. He was still doing a little meth, thanks to care packages from Ada, but keeping it infrequent and low-key, in the privacy of his own place. His go-to buzz was drinking copious quantities of beer. He also mixed up some tasty Margaritas in his new blender. He continued the tradition of joining us at the end of the day around our new camp-fire ring in the front yard of the cabin. All the while he was maintaining a level of functional-ability that made him a contributing member of the Gulch community and fun to socialize with.**

**As the preparations for the big 79 Gulch Party, Hooter asked if he could invite anyone. I told him. "Anyone you want but you are responsible for telling them the behavioral guidelines and making sure that they stick to them".**

**Teri and I were still working too hard. We took turns with off- the-land paid jobs while the other stayed with the kids while completing tasks around the land. It was an eye-opener for**

**me when Teri took a full-time office job at a local law firm while I stayed home. I thought “Great, I can finish up the interior work on the cabin while tending to Autumn and Case”. The first day, after Teri left for work, I got them up, fed them, played with them a while, then set them up with toys and books to keep them busy in their room while I attempted carpentry work. I got out the saw horses, tools, and materials. Before I cut the first piece of wood, they needed something. Three days later everything was still set up and I had not cut one board or nailed one nail. I then put all of the carpenter stuff back away. From then on, I spent all of my time tending to the kids, cooking, and cleaning so that Teri would come home to a clean house and a meal on the stove at the end of her eight-hour work day. When I see those bumper stickers that say “Every Mom Is A Working Mom”, I solemnly nod my agreement.**

**Hooter had never varied from his approach to what he deemed “available” women. Which was pretty much asking every age-appropriate female he encountered, who were not presently, in the company of a male**

partner, if they would care to fuck. This offer referred to the present tense. If they demurred initially, he would let them know that he would be available any time in the future should they change their mind. He was always non-aggressive about it, politely took “no” for an answer, and offered his contact information in case

they had a change of heart. Of course, many were taken aback, but rarely did they seem offended. A surprising number took him up on it, either on the spot or called back later. Again, this triggered a little jealousy on my part and deep stirring of lust in my loins.

One sunny Sunday afternoon, Hooter’s Dad and stepmom came up for a visit. The cabin was habitable, but not yet fit for entertaining guests as I still completing most of the finish work. So, I called Hoot down from his trailer up above and we all made ourselves comfortable sitting in the yard just outside the back door of our cabin. I had never met Hoot’s dad or stepmom before and they seemed to be at ease with our young family. They had a lot of sincere questions about how we had come to homestead in those secluded woods and how we had built the cabin with barely any financial resources. All was going swimmingly until one of Hooter’s favorite “fuck

buddies”, Pam H. (Not to be confused with Jim’s ex, and Hooter’s all-time favorite “fuck buddy”, Pam of Denver fame), from Iowa, showed up unannounced. After a very brief intro of her to his folk’s, she and Hoot disappeared into the cabin, scurried up to the loft, and proceeded to engage in very noisy sexual congress. As the carnal vocalizations increased in intensity and frequency, Hooter’s dad was visibly squirming as his face turned a scarlet red. He then looked at me and said “Tell Mike that we decided to head back to Garnavillo and we

will call him later”. I said “Wait one second” and made a beeline up to the loft, interrupting the wild gyrations of Hooter and Pam. When I explained the situation to Hoot, he was completely astounded at his folk’s discomfort. But he dutifully jumped out of bed, got dressed, and went back to join his parents. They appreciated the effort but their discomfort was not easily assuaged. They stayed for a bit longer, but soon headed for their car. They never returned and I never got to enjoy the pleasure of their company again. But Pam H. continued to be one of several regular female visitors to Hooter’s love shack on the hill.

As fall blossomed, Teri was missing being the primary care-taker of our kids. I was itching to get out of that

role and back to finishing the cabin and doing some paid work of my own. Hooter and I got jobs picking apples at Kickapoo Orchards on the ridge above Gays Mills. When the boss found out that Hoot had grown up on a farm and had been driving tractors since he was 10, he was immediately promoted to tractor driver which included delivering empty bins to where the pickers were working and taking the full ones back to the processing shed. There was also the possibility of spring and summer work before picking commenced in the fall. Hooter was looking at a nine month a year gig with unemployment bennies for the other three.

Hooter was in his element. His herky-jerky style of driving the tractor and his day long non-stop, often “non sequitur”, verbalizations, whether to himself or anyone nearby, was strongly reminiscent of the charismatic Neal Cassidy. He did not emulate the deeply intellectual aspect of Mr. Cassidy who was known read a wide range of literary and non-fiction texts, as well as writing short stories and poetry himself. But the twitchy constant movement, accompanied by run-on stream of consciousness chatter, was eerily similar to Dean Moriarity in *On The Road*.

It is fair to say that Neal was one of the founding forefathers and cultural icons of the beatniks and later

**the hippies, both movements having been spawned in the Bay Area. The character Dean Moriarty in the groundbreaking novel ‘On the Road’ by Jack Kerouac, was entirely based on him. Then he was also pretty much the central character and driver of the bus in Tom Wolfe’s non-fiction narrative, Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test. If you have not read them, do so. If you have, it is worth your while to re-read them. I often felt like we had our own “in-house” Cassidy.**

**Everyone loved Hooter. The owner, the crew boss, the pickers, the ladies who worked in the shed and even the customers who bought bags of fresh picked apples in the parking lot. He was kind, funny, and endlessly entertaining in word and deed.**

**Even though he always seemed to be going in many directions at once he somehow managed to pull everything together and get all of his tasks and responsibilities successfully completed. He was also becoming a big hit with many of the neighbors in the vicinity of our land. I believe that the unexpected contrast between his scarred, tough guy, biker look, and his friendly considerate demeanor was an unexpected and alluring juxtaposition to many folks who were used to judging a book by its cover.**

**We were working six days a week at the orchard which left Teri and I Sundays to do laundry and gather supplies in Viroqua. This also was Hoot's day to run his blender, continually perfecting his Marguerita recipe, usually sans clothing. It so happened that two of Teri's sisters, Anne and Judy, ages sixteen and seventeen, chose one of those Sundays to drive up from Chicago for a surprise visit. When they realized that no one was home at the cabin, they walked up to Hoot's place and knocked on his door to ask when we might be returning. Hooter, of course, answered the door totally naked, in his usual nonchalant demeanor. With him standing a few steps up on the porch and them at ground level, they got an eye-to-"eye" view of his "one eyed snake". Surprise!**

**They stuttered out their inquiry as to when we would be returning and he, in his most kind and friendly fashion, stated**

**"They should be back soon, would you like to come in for a Marguerita?" They demurred and chose to wait down by our cabin.**

**Then in early 79, in ones and twos, (Mick was now with Jane and Jean was single. All very amicable of course), the original gang from the M St. house started to show up for visits, including hikes around**

the land, questions about our building of the cabin, our general lifestyle, and whether they might also buy a “landed partnership”. “Of course,” we replied. My original vision had included us all chipping in to buy the land together. But since no one else seemed to be committed enough to actually do the hard work of scraping up their share of the down payment and spending time searching out the perfect place, Teri and I had done it on our own. But it was not too late. With the money that they would kick in for their shares, we could completely pay off the balance of the land contract and have that main monthly financial obligation off the board for good.

A couple of Hooter’s new friends, Steve and Donna, from back in So Cal had also expressed interest in buying in. I told Hoot that they would have to come out for a face to face, but the more the merrier as far we were concerned.

Then came the second Poverty Gulch Party in late July. It was a big un. I had five bands lined up, all willing to play for free. I got T-shirts printed up to sell to the attendees for just enough margin so that all of the band members performing, would receive theirs’ gratis. Steve and Donna decided that they did not want to miss out on the fun so they showed up a week before the party and built a small lean-to in the woods



to bunk in. Hundreds of friends and plenty of folks I had never laid eyes on before joined in the fun. I had put up a few posters in nearby natural food stores and a few bars so that any friends, who had not heard about the party word of mouth, might be informed. Hooter was the main driver of the first-time visitors. He literally invited everyone he came in contact with leading up to the party. A significant portion of the locals thought that it was “Hooter’s Party”. That was fine by me. I did not really want my name in wide circulation around the county. Several hundred showed up for the no cover, free beer, early afternoon to late night fest. And when the first round of beer started to get low, we passed the hat. We once again received enough in donations to pay for the original 10 half barrels and buy 10 more before the local beer distributor closed for the day. We still ran out sometime after dark while the bands played on.

When the big day arrived, most of my friends were pre- partying down at the bottom of the hill while Teri and I raced

around finishing up the last of the preparations. But as soon as Northern Comfort hit the stage to open the show, we too went into party mode. If anyone had a logistical problem, I told them to deal with it themselves or ignore it. Half way into their first set Hooter jumped

**on the stage and asked Northern Comfort to play “Give Me Three Steps” by Lynyrd Skynyrd”.**

**I’m sure they had never played it together before, but accommodated him while he did a surprisingly great vocal rendition. It instantly became part of the annual Gulch Party tradition. After his turn on the stage conventionally attired, he went up to his trailer and donned his favorite well-worn yellow sun dress. I believe that this was the reincarnation of the times Ada had dressed him up in a bizarro approximation of a female back when he had lived in So Cal. He was the maestro of the dance floor, swirling and twirling with all who shared the floor including men, women, and kids. Everyone seemed in on “the joke”. Occasionally, when no kids were in view, he would pull up the dress up for the big reveal. He was not wearing anything under there! Big laughs. Hooter’s rep as “a character” and “crazy guy” were becoming established legend in local folklore.**

**Hoot had a gallon jug of his home blended Margarita’s and had been chugging it furiously all day. Teri’s brother Tom had been a frequent visitor since we had first moved to the Gulch. This was the year that he was bringing his first serious**

girlfriend Nan, instead of his gang of stoner buddies. On the drive up he tried to explain to Nan that she would be meeting a very unique and crazy friend of his sister's named Hooter. Her immediate and skeptical response was: "Everyone has a crazy friend named Hooter. I am sure that '*my Hooter is crazier than your Hooter*'." (Thank you, Nan, for providing the title to this memoir)

By the time they arrived, the party was in full swing. Tom knew the lay of the land and wanted to hike up to the very top of the hill in order to find a secluded spot to set up their camp site. On the way up, as they passed Hoot's trailer, Tom pointed it out to Nan. They had yet to spot the man himself. After they had carefully set camp, since they would not be returning until after dark, they headed back down for some serious partying. As they passed Hooter's trailer Nan laid eyes on the him for the first time. The grizzled dude with the long bushy hair and beard to match was leaning over the railing of his porch, in his yellow sun dress, projectile vomiting. He took a short break to wave and smile at Tom who he knew well, and Nan who he did not, while he casually wiping some puke off of his beard. They waved back without breaking stride. At that point, Nan confessed, "Your Hooter *is* crazier than my Hooter".

**Despite the rampant drinking and pot smoking it was a very kid friendly party with many attendees bringing their broods. We set up a nursery in our cabin so the youngsters could play with toys and/or take naps with an adult always present. When the kids were outside, they danced and socialized through the crowd. No matter how inebriated any of the adults were, they were consistently very kind and respectful toward the little ones. Meanwhile their parents always had one eye on their whereabouts.**

**During Steve and Donna's summer stay we all hit it off famously and agreed that they could buy in as soon as they had enough saved for their share. As the weather cooled, they headed back to sunny southern California to work and save up.**

**As fall approached, I had a bumper crop of herb drying out on elevated screens behind Hoot's trailer with many friends putting in advance orders for the product when it would be properly dried and manicured. Hooter and I had contacted the orchard and circled the start date on our calendars for the upcoming picking season.**

**I had stayed in contact with Jim through visits back to his farm. He had gone through a number of caregivers. His latest**

was Craig S. who was excellent and a perfect match for Jim's keen intellect and sharp sense of humor. But Craig was ready for some hard low paying work, being of Scottish ancestry and all. When I told him about the apple picking gig, he gave Jim a few weeks' notice and contacted the orchard to reserve a job. The day before we were all due to start picking, he showed up at the Gulch and took over the lean-to that Steve and Donna had lived in over the summer.

The first day of the new picking season I met a very congenial, blue-eyed, blond-haired fellow named Rex W. He and I hit it off immediately. He and his land partners were some of the original back-to-the-land settlers arriving a couple of years before Teri and I. They had been instrumental in setting up the Gays Mills Food Coop in the tiny burg of GM while larger towns in the area did not have one until years later.

Jack K. was also a new member of the picking crew and an old friend from when I lived in CR. He had been a newly minted ex-boyfriend of Jean's. He showed up one day to visit Jean, hoping to re-kindle the old flame, only to discover that she had a new live-in boyfriend, me. Despite the potential for jealousy, he and I had both taken a pass on that old shit and hit it off immediately. We have been close friends ever since. The Gulch centered crew was becoming a

**close-knit group and spawned many friendships that have survived over the**

**decades. By the time picking season was over, we had insisted that Craig move into the cabin with us as the lean-to was not fit for the encroaching frigid weather. He was incredibly helpful with the hardest of tasks like firewood spitting and hauling. He was “the man” when it came to carrying water from the spring a quart-mile away, in five-gallon buckets. The trek concluded with the last two hundred yards being up the steep drive-way. He could go the whole distance without a break whereas I had to take several. Hand carrying was the only option as snowfall had made the driveway impassable to our two-wheel drive pick-up. It was around that time that he attained his nickname, which I still address him by, “Ra-Man”. Autumn was not yet able to enunciate Craig so she cobbled together her own version, “Ra”. I added “Man”.**

**1980 dawned with much joy and optimism for the future of our burgeoning community in the woods.**

## **My Hooter Is Crazier: Chapter Twenty. Hooter's Best**

**As spring of 1980 bloomed, so did Teri, as we were expecting our third child. Any reservations about Hooter being an integral part of our Gulch family, Casey's godfather, and an "uncle" to our kids had pretty much dissolved. Sure, he was shooting a little meth, but in the privacy of his trailer and not letting it get in the way of taking care of his responsibilities or his natural kindness and outgoing personality. He had bought a full-on Harley and built a little shed to keep it out of the elements up by his trailer. He even contracted with a marginal local artist to paint a picture of a Hoot Owl on the gas tank.**

**He was becoming a well-known and mostly beloved figure in the local community as he transversed the roadways and drinking holes on his frequent "putts" riding the old Harley. Often with his girlfriend de jour on back.**

**He had girlfriends and friends coming and going but always let them know the expectations that I had laid out about consideration for my family's peace and wellbeing. Most got and respected them and those that didn't were run off immediately and never allowed back.**

**We were gearing up for the biggest Gulch Party ever with seven bands lined up, once again all of them playing for free.**

**And I had enough dough from the previous year's pot crop to buy 20 half barrels just for starters. We were expecting even more folks to show up than the two hundred we had the previous year. Word was spreading. Steve and Donna were going to make it back for the party and purchase their partnership share in cash. Steve had asked if he could bring his heavy metal band, Warrior. Who was I to turn down another free band featuring one of our newly minted partners. He wanted the headline finale spot which was fine, as Northern Comfort, the featured act, always wanted to *open* the show. I wasn't sure how the "head banger" music would work with the mostly old school hippie sensibilities of the usual crowd.**

**Hooter was impressed by the money I was finally making growing the ganga. He had never had any "gardening" experience, just planting and harvesting "row crops" at his folk's farm, while perched on a tractor. But he had decided to give it a try. I gave him explicit instructions on how and where to cultivate his patch next to mine, along with a strict prohibition on telling anyone about, or showing them, our patch. I also turned him onto some of the great seeds I had**



been using for the past couple of years. Our very secluded pot patch was a several hundred yards from the cabin through dense woods. I was not overly concerned about one of the party guests wandering into it.

When the big day arrived there were indeed a record number of guests jamming the hillside that looked down on the front porch of the cabin which also served as the stage. All of the “Gulch Gang” were present, including Mick and Jane as well as Ra-Man who would all soon buy partnership land share. Sister Jean was back from North Cali, and in attendance as well.

I was a little concerned about the “hard core red-neck” complexion of some of the guests who had probably received their invites from Hoot. As Northern Comfort took the stage the crows was in a jolly mood. Hooter, wearing jeans and a Northern Comfort t-shirt sang his signature “Give Me Three Steps” to the delight of the crowd. I forgot my concerns and settled in for a good time. I had come up with what I thought was a brilliant plan to keep all those kegs cold. I had dug two long trenches about fifteen feet above the fire pit, then laid down a thick bed of ice in the bottom of each pit. With the help of a couple of friends, we carefully placed ten kegs in each. Then we blanketed

**the sides with ice and topped that off with a thick layer of dirt leaving only the tops above ground. I had wisely rented three tappers to avoid long lines and waits for beer.**

**I wasn't paying attention to Hooter, but apparently, he and a couple of like-minded friends had made their way up to his trailer so he could change into his iconic sun dress and they could shoot up a shit ton of meth. In the meantime, as I was relaxing on the hillside with Teri and our kids enjoying Northern Comfort, a couple of people I knew approached.**

**"You know that guy Walter?"**

**"Yeah of course we do. He was the minister at our wedding two years ago".**

**"Well, he just doesn't fit in. He's not smoking pot or drinking beer. He is making us and some other folks nervous. They think he might be a narc."**

**"He is not a narc. He is a dear friend and honored guest. If he is making anyone nervous, they can get the fuck gone."**

**A bit later Hoot and his shooting buddies returned to the crowd visibly wired to the max. The same folks who had complained about Walter, not doing enough drugs, now wanted to bend my ear about Hooter being**

**“too high”. I immediately dispatched them with “Just worry about your**

**own damn self and don’t bother me again”. But when I looked around and spotted Hooter and saw what condition his condition was in, I was immediately distracted from the music. In fact, he was looking pretty distressed. This evaluation was confirmed when he was too high to even hit the dance floor. I was not pleased. I eventually wandered over and asked if he was OK. He gave me an unconvincing smile and said that he was. I told him that if he did any more speed that he should stay in his trailer and not return to the party. Later on, he and his crew did just that.**

**As darkness fell a serious crisis reared its bothersome head. The buried kegs which had functioned so well to keep them ice cold during daylight hours had now developed a fatal flaw. Dozens of very drunk people stumbling around in the dark had accidentally busted off all three of the tappers stopping the flow of all that cold, free beer. This was a dire situation that demanded my immediate personal attention. I pushed my way thru the growing crowd of thirsty patrons with empty cups in their hands and worried looks on their faces. I unscrewed the three broken taps which I then carried back up to the stage.**

**After Warrior finished the song they had been playing, I stepped up to the mic. Normally the only time I spoke from the stage was at the start of the party to introduce Northern**

**Comfort. I was never comfortable being the on-stage center of attention. But I soldiered on. I outlined the problem. "I have three broken tappers in my hand which means that there is still plenty of beer but it is not coming out of the kegs. I know we have a lot of mechanically inclined folks here who can make at least one workable one out of the parts from the three". A half a dozen guys immediately stepped forward and took the tappers out of my hands. The first one was cobbled together and back in service withing minutes. The second one fifteen minutes later. I also recruited a friend to run an extension cord out to the kegs and set up a trouble light to illuminate the area and avoid further breakage.**

**A bit later I had to take the mic again. One really fucked up guy was dancing dangerously close to Warrior's mic stand and occasionally knocking the mic right into Steve's mouth. I had warned him that it would not be tolerated and even drew a thick line in the dirt three feet from the stage that he should not cross. When he did not comply, I took the stage again, outlined the current problem, asked for help removing**

**the guest, and for someone to escort him to the bottom of the hill. Within seconds, several burly attendees stepped up and did so. Never saw the dude again.**

**After Warrior finished the musical portion of the party, most of the folks wandered down the hill to their campsites or**

**headed out. A dozen or so gathered around the fire to drink the rest of the beer and shoot the shit. I only recognized a few of them but I took a seat and tried to drink my share. A little later Jean wandered up to the firepit and looked around for a familiar face and a place to sit. Before I had a chance to wave her over, one of the hard-core red-neck guys, who I assumed was a Hooter invite, goes “Hey darlin, you can sit over here on my lap”. He was surrounded by a bunch of his buds and I did not appear to have that many of *my* friends close by. But my anger surged and my mouth seemed to run without any fear or guidance from my brain. I looked the asshole straight in the eye. “Has that ever worked for you.? Has one single woman ever taken you up on that stupid fuckin line?” I immediately realized that I might be on the brink of getting my ass kicked but just continued to give him the “dead-eye stare”. He seemed to shrivel under my words and gaze. He did not utter a syllable and within**

five minutes he and his running buddies were gone. Jean gave me a grateful look and took the seat next to me.

By most of the attendees reckoning, the party had been a huge success, and even though I was able to immensely enjoy it for the most part, the few troubling incidents gave me cause for concern.

In October of 1980, Oakley was born. Hooter had asked Teri and I if he could attend the birth. After she and I conferred for a couple of days, I got back to him. "Teri says she is OK with it and so am I. But you must be completely sober, clean in body and clothing, and not smell like ciggies". I realized that this was a tall order as predicting birth date and time was as accurate as predicting the weather. He would have to stay literally and figuratively clean for days before the projected due date. I also told him that he would be a completely silent observer from the corner of the room. I knew he loved being the center of attention, but let him know that he would not be in that role at the birthing. I doubted that he would be able to do so. He proved me wrong. He did manage one Hooteresque work around. When Teri's water broke, I called to put him on alert. When the contractions started, I told him to come on down. In attendance were a sleepy Autumn-Star, Teri's best friend Brenda

**B., myself, and a sober, silent, clean smelling Hooter, in his freshly washed sun dress, in the corner. When Leri the mid-wife, who had never met Hooter, arrived she momentarily slipped out of her professional demeanor long enough for to enjoy a good belly laugh and comment “That’s a new one”. Oakley Omega was born at 3 am October 10<sup>th</sup>. Ra- Man was named the godfather. Shortly after Oakley was born, Teri and I agreed that three kids were plenty for us. I quickly got a fairly painless vasectomy or two from our friend Dr Bill.**

**After Oakley’s birth, he, Casey, and Autumn-Star were added to the deed along with Mick & Jane, as well as Steve & Donna who had recently bought in. Ra-Man had also purchased an ownership share but did not want his name to appear in the county land records. The M St. gang except Jean, who had moved to northern California, were now a co-owners of the Gulch, along with newbies Ra-Man plus Steve and Donna. Hooter and Ra-Man wintered on the land along with our family, while Mick and Jane were scheduled to move to the Gulch in the spring. Steve and Donna were going to be absentee share owners with regular visits in the summers.**

**Teri and I’s dream of living on a cooperatively owned piece of secluded country land with our friends was**

**coming true. We were excitedly looking forward to the next chapter.**

**THE END OF PART ONE: MY HOOTER IS CRAZIER THAN YOUR HOOTER.**

**COMING SOON: PART TWO: HOOTER GETS CRAZIER. And others go off the rails as well.**