

My Redacted Life

By

Ronald  eyes

Micci

(mind your own biznez!)

WHY I LIKE IT: Fiction Editor JOEY CRUSE writes... Ronald Micci's, "My Redacted Life," is a story equivalent to the likes of the Coen brothers' *Burn After Reading* or any comedy in which the clandestine nature of our governments is turned into a farce.

Our expatriate protagonist is not entirely slumming his way through Paris. He still believes in writing, studying those great moderns of the 20's at university, he still hopes his walks down the Rues will amount to the great thoughts of those who used to stroll through Montmartre, and, like most characters bumbling through their own plot, he continuously falls for the sexpot that is nothing but tits and trouble – and, I guess in this case, heroin. Then, one day, he gets the call from movers and shakers of this world that he is endowed with a very important part – not that one – and must quickly go on a mission to protect the interests of his country.

Why the government would choose him is probably the biggest mystery of the story.

What I like about this story is its cleverness. The pace is never stagnant, the redactions humorous, the dialogue can't help but make you chuckle, and underneath all dwells this literary quality that understands the great myth of the writer.

Enjoy.

 Hermione

QUALITY QUOTABLE *(for the love of language...)*

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“We need info on Putin.”

“Such as?”

“The size of his boxer shorts, for starters.”

“Jiminy H. Christ,” I responded, apologizing for taking the Lord’s name in vain.

“He is a weak, vain man. If we can expose the size of his crotch to the world, likely somewhat puny, he will be embarrassed and humiliated, and then we can use our intelligence to further undermine his operations.”



My Redacted Life

(the mostly unredacted version)

I was born on [REDACTED]. I know this because my mother told me, and for no other reason.

When I was [REDACTED] years old, I fell off a [REDACTED] and broke my leg, and sustained head injuries that left me [REDACTED].

Lucky for me [REDACTED].

And then, in my freshman year of college, I met this girl, which temporarily changed my life. “It’s a shameful racket,” she told me. “This thing called [REDACTED].”

I knew her from somewhere, but where?

She had pert brown hair, and the moment our [REDACTED] met, she too remembered.

So she turned to me and said "sure, sure I remember you, from our literature class." That's how it all started. In an intimate [REDACTED] off the Rue [REDACTED]. On a warm [REDACTED].

Her name was [REDACTED]. I don't expect you to believe it, but that was actually her name. But it might as well have been [REDACTED]. See, she was [REDACTED], big [REDACTED].

I was in Paris on an [REDACTED] program. She caught my eye. I caught her eye. I think we had a bad case of caught eye syndrome.

That's when it hit me. I knew her from somewhere else as well. Her face had been in the French papers. She was some sort of femme fatale, with connections to some [REDACTED] people. And she had errands for me to do, [REDACTED].

She wanted me to be [REDACTED] private Idaho, but I wasn't in the mood for baked potatoes, especially after she revealed her plans.

"Est-ce que tu m'aimes?" she said, with flashing eyes, and seductive hip curves. I was only too willing to navigate her alluring ski slopes.

Did I love her? You bet. "Sure," I said. "Sure I love you. Ne me demandez pas de faire ce que vous venez de me demander." (Only, don't ask me to do what you just asked me to do)

"L'amour a un prix" (love has a price tag), she said, flashing deep plunging cleavage [REDACTED].

She handed me a parcel bound in brown paper, and asked me to deliver it to the Rue de la Something or Other. I knew what was in there, and it wasn't exactly Girl Scout cookies. It was smack. The white stuff that's bad for Johnny – and Jimmy – and all the junkies that line La Place Pigalle. That's where all the dirty shops are, and many fleshy enticements. I got to wondering whether my French cutie, whose name was Nicole, wasn't maybe working the streets. You know, working her way through college. But she offered enticements.

"Ensuite, nous irons bosse dans le lit," she said, meaning afterward we'd play humpty dumpty between the sheets, which beat Parcheesi in my book any day. My French may have been a little rusty, but as for my moving parts, everything was up to date in Kansas City.

What was it about Nicole? What would make me risk arrest and imprisonment for just one hour in her arms?

Heck, I came to Paris to study literature. I wanted to be like Papa Hemingway without the shotgun and hunting vest, or Gertrude Stein. I thought a rose was still a rose.

I wanted to lounge around the outdoor bistros sipping café noisette over an impassioned discussion of Proustian literature or abstractionist painting. There was nothing abstract about Nicole's boobalás. They were like a couple of Matterhorns begging to be climbed.

"What are you studying in school," I asked. "I mean, besides literature?"

"Marketing," she said. "Comme les Américains. Now be a good little boy and run ze parcel to Pigalle."

I was in a real Pigalle alright, or pickle. Take your pick.

Right now I just wanted to smother myself between Nicole's twin peaks, but she would have none of it.

"Instead," I offered, "couldn't we go for a romantic stroll down the boulevard Saint-Michel?"

"Romance, she eez for later, my little sweetie. Ze packeege, you take?"

Ze packeege, ze packeege. Why is it always ze packeege with women. Took me back to grade school, when my first crush asked me to carry her books home from school.

"They feel so heavy," she umphed. "I'd be forever grateful."

When we got to her front steps, she kneed me in the cumquats, appropriated the books, and slammed the door in my face. If I had been the UPS delivery boy at least I might have gotten a tip.

If I had half a brain, I would have learned from that early experience about "ze packeege." Always beware ze packeege. Good things may come in small packeegees, but to paraphrase Gertrude Stein, a packeege is a packeege is a packeege. Hey, am I famous yet?

In high school, a pretty girl leaned across her desk during social studies class, batting her eyes flirtatiously. "Good things come in nice packages," she said, tilting her ample bosoms just so.

"How about a malted after class?" I suggested.

"In your dreams," she snapped, sweeping me aside with a gesture of her hand. Then she slammed shut the book on her desk, and let go with one of those show of disgust grunts.

That traumatized me as far as packages were concerned. For years, I wouldn't even open my gifts at Christmas.

Okay, so back to Nicole, twin peaks, fertile valleys and all. I stuffed Le Packeege under my arm and made off for La Place Pigalle. Under an awning there, in the shadows, stood a collection of thugs wearing berets and smoking smelly cigarettes, and one of them was only too willing to appropriate my bundle. "Thanks chum," I think is what he said in French, as he elbowed me aside and disappeared in the shadows. I'm sure he would have gladly sliced my throat, and so I thought enough of Nicole was enough. I'd send her a postcard from the Grand Canyon some day. Then I caught the first flight back to the states. No more exchange programs for me, or Ernest Hemingway literary safaris.

Don't ask why, but I joined ROTC, and within weeks my extraordinary intellect and wit must have come to someone's attention, because men in trench coats took me aside in the student union.

"We recruit for the CIA," they said. "You may have just the qualities we're looking for." I don't think they meant Boy Scout qualities, although I made it a point to wash my undies regularly and knew how to tie a square knot. "Can you keep a secret?" they asked.

"Well, uh – "

"We need you to sign a few formal documents."

To wit:

TOP SECRET **** CLASSIFIED INFORMATION **** PORTIONS
REDACTED PURSUANT TO U.S. GOVERNMENTAL SECTIONS 1.4(a) thru
1.4(h) ****

[REDACTED]

Next thing I know they had squared something with the college dean, and I was being whisked to Washington on a private jet. My parents wondered what the hell was going on, and would I get my tuition refunded. I did, but the what the hell part had to be kept in the dark, or so said the men in the trench coats who appeared one day at their door. They weren't there to sip tea.

“You’re one of a kind,” they told me in the hush-hush setting of a Langley boardroom. “Look at your pinkie finger.”

“Okay.” It did have an odd little nervous twitch to it.

“You may be one of **them**,” they told me. Oh no, was I a space alien or something? Did I have ancestors on Alpha Centauri?

“Once in a generation,” they said, “these anomalies occur. The enemy has no way to thwart their powers.”

“Does that mean I’m Superman?”

“Don’t get cute.”

Geez, all I had wanted was a little sex with Nicole and a discussion or two with French faux intellectuals. Now they were telling me I was Ernest Hemingway with a second growth of chest hair, or so it seemed.

“Are you sending me out big game hunting?”

“We need info on Putin.”

“Such as?”

“The size of his boxer shorts, for starters.”

“Jiminy H. Christ,” I responded, apologizing for taking the Lord’s name in vain.

“He is a weak, vain man. If we can expose the size of his crotch to the world, likely somewhat puny, he will be embarrassed and humiliated, and then we can use our intelligence to further undermine his operations.”

“What am I supposed to do, bring along a tape measure? I doubt I can abscond with his shorts in broad daylight from the Kremlin. Really, can’t you pick someone else for this assignment? Or use infrared spy satellites to home in on his privates and do it that way? I never considered my ultimate destiny in life delving into the secrets of a dictator’s personal billiard pockets, if you catch my drift. Couldn’t you just communicate with his tailor?”

“While we’re on the topic – “

“Oh no,” I said. “Only Nicole knows that, and she’s not talking. Let’s settle for the pinkie finger anomaly and not pry elsewhere into my physiology. Who knows what you might discover, a third armpit maybe. And if you think I’m playing a game of ‘my shorts are bigger than yours’ with Putin, forget it. They kill people over there, usually with poison. Which reminds me, how am I supposed to get past the palace guard?”

“A high level meeting has been arranged between the two of you.”

“He’s just gonna meet with any old slob?”

“Once you flash your pinkie finger, passage will be granted you. The Russkies know better than to mess with the one who bears the anomaly.”

“I never thought of myself as an anomaly bearer. Do I get paid for this?”

The silence was deafening.

“So you want me to flash the pinkie finger in order for us to ultimately give his regime the middle finger, I get it.”

“Your private jet will be waiting first thing in the morning.”

A limousine parked outside transported me from Langley to a pricey hotel, one with armed guards in the lobby. Ulp.

When I got to my nicely appointed room, the phone was ringing. It was long distance, and probably being tapped.

“Oh, mon packeege, mon packeege.”

Yup, Nicole.

“I am een ze trouble.”

“Tell me you still love me,” I said.

“Oh mon sweetie, I am as ze Americain say, in ze stir. Locked up. Ze authorities caught me avec le goods. Help me, mon precious sweetie.”

“What about the love thing? I mean, do you still -- ”

“I will give myself completely to you, mon sweetie. But ze being locked up, she eez not nice. Ze gendarmes, not so good.”

“Frankly, I’m amazed they put your call through. But maybe ze French they know of my superhuman powers and high level connections. Your sweetie will try to put in a good word for you.”

“Oh j’taime, j’taime, mon precious Bonaparte.”

“Kind words, for someone who not terribly long ago sent me packing with ze dangerous packeege.”

“I am so sorry, mon Cherie. Forever unto you would your Nicole be grateful if you could get her out of theez place.”

“Promise you’ll be a good girl if they cut you loose?”

“Je promise.”

I knew her too well. They might let her go, but she was ze trouble avec ze capital T. Still, there was the matter of the Matterhorns, all two of them. The ski slopes of my dreams.

“Where are you incarcerated?” She gave me the address of the precinct.

“I rue zeez Rue, where zay keep me, mon sweetie pie. Eet eez la tristesse ultime, mon cutie heart. Zet me free, je t'en supplie.” (“I beg of you,” to the rest of us.)

My French was rusty, but I got the gist. “I’ll do my best. Now I need ze sleep, mon tentatrice criminelle (criminal temptress). Ze nighty night.”

The next morning, before secretly jetting off to God knows where, I dialed a classified phone number, and spoke with my handlers about Nicole.

“Favors already, buddy boy?”

“She eez so sweet, mon handlers.”

“What’s with the accent?”

“All in jest. Do what you can. And if my mission fails, say nice things over an effigy of my boxer shorts, eh?”

They weren’t guffawing.

“Can I see my mummy before I go?” I asked.

“Get your wise ass on that plane and your measuring tape up Putin’s crotch. Then you can get mummified. Got it?”

“Yessir.”

Next thing I knew, a limousine driven by a man in wraparound sunglasses was sweeping me to a deserted airstrip, where a well-appointed private plane awaited me. They gave my pinkie finger a good going over before they would allow me to board, and I had to exchange several passwords, none of them dirty: ██████████.

Free drinks were on the house in a poor man’s equivalent of Air Force One, but the sunglassed Secret Service men who sat across from me were dour and uncommunicative.

“You come this way often?” I asked, with a smile on my face.

They were not, how do you say eet, pleased.

“I guess you guys get the sort of plum assignments, eh?”

“Eat your prepared meal and don’t get funny with the booze.”

“Where to next?”

“That’s classified, buster.”

“You see this?” I waved my enchanted pinkie.

“We’re not impressed, P.T. Barnum. But out of the goodness of our heart – Germany. A stopover to refuel. Then on to the Big Kahuna.”

The Big Kahuna was Moscow, and we were no sooner on the tarmac than some Russian goons in military uniforms blindfolded me.

“Uh, which way to the commissar, comrades?” I quipped.

“Замолчи!” they barked. That’s the Russian version of “shut-up-ski.”

How could I be sure they wouldn’t dump me by the side of the road, or force me to play checkers with Edward Snowden?

Well, when they unblindfolded me, I was in a swank Russki hotel room, with formal evening attire laid out neatly on the bed.

“You shall dine with President Putin, newly arrived one. Promptly at eight. We shall send a beautiful and treacherous woman to escort you. Your room is heavily bugged, so keep the dirty phone calls to a minimum.”

No sooner had my handlers left than my phone rang. Was it the execution squad making preparations for dispatching me at sunrise? Oh no, much worse. It was ze Nicole, full of ze enthusiasm.

“Oh sweetie pie, I am ze free once again. You have saved me.”

Oh God, the tigress had been cut loose to roam the jungle.

“I’m happy for you Nicole. Right now I’m in a bit of an odd spot. Can I talk to you later from Siberia?”

“Ze gendarmes, they were so sweet to me after ze phone call.”

“‘Sweet,’ Nicole? Were you sweet in return?”

“Oh no, no, no, mon gooey chocolate, I was true to you, j’swear.”

“And do you promise to return to your studies and be a good leetle packeege?”

“Yes, yes, mon dearie pie.”

“Good. Now go and be a good little Matterhorn until I talk to you again. I mean, in the unlikely event that I manage to avoid the firing squad. Goodbye.”

I knew full well there’d be trouble in Gay Paree, but this was no time to ponder it. I put on my tux and cummerbund, whatever that is. And a sort of Man Friday came in and helped me with the neckwear bit, and gave me a once over. Not long after he left, a very beautiful, svelte Russian lovely, probably in her mid-20s, entered the room. She batted her Caspian eyes at me.

“I am your escort for the evening,” she said in surprisingly good English. “My name is Natalya.”

Another name starting with an N. “Nicole, meet Natalya. She saved me from the gulag. So, if you don’t mind, she’s gonna shack up with us. But she

might be bugged or something, so be discreet in our conversations. I think I might be in love with her, but I don't know what her status is with respect to the carrying of packages."

Okay, so Natalya took my arm, and down the circular staircase we went into a large foyer, off which was Le Grand Hall. Dignitaries were milling about with drinks, and a waiter offered me a glass of what appeared to be champagne. I was too embarrassed to ask if it was poisoned, but I had Natalya take a sip first just in case. She batted lovely eyes at me and even kissed me on my innocent cheek. I think she said Americans are cuties or something in Russian – she kept winking and nudging and such.

Then, some soldiers with white gloves and trumpets came in, blew a fanfare, and we all sat down for ze big dinner. Naturally, I held the chair for Natalya.

Here I was, not yet twenty years old, among these white-haired KGB types. I guess the old order hadn't yet given over to Gen Z or the Millennials.

Natalya kept whispering in my ear, and at one point she slipped her tongue in there.

At the head of the table of about a dozen men was the big gefilte fish himself, President Vladimir Putin, dressed in military regalia.

There was a small plate of caviar set out before each guest. There was also a small stemmed glass containing what appeared to be vodka.

"A toast," said Putin boldly. Or something like that, my Russian was a bit rusty. And then the shouts began: "Beluga! Beluga! Beluga!"

Vodka was being gulped, and empty glasses flung everywhere, smashing wildly. I guess this is how the Commies do it.

"Come, taste our caviar, suspicious one."

I thought maybe it was a good idea to let Natalya taste mine first, in case it had been poisoned, but she was busy tugging at my sleeve. "Take me with you," she said. "I must escape this place." Her English was pretty damned good.

After dinner, Putin and his bodyguard thugs took me to a small room off the banquet hall. Putin introduced himself, with that sinister scorpionic half smile that meant he'd be glad to murder me if I dared turn my back.

"Glasnost to meet you, President Putin," I joked. If he didn't have a sense of humor, I was hummus for hungry Siberians.

“Call me Vladimir, oh strange pinkied American. And what exactly brings you to Moscow, besides the obvious – to spy?”

“Well, er, I’ve seen those photos of you, lean and mean, on the news. Bare chest and all. Frankly, I very much admire them.”

“Ah, a groupie.”

I had Googled Putin’s particulars ahead of time, all five feet six, one hundred and fifty- two pounds of him. He was pushing seventy, with the body of a much younger man.

“You keep yourself trim,” I said, edging closer to the obvious question. “Uh, I know this seems kind of personal, but how trim exactly?”

He probably thought I was gay or some kind of pervert. I’m sure they have tortures specially designed for that.

Meanwhile, Natalya’s hand was under the table fooling with my oysters.

Putin puffed out his chest, flexed his muscles.

“It is my waist size that interests you, pinkied one,” or so his interpreters said. “We have spies.”

Ulp! In any language, that meant I was dead meat.

“On a good day, thirty-two perhaps, but most days, thirty-four. And yourself?”

“Oh God, I haven’t checked lately.” I hadn’t, but Natalya sure had. And lately her ministrations had added a bit of thickness to my briefs, no question.

“Silly Americans. But what is your real mission here?”

I looked at him funny.

“You were fed much baloney by your handlers, young one. They were after bigger game than my Fruit of the Looms.”

Omigod, had I been duped? Used as a tool to gain something more sinister.

“Let me get back to you on that one, Vlad baby. Let me sleep on it.”

Back in my room, accompanied by Natalya, I placed an emergency phone call. “Why did you set me up? And yes, I’m sure they’re listening. Get my buns out of here.”

There was a long pause. Then came a bizarre, encrypted message that required pen and paper to decipher: “There will be a man, a Russian at breakfast. Bald, with a signet ring. He’ll get you out of there. Destroy at once.”

I balled up the piece of paper, then tore it in shreds. Natalya reached for it, and before I could stop her, tucked the shreds between her breasts.

“You search for it, American-ski boy, and we have – how do you say – a roll in the hay. I must escape this place. You take me with you.”

“Natalya, I’d gladly take you, but if supreme Putin-ski gets wind, they tan American-ski boy’s hide. You get the picture.”

“Kiss me and make love to me, strange-fingered American boy. You will take me away from this place. Then I will owe my love to you.”

“You’re not by any chance in the courier business?”

“I don’t understand-ski.”

“Packages – packeege, shipping, that sort of thing.”

“The only packeege as you say, funny boy, is what you are now about to unwrap. Why wait-ski?”

Okay, out of pure shame, I’m going to redact the night we spent together. Nicole wouldn’t be happy. But when you possess ze funny pinkie finger, you do funny things.

Here are the lurid details of our night together:

[REDACTED]

The next morning, after a breakfast consisting of a strange-looking fish on a plate who seemed to look right through me with his dead eye, the man with the signet ring escorted me to a small anteroom. Naturally, Natalya wasn’t far behind.

He gestured to a set of French windows, and I took Natalya’s hand and we went out and there was a helicopter waiting. Natalya waggled her pinkie finger at the pilot as we climbed aboard. Omigod, was she another anomaly, was I not the only earthling with le pinkie etrange?

It wasn’t long before we reached a small airport, and awaiting us was that poor man’s Air Force One. I got the going over again, but they didn’t bother to pat down Natalya. I had to wonder, was Natalya a spy or double agent or something. Maybe she was carrying top secret information on her person, though after last night, there wasn’t much of her person that was any longer top secret. Well, being a spy certainly had its fringe benefits, but if Nicole got wind of this she’d never speak to me again, which, come to think of it, might make my life infinitely easier. Oh what a young lad of nineteen will do for God and country and a night with the ladies.

Back at Langley, my handlers took me to the debriefing room, no pun intended.

“We know, we know. The crotch size thing was simply a pretext to get you over there. You were carrying something on your person that has now been strategically planted so that our hackers can hack back at the Russkies. Nice work.”

“And Natalya?”

“She did the planting.”

Actually I had done a bit of planting myself, but it was better left out of the conversation. I know what you’re thinking – Natalya shucked down to get whatever device I was carrying on me, and the passion bit was all in the line of duty. I suppose we may never know.

“What about the pinkie?”

“Pure hooey.”

Gads, I wasn’t Superman after all.

“And now?” I asked. It didn’t take long to find the answer. I was whisked back to campus, and my government career summarily ended.

“Hey, buddy boy. Where ya been?”

“Ha, ha!” I retorted. Too few ha’s for the jerks who were jealously annoying me. “I was on a secret mission for the CIA, jerkwater, where do you think.”

“Yeah, right. What happened, they put you on probation because you flunked Renaissance poetry?”

This from a bunch of klutzes, I didn’t need.

How to return to normal campus life. My roommate barely noticed my return when I moped in. My cell phone rang. “Yeah?” And you well know who it was. “Come see you? Nicole listen, I’m gonna have final exams in a couple of weeks and I missed a month of classes.”

“Ze cleavage, sweetie boy, ze cleavage.”

“Yes, I know. But why do I have suspicions ze cleavage is once again involved with ze packeege?”

“Oh darling cutie, your Nicole has been good girl.” Somehow, “good” had bad connotations. She was probably in Marseilles off-loading crates of narcotics. Some girls they just never learn.

“You should know,” I said, “that I’ve lost my high level connections. I’m just a grunt again. No pull, no get ze out of ze jail free. Get it?”

“You are too modest, my handsome one. Theenk of how soft ze cleavage eez.”

“I’d like to cleave to it, believe me, but right now I’ve got studying to do.”

And to think, just a few days ago I was breaking bread with Vladimir Putin the man himself. Now I was just another schmuck studying Philosophy 101. Jean-Paul Sartre, who couldn’t seem to decide whether his existence preceded his essence, which seems a bizarre dilemma and not quite as engaging as who won the first race at Aqueduct. Long dead and buried though he was, Jean-Paul couldn’t hold a candle to Nicole’s ski slopes or some unpoisoned clinches with Natalya. Ze worldly women, they help you grow your philosophy fast.

Indeed, suddenly the unredacted, fun parts of my life had gotten redacted. It didn’t seem fair. But watch what you wish for. En route to biology class I got jumped in the quadrangle by two burly men who threw a bag over my head and dragged me off somewhere, stashing me in the back of a van.

“Now,” they said in heavy French accents, “what did you do with the H?”
Oh Christ, not that again.

“I don’t know, I gave it to Bruno or whomever, and that was months ago. I have nothing to do with that kind of thing anymore.”

It was then that a familiar voice chirped in: “Oh mon sweetie, eet eez so good to see you,” and I felt familiar arms wrap themselves around me.

Jesus H. Christ, guess who.

“I have ze philosophy to study, Nicole. Please, tell these people the truth and let me go. My existence is feeling a nasty tug on my essence.”

“Ah, ze essence. Hold me close, mon sweetie pie. Our essences can mingle.”

“Shut up!” snapped one of the burlies. “Where’d he stash the dope?”

The van door suddenly burst open, and big, heavysset men in wraparound sunglasses – yeah, you probably guessed it – snatched ze thugs away at gunpoint. They also put the grab on Nicole.

“Oh sweetie, do not let zem take me away. . .” And then her voice trailed off. Uncle Sam to the rescue. The Secret Service actually. Okay, maybe the pinkie thing had been a ruse, and maybe not, but it was apparent your tax dollars were paying for someone to keep an eye on me. Maybe they were afraid Vladimir would send his men out after me or something when he realized there was a

computer chip embedded in the lining of his Hanes underwear. Or maybe this was just a one-off drug grab and the powers that be had been tracking Nicole.

In any event, my life had once again become unredacted, which I think means I could go about unhindered just like every other college nerd. Still, there was the matter of that pinkie. I thought I'd have it checked out in the college infirmary.

The nurse in there gave me the eye – no, not again – but had me sit on the examining table as she perused my finger and fooled with it.

“That hurt?”

“No ma'am.”

“How about that?”

“No.” I was starting to feel a bulge somewhere, and you very well know what I mean.

“For a young buck,” she said, “you're quite well antlered. Would you consider -- ”

“Don't say it.”

“A stalk in the woods?”

My antlers were trembling. “So what's with the pinkie?”

“Your pinkie is normal, altho' it does have a strange glow about it. Haven't seen that before. Have you had your annual physical?”

“Physical? I need a physical, I'm only nineteen years old?”

“You know, it's never a bad idea,” she said, eyeing me up and down. Mostly down. Oh God, please, no more. Apparently she was more interested in my essence than my existence. Wasn't there anyone who could love me just for my existence? (I can hear the doctor studying my innocent self as I lay there in the cradle – “very unusual essence, your boy.” I wonder if he learned that in medical school.)

“Hey, I'm late for class,” I told Nurse Ratched. I scooted the hell out of there, taking my unredacted self with me.

Anyway, that's my antlered side of the story, partially redacted. Or retracted. Or whatever. Now if you want *their* side of the story. .

Hey, I cover my tracks.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: *A writer friend and I were musing over all of the redacted documents on the evening news, and it occurred to me – why not publish a novel in which the entire text had been redacted. Ergo, each and every page of the entire book had been blacked out. As a kind of goof. But hell, if they can sell pet rocks, this would probably climb to the top of the NY Times bestseller list.*

*Anyway, I began to write a mock autobiography that had been heavily redacted, and that somehow morphed into the espionage plot, which had borrowed the “crotch” size idea from an earlier short one-act play of mine, *Waterboarding, Surf’s Up*, which juxtaposes Guantanamo waterboarding torture in order to obtain Putin’s crotch size with the goings on at an elegant dinner party.*

And ze rest, she eez history, no?

AUTHOR BIO:

Look no further than the free Booksie website to sample a myriad of Ron Micci's plays, novels, essays, poems and screenplays.

His plays have been presented at First Stage in Hollywood as well as in New York at the Producers Club, Theatre-Studio, Kraine Theater, in conjunction with the Turnip Theatre Company's 15-Minute Play Festival and the New York International Independent Film & Video Festival.

His parody *Thebes Like Us* was a finalist in the 1996 Strawberry One-Act Festival.

Later that year, the Riant Theatre staged his gender-bending parody of the Old South, *The Lady Gentian Violet*, described as *The Crying Game* meets *Gone with the Wind*.

Moonlight's Little Madness, aka *All the Wolves You Were*, a Victorian werewolf farce, was a finalist in the Enchanted Players' First Annual Play Contest for New York and New Jersey Playwrights and was staged at Boonton's Darress Theater. It has also been adapted into a screenplay.

His plays have also been presented in Lawrenceville, NJ, Canton, OH, Michigan and Connecticut.

They are also available on Amazon in Kindle and paperback format, along with his novels and screenplays, and as ebooks on numerous websites. Two of his one-act plays have been published by Brooklyn/Heuer Publishers.

A former magazine editor, advertising proofreader and pharmaceutical copy editor, he is a passionate flutist (or flautist, who doesn't flout it, er, flaunt it), and has never sung backup for the Shirelles. Honest.