

Asa Daniel
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Mr. Weisburg,

You might want to throw this letter in the trash, but for some reason I don't think you will.

Why I chose you to write I have no idea, I had a premonition when I read some of your articles, research and etc. on the Kennedy Assassination and the subsequent cover up.

My name is Asa Daniel, I am 52 years old, born June 23, 1939. I finished the eighth grade in school, I joined the Navy at fifteen (actually sworn in on my sixteenth birthday). And at present I am a fugitive from Dallas County Law Enforcement. If this scares you (which I don't think that it does) then you should throw the letter in the trash now!!!

There were a lot of factors involved in my decision to run rather than take my punishment, I'll explain in part later. But after I ran I decided that I should write a book about my life. It hasn't been easy. In starting to write a book, I realized that I had no style, no education, only a story to tell that was in my head and no way to get it to paper. I went to the Library. I read Jack London, John Steinberg and looked at some of my writing. Mine was (in my opinion) somewhere in between with a large writer's block in between. I decided that I needed to research my subject some. The novel (read autobiography) that I want to write will contain reasons as to why I'm in trouble now as well as insight as to why I feel that the system put me there. I read about Kennedy and wanted to know more about where he got his money. From my reading I thought that most of it came from illegal activities, bootlegging during prohibition, prostitution, and somewhere I thought that I had read that he was involved in the opium trade. I can't find writings to that effect now. In researching this subject I ran across Stephen Fox's blood and power and living in Dallas at the time of the assassination (I was downtown, two blocks away in my pickup truck, and when the description of Oswald came over the radio, I became deathly afraid because I fit his description. I'm glad that Mr. Beavers didn't see me, I would

have been arrested for acting strangely. After reading Blood and Power, I'm more inclined to agree that Mr. Carlos Marcello, and the Underground had Mr. Kennedy killed for betraying his kind than any other theory that I've read. Anyway I've tried to research the cover ups and the abuses of the Dallas Police Dept. but have not been as successful as I would like. All the time I'm trying to write and ever reading. (I've read around 60 books since May 13th. The day that I ran. I'm now living in the backwoods and have plenty of time to read.

Now as to why I'm writing you! I was impressed by the reasoning and the facts in the articles that you wrote and the way they were presented. And for some ungodly reason I was drawn to you. I would like to enlist your help in finding any and all literature that you may have or can get about the legality of sting operations. Current information that you may have, if any, about the Dallas Police Dept. And anything else that you may think of that may help my case when I get caught, and go to court.

I am enclosing a short story that I wrote today, and the first few pages of the manuscript that I am working on. Then there is a short explanantion as to my situation and how I became involved in my "illegal " activities.

I would like your opinion of my writing. If you think that it has a commercial appeal. Or maybe if you would like to collaborate on such a story.

Below is the explantion:

June 5th, I watched Eddie Dodd on T.V. and was entertained by what happened because I could really relate to the situation. It was about an illegal sting operation and how the police selectively enticed a politician into a bribe. I'm in that situation, with no Eddie Dodd to set things right.

It all started in 1984 when I had an accident at work, which resulted in my having a cervical spine operation and two lumbar spine operations from which I still have not fully recovered. I applied for disability after my first back surgery and was denied. I re-applied and appealed to an Administrative Judge and to Senators Bentson and Phil Gramm for help in obtaining my benefits, to no avail. I did get into a rehab. program which the state sponsored and received quite a few college credits in accounting. I applied for work with several accounting firms and other accounting positions and was more or less told that no one would hire me because they would be afraid that I might hurt my back just bending over to pick up some paper or something.

I then wrote to the Governor of Texas (Mark White at the

time) and asked for help in obtaining employment. That didn't work either. I decided that I would make a good counselor with the Texas Employment Commission, hell I was smarter than any of them that I had ever talked to. Well I had the required college credits, I took their tests and scored in the upper 85 percentile on all the tests, but guess what? I received a reply in the mail that I wasn't qualified. No reason just not qualified. Other letters to the Governor and the Administrator of the T.E.C. didn't bring an explanation.

After not working since May 1984, I was approached by a Mexican that I knew, wanting me to lend him some money to take over a Mexican Night Club, he said he could get into it for \$1500. I had received twenty four thousand dollars in a settlement, but most was gone to catch up on my bills, after not working for four years. Well after some thought I told him that I would not lend him the money but that I would go into partnership with him. And we did!

I obtained the license in my name and we opened in June 1988, I knew nothing about the club business and could not speak Spanish, so therefore he was going to run the club and we were going to split the profits after he took a salary. That worked good for about three weeks and then he never brought any of the money around and was not open when he should be, so I started going out to the club. Come to find out he was addicted to cocaine and wasn't able to open on time and was spending all of the profits (and capital) on his habit.

I had signed a two year lease on the property and equipment in the amount of \$1500. per week and I had seen that the club could make money, so I started negotiating to get him out of the partnership agreement. In August, I finally pulled my License and told him that I was out of it. At that time he agreed to let me have the club myself. So there I was in a Mexican Club with no experience and no knowledge of the Language. (Most of the clientele was not bilingual.) I struggled along until early September and then I started having troubles, there was some security problems, and one night there was some shooting. (Actually ther was shooting almost every night. I made some enemies when the Mexicans bacame drunk and I had to throw them out and a few I barred from the club. They tried to shoot me quite a lot, but I had a living to make) Then I became afraid. About that time I was approached by one of the waitresses boy friends (Juanio Alvarado) to help me out, and I agreed. Again everything seemed to be working and I started leaving him in charge. And getting some time off. But then he started borrowing money and had built up a \$3000.00 plus debt and business had started to slip before I knew what was going on, so again I got actively involved.

This was somewhere around January 1989. In the mean time

I had leased a convenience store and was trying to run it, but it was losing money about as fast as the club would make it. The club was open from 6:P.M. until 4:A.M. and the store was open from 7:A.M. until 10:P.M. Anyway in February my new found help that was siphoning off the profits, got into a confrontation with a customer and tried to shoot him and I fired Juanio over it. This left me with little help and no knowledge of where to find any. And I was exhausted. But I had accumulated a little money, but because of my cash flow (which was about \$12,000.00 per week and it was all cash) people started thinking that I was rich, or a drug dealer.

In March 1989 Juanio (the manager that I had fired) got arrested for selling or poccessing coke and his girl friend came to me and borrowed the money to get him out on bond. The next week my Club was raided by the Dallas Police and all my help was charged with a liquor law violation (that time I was asleep in the office when they came in and was not present to know if there was a violation, but looking back I believe that they pulled a drug raid and when they didn't find anything they trumped up the charges to justify their raid.) During the raid they illegally searched my car, they searched my office, my safe and cash registers and I checked up \$800.00 short in the process. They also beat and abused the customers in the club. One pregnant woman tried to explain that she had to call a cab before she could leave, she was thrown to the floor and kicked for not obeying the officers. All she wanted was a ride!

The next week I got a call from Jaunio (the one I had fired) and was asked if I knew anyone that could use 10 kilos of cocaine. I told him that he knew that I didn't do that, but he kept calling back around five times with the same question and the same answer over a two month period. In April he came to see me and told me that his Mother was in the Hospital and he didn't have Insurance or the money to get her out, again I lent him \$500. This made about \$4000.00 that he owed me. During March, April, May and June, I was raided six times and everyone was taken to Jail for the same thing liquor law violations, during these raids I begged Officer Mendez to take the non alcoholic beer that he had purchased in for tests so that I could prove (that he could prove) that it was non alcoholic and that there was no violation. (We sold non alcoholic beer from 2:A.M. till 4:A.M.) Officer Mendez informed me that he was going to get me for something and that he didn't need proof that his word was enough. Over the period of three months I had developed a "rap sheet" three or four pages long on the county computer.

By June my business was down to nothing because people were afraid to come into the club out of fear of being victimized by the police I could not pay all my bills and I was completely exhausted from trying to get a business going.

The first of July, Juanio called me again and asked if I knew anyone that could use any Marijuana, by now I was desperate I asked how much they had and how much it was he said that they had 600 pounds and that it was \$500 per pound I told him that I would ask around!! Then he came to see me and said that this guy was in town and that he would pay me what he owed me, which I desperately needed and that he would pay me \$5000 if I could find someone to take his pot.

Desperate for money, (I had already made arrangements to close the Club) I started asking around and found someone that was interested in it and called Juanio and told him that they wanted to see it. This was July third. Juanio and another Mexican that he introduced as Roberto brought me a quarter of pound and gave to me, for me to show and at the same time Juanio gave me about a half ounce of cocaine and told me to show that to them. During the next two days we all argued around about how to do it, I told them that I didn't know anything about it, but everyone decided that the reason that we couldn't agree on where and when was because of Juanio so they decided that he should not be there. After that everything seemed to go right. On July 5th, 1989 Roberto called me to meet him and to take him to the other people I met him and we went to the agreed upon meeting place once we were there all hell broke loose, it turned out that Roberto was a COP and it was a set up. So now I was drug dealer. A felon.

But Roberto arrested only the people that were there, he didn't wait for the buyers to show up. Looking back I think that it was a set up to turn me into a drug dealer from the very first raid on my club. Coercion on the part of the police and Juanio to get even for me firing him. Regardless I took the bait after being tempted and propositioned for three months. They took my car and all (what little bit I had left) my money and left me with an attorney bill that I had no way of paying. I retired to home life for about eighteen months and did nothing. I was depressed and despondent. Then as the trial came to a head, my Attorney informed me that I needed another \$5000.00 to file an appeal that he thought would keep me out of jail. Again I needed big money fast and the Police knew it. So I was propositioned on a deal and took it. Again it was the police.

By now it should be obvious that I'm not much of a drug dealer if the only ones I can set up deals with is the police!!

On May 9th, I found out that my wife has cancer of the lungs and the lymph nodes. On May 13, 1991, I reported to the court house and offered to plea bargain for twenty years, just to get it over with, and they turned me down. My thinking that day was that I could get all of this behind me

and maybe be out by the time the end came for my wife, if she became terminal. But they wanted more from me, all because one police officer (Officer Mendez) and an ex con (Juanio) had started a vendetta against me, and was able to entrap me. I know that there are good Police on the force that do their job within the law, but it seems that the good ones assume that all of them are honest and sincere and are willing to listen to the bad ones believing that they to are honest and sincere. But both times that I was arrested some of the officers did not turn in all the money that was taken.

The first time I was arrested one of the officers (Frank Perez, the undercover Officer that was introduced as Roberto) stole a ring from me and had the nerve to wear it to court (there were other items of CASH AND JEWELRY missing from the Police inventory

The last time I had just counted the money that I had in my pocket not five minutes before I was arrested. I had \$1776.00 in cash and one of the officers put \$1000.00 in his pocket and turned in \$776.00. I told his Captain, but nothing was done. Before you can win this war on drugs you are going to have to have honest Cops, and hold the Officers accountable to be honest. Perhaps the police should be made to take polygraphs on all their arrest reports to see if they are being honest or trying to build a reputation with manufactured evidence???

Today I'm a fugitive! All because some unscrupulous officers set up a person (read bankrupted him) to the point that he gets desperate and takes the bait. I believe that the day that they raided me the first time, they started to set me up, because Officer Mendez stated that it didn't matter how he had to do it he was going to get me. (Moreover I believe that the system started to entrap me the day that they refused my SSI benefits.) Even if he had to break me by just running me in and letting me have to make bail. Today (June 6th) my house burned down, and I for one believe that the Police set it on fire. My wife has cancer of the lungs and lymph nodes. She stands a good chance of losing the house after its rebuilt, to a Texas Law that charges a tax on illicit drugs. It seems that without first proving that I was the one buying the drugs that they could not charge the tax. What else can happen?

May 13TH, I reported to court and one of the arresting officers (Chris Leffler, 'phonetic') that I had never spoke to testified to a conversation that never took place. (Is that a justice system or what?) He was only on the scene for two minutes, and the conversation he told we had would have taken an hour. That's when I decided that I could not get a FAIR TRIAL in a Dallas Court. That I would not be out of prison to be with my wife at a time that I felt she would have needed me most. And that I could no longer play their

game. I relied on the most primeval instinct of survival that I know. I went down the stairs and I ran like hell. I know that when she gets down helpless, and when I attend to her, I will get caught but it won't matter then.

I really look to get caught at anytime now, but even the police agree that I will not survive in prison. The Texas prison system is full of Mexicans that I had to throw out of the bar and made enemies. With my back as it is I can only sit or stand in one position for 20 to 30 minutes and a time, and I have developed a heart problem. (Maybe it's my nerves!) After the incidence of the Police burning my house, I have become afraid for my life from the Police as well. I am trying not to even break a traffic law, (I'd walk ten miles to avoid jaw walking,) and stay out of trouble and SIGHT! If there was some way to get out of the trap that the police have ensnared me into then I would do so. But I see no way and I don't want to spend the rest of my life in prison. Especially when I know in my heart, that I was entrapped, as a matter of law.

I fear no one will have pity upon me and don't blame them too much, in light of the fabricated evidence against me and the profile that the DPD has been able to paint of me.

Maybe I should hire Eddie Dodd to represent me, but all of that is just on T.V!! Isn't it? Truth and Justice for all??

In light of all that has happened since 1984, I feel that my best defense is a good offense! You know? " Damned the Torpedoes full speed ahead!" An offense against the system. The Attorneys that I've talked to just don't seem to want to do anything but Plea Bargain, and what I need is a maverick, A RENEGADE, if you will, like Eddie Dodd, that is not afraid to attack the system. Do you know such an Attorney? CRIMINAL LAW! It must be remembered that my finances at the time are very limited.

Asa Daniel

Shano

The noon day sun beat down on the tin shed that housed the old bitch and her new litter of pups. It was Mid July and the summer had been a long drawn out one. Times were hard. Jud, their master was out of work and the food had been scarce, even the dogs were hungry, there simply wasn't any scraps left from Jud's meager table any longer. Ruby, the mother dog was tired and weak, from hunger, when the pups were born, she didn't have enough milk to go around for the ten pups in her brood. From day one Jud could tell that Shano was different from the other pups. He stood off from them and waited till all the others were out of the way, before he would eat. When the other Pups would play and scuffle, he would withdraw and wait, always wait. If one of the other Pups invaded his privacy, he would withdraw further until there was no longer anywhere to withdraw to. Then he would lash out and inflict real pain upon the guilty party. " That damned Shano will never amount to nothing Jud would say " He's to damned independent, and can't get along with any of the other dogs." But Shano would just withdraw and hide like he knew what the conversation was.

When he was three months old, Jud took him to the woods and turned him loose. Alone he didn't know what direction to take. Things were pretty bleak. The food supply amounted to whatever he could beg from the farm houses or find beside the road. Always hungry, always waiting. He would find sleep under the bridges and in culverts, at night dreaming of a Master, one that would feed and care for him, and one that he could be loyal to. To protect. And again he would dream and wait.

Time came and time went and Shano would dream, and beg, and go hungry. When he turned three years old he was struck by a fast moving car and broke his back. The car didn't stop and for awhile he almost died, for the next two years, things got even worse no longer able to scrounge the vast area around him, he started to following some wild dogs, and taking their leavings. Never joining the pack, just staying on the edge. Never able to stay up, he limped and drug himself along. Dreaming and waiting. Always waiting for better days. Then when he was five, he met Mike. Mike was a mexican about thirty five years old. He had been hired by the farmers to rid the area of the wild dog packs that had sprung up, and was victimizing the country side. When he met Mike he was leery of him, but after Mike fed him a big hunk of fresh meat he started not running as fast as the pack to get away. Then as he was enjoying the first real meals that he had in

his short but weary life, something happened. At first he didn't realize what it was, but he had a sharp pain in his side. Mike had poisoned him. He was sick all over for a while, and it was a while before he realized that something was wrong. Mike was nice, but every time he caught the smell of Mike on something that he ate. He became deathly ill. After a while, he would run with the pack every time he smelled Mike. Hiding, never quitting, never giving up, just hiding and dreaming and waiting.

Then came Roberto. Roberto was another Mexican and Shano should have been suspicious from the start, but this time Roberto had fresh meat and there was no sickness with it. After a while Shano would come close enough to lick Roberto's hand. At last someone that he could trust he was beginning to think. He would lay in his liar under the bridge and dream of Roberto, and wait until the next time he saw him, and knew that at last his food supply was guaranteed. He had a master even if he didn't live with him. By now he could no longer run when trouble approached, the old injuries, from a life time of abuse and hard times were showing on him. But with Roberto things would be different, he wouldn't need to run with the pack. He wouldn't need to beg for food every time he saw a door open, only to be hit with a rock or broom when he ventured too close. With Roberto he could relax and not worry all the time about where his next meal was coming from.

Then it happened, he was close to Roberto, eating out his hand when suddenly the jaws of the trap sprung on him. They tore at his flesh. He was nauseated, the pain in him knew no bounds. Roberto stood up and laughed. " I've got you now you no good Son of a Bitch. Let's see you get out of this one." Roberto left.

Shano, lay there and drifted off into a fitful sleep, he drifted above the clouds, and he dreamed. The pain awoke him, ever the pain, would it never go away and he waited but no one came and the pain stayed! Then he started gnawing on his leg, he chewed and chewed and finally the leg came off, he was bleeding, but he was free. He crawled quietly away and found himself a drainage ditch, he crawled into it and fell asleep. He was losing blood, the strength of his youth deserted him. He slept, he dreamed and he waited, but no one came. And he slept the sleep of the dead and no one came. Then at last the pack found him and they feasted on his remains. And Roberto laughed he had done his job. And the Pack laughed for they were full.

Asa was born June 23, 1939, the middle of ten kids. His father Jud, had a fourth grade education, first a share cropper, then a welder, was never quite able to keep his family fed and clothed, at the same time. Jud was a good man, and his Mother, she was a Saint. While Asa is a sensitive caring person, all these other things, well he just ain't! Never quite fitting in with the other kids, he was withdrawn, ever ready to protect anyone of them against any evils that might come against them he was equally always ready to lash out at any of them that invade his own little dream world.

At thirteen, with eight years of school behind him and full of dreams of a better way of life, he left home on a freight train and traveled to Galveston, Texas, where he worked first in a riding stable and then in a Grocery Store. At the age of fifteen, still the dreamer and thinking that the Honey Pond and The Flitter Tree lay just over the next hill, he enlisted in the Navy. On the entrance examination, he scored higher than the college graduates that took the test at the same time he did. This proves that I can make something out of myself he thought. Four years in the Navy proved uneventful, he came to Dallas in 1959. He went to work in a Grocery Store and in just a few months was promoted to Assistant Manager. In 1961, he married and had three children, but the relationship was one that never worked. The chemistry was all wrong. There were always fights, and finally in 1967, he left her and the kids behind. In 1967 also he had an accident and had 2300 plus stitches in his face and 900 plus inside his mouth, he missed five days work. Still always the dreamer, he tried to find financing to start his own store. Never seeming to be able to gain the money he needed. In 1968, he met another lady and fell madly in love with her. They had two boys and he was the proudest of them. Always wanting the very best for them, he settled down. In 1972 he broke his ankle, he didn't miss work, he stayed at it. In 1974 he broke his neck. He missed three days work. He broke his collar bone, missed no work. Then in 1980, he was able to buy his own house. At last he had found the source of The Honey Pond and the Flitter Tree, that his grandfather had wrote about. Here he could find "all his coons up one tree." Then in 1984 he had another accident, only this time he couldn't get over it. He had back surgery. It didn't help! He had neck surgery. He applied for Disability Insurance. He didn't get it! He wrote to his Representative, he didn't get it. He had another back surgery. Still no SSI Benefits. He wrote to Senators Bentson and Gramm, still he didn't get his Disability. He wrote to President Reagan. Still no benefits. He was broke. He tried to find work, the Doctors wouldn't give him a clean bill of health. He went to college. He applied with the state for employment. They turned him down. He wrote to Governor Mark White. No luck! But still he dreamed, if only he could get a start.

In 1986, he got a settlement on his back. \$32,000. The Attorney took \$8000. and after paying his bills he had very little left. Knowing nothing about the business, he went into a partnership in a Night Club. (A Mexican Club in the less desirable part of Dallas, it had a bad reputation, to say the least.) The partner began to shirk his duty and the club started to lose money. After a confrontation with his partner he gained control of the club himself. At first he tried to clean the club up, but each time the police were called they would threaten to close him down, so finally he started trying to handle the problems himself. He hired security. They abused their authority. He fired them he hired more. The same. He was making enemies. He tried to patch things up. He couldn't speak Spanish. Finally he started just running with the pack! Taking the business as best he could. Then came Officer Mike. Baiting. Robbing. Then baiting and robbing again. He abused his authority. Asa went to an Attorney. Nothing! And always there was Mike, speaking his Spanish, baiting then arresting and robbing. Baiting, arresting and robbing. Then in July 1989, he met Roberto. Roberto promised to help get him out of this mess. He promised money, protection, big profits. At last Asa could close the Club, Roberto had promised to help. Then Asa took the bait. Roberto, was Mike's partner, the steel jaws of the trap closed in around him. He gnawed trying to get free, finally free, he crawled off into a culvert and slept, and he dreamed, and he waited to see his family! And Roberto laughed, and the pack ran free. Free to sell their drugs, to rob steel, and kill. But still Roberto "laughed, he had done his job. And the pack laughed for they were full.

IN SEARCH OF THE HONEY POND AND FLITTER TREE
A NOVEL (OR AUTOBIOGRAPHY) BY ASA DANIEL

I suppose that from the day I was born I was destined to roam with a wonder lust and dream of the HONEY POND AND FLITTER TREE. The following article was written by my Grand Father Pammy Norris Daniel and appeared in the Old Farmers Journal Magazine in March 1930.

My father Judson Cauthan Daniel, spent the better part of fifteen years riding the main lines of the KATY railroad from one end of Texas to the other, looking for the Honey Pond and Flitter Tree. He died of alzheimers disease November 1986. Both my Grandfather and Father were broke and alone when they died. Having spent their youth and their health chasing their dreams and looking ever ahead for the elusive HONEY POND and FLITTER TREE.

Its here that I begin my story, where they left off.
*****FROM AN OLD TIME FARMER*****

PAMMY NORRIS DANIEL, Route 5, Talbotton Georgia (March 1930 Farmers Journal Magazine.)

I was born in Lownesville District, South Carolina in 1866. "I have had many ups and downs in this world. Been riding a see - saw all my life. Never moved until I was twenty - one. Since then I have made up for lost time. I have been searching for the HONEY POND and FLITTER TREE, but it has always been just a little ahead, around the next corner. So my advice to the young man is to find him a good place and stay with it.

I am sixty - three years old. Have a wife and ten children and forty - two grandchildren.

I moved to Georgia and stayed nineteen years. Bought six different places in 1920. I went into the hole so bad that it would have taken a Philadelphia lawyer to get me out.

So I moved to East Texas and rode on Texas money. I always did make good crops, but always risked too much. Never would let well enough be good enough. I took charge of a farm in Cass County and broke the record for making cotton since the Civil War. When I took charge of the Farm it made eight bales. I brought my own labor from Georgia and the first year we made forty bales and the second we made sixty - five. In 1925 we made 153 bales.

Then I heard of the Red River bottoms where you could make cotton without fertilizer. So there I must go. First I tried Arkansas. Made twenty six bales and 500 bushels of corn. That was 1926. Cotton went cheap and my landlord got restless. So I moved to Louisiana, where I knew that I would find all the

coons up one tree.

Got all our cotton planted by march and had a good stand by April. It was the prettiest corn that I had ever seen for that time of the year. Then came the flood, and we had to go out in boats and stay out until the water fell. So my wife and I got full of Malaria and had to break up on account of our health.

I like the West and would like to settle all my children in Texas, for that is the home of the cotton plant.

I believe the time is coming and not too far off that they will not plant cotton in the Eastern states. The time is coming when they are going to control the waters of the Mississippi and its tributaries. When they do they will make enough cotton to supply the world, and the Eastern States will go into Cow, Sheep and Goat Ranches and Dairying.

"Pass around the bottle boys and lets talk about old times! Like rolling in. Its cold as sin; standing in the welfare line. "(from the Four Horsemen Album, with Johnny Cash, Waylon Jennings, Johnny Rodriguez and Willie Nelson.)

October 3, 1952. The slow drizzling rain that had been falling all day had stopped and only the cold dampness remained; as I crouched in the darkness, waiting for the mid night train to arrive. My thoughts went back to earlier in the day.

We had attended a Brush Arbor (a tent made of poles with brush piled on them) Revival Church meeting. The women and smaller children were up front under the Arbor, listening to the preacher and getting their weekly dose of the GOSPEL. A few of the older children were out playing roll the hoop, and most of the "men folk " were all huddle out by the old cars, trucks and wagons. Being adventuresome, and feeling the need to be in the accompany of men, I had slipped away from Mother's watchful eye, and had joined the men in their B.S. session.

Jud and Luther were reminiscing about their Hobo trips through West Texas in the mid twenties and late thirties. Several of the men had fruit jars, filled with a clear white liquid that they were passing around quite freely. Each time the Mason Jars made their rounds, the stories became louder and more exciting.

"Remember the time that we hopped a freight and went out to El Paso, back in '27 ?" Jud asked.

"Yeh we near 'bout starved to death" Luther joined in.

"We staid in that house over in Fort Worth. The food wuz terrible! Wye the biscuits they wuz wooden and the beef steak you couldn't cut it with a sword. (pronounced to where you hear the "w".) And we had to crawl out the winder cuz we couldn't pay the bill. Wye that caused me a lot of pain, but if we'd a staid another day we'd a been insane. "

"And after that we rode that there reefer all the way to El Paso, we didn't have nothing to eat except for some canned tomatos we found in the hole." Luther burst in again.

"Boy I'm telling you' Luther had on brand new white overalls when we left and they wuz coal black by the time we got back from riding behind the stack of the told coal burner."

The Mason Jar was coming around again and the men were not taking notice, so this time when it passed me. I sampled the contents. The strong pungent liquor scorched me throat and took my breath, as i fought to get my breath back I remember thinking. " I can't let the men think that I'm a sissy." Boy I knew why they were calling it "WHITE LIGHTNING" My head thundered my stomach tried to push it back out and there was a hell of a storm all over my body. I thought that the Earth was shaking.

The Fruit Jar came around again and again I took a chance, this time it went down a little easier, I had made the grade! About this time there was a commotion all around and I was a little confused as to what the problem was, but then I noticed that the service was over and the men were trying to hide the fruit jars before the Preacher and women got over to us.

The Preacher went over and invited all the men to join the service next week, and by his tight lipped fake smile, I knew that he realized what we had been doing.

The ride home seemed to take forever. My frigging ears burned. My throat was on fire, head and stomach were spinning and each time the car hit a chug hole I just knew that I was going to through up.

The little Chevrolet Coupe was crowded with us seven kids and Mom and Dad, but no one complained, I guess we were used to a crowd.

"PaPa, what did your folks think about your Hoboing around all the time and what did they do when you got home from your trips ?"

"Son, Hoboing was a way of life back in those days." he answered. " There wasn't any work for the young men or any one else for that matter, and many a good men left home to ride the rails. Most would follow the cotton crop, working during the season, and when the crop would run out, then move

on to the southwest to catch the next crop and work for a while. Then there was the pipeline and the WPA to follow. It wasn't uncommon to see maybe half a hundred 'bos jump from a train as it pulled into the yards to keep from getting caught and maybe beaten by the Railroad Bulls. It was a way of life and people accepted it. "

Being the middle child of seven children I had two brothers (one older and one younger) four sisters (two older and two younger) plus there were three children that were dead, two boys that died before I was born. One died of Colic the other from a cold that would not get better. (From what I know today they only died because we were too poor to get medical help that far out in the country back then. My sister was struck by lightning in Galveston back in '46. My older brother, Bobby and myself were struck at the same time, they pronounced my brother dead at the scene, but he revived by the time they got him to a hospital. He was in the Hospital for weeks and when he came home no one would play with him because they thought he had electricity in him. All it did was knock me down and as I would later wonder "knock the sense out of me" a condition that I don't think I ever recovered from. That was the year before Texas City blew up and I saw all these dead people on flat trucks coming by the house in Island City Homes. That sight has always stayed with me.

I always wanted to jump a freight and light out for the unknown and tonight seemed like a good time. I was tired of school. Mom and Dad were having a hell of a time feeding all us kids, every since Dad broke his back and leg. I needed to be on my own, off their hands and out of their hair.

I had heard the men talking that there was always plenty of work in Houston and how anyone could find work. One thing I knew for sure there had to be a better way of life than this old cotton farm and Kildare, Texas population 200 and declining daily.

After everyone had gone to sleep, I crawled out my window and headed for the tracks. The spot that I picked was the one that PaPa said that he used some twenty odd years before, it was on a steep grade and curve, where the train would have to be going slow and this is where I waited.

A shudder ran through me as finally heard the train whistle in the distance, a soft mournful sound. " Should I forget this silly idea and go back to my warm bed ?" I asked myself. "No I can't chicken out now, besides someone might wake up and catch me, then I would be in trouble." I began to shake violently now and wondered if it was from the cold or the fear that was knotting in my throat and choking me. I took a deep breath and held it for a long time. The clickity - clack of the train was getting closer now and I suddenly realized

that my heart was keeping time; clickity - clack clickity - clack, over and over again and again. Suddenly the train was upon me and without thinking I grabbed hold of a railing. "My God I'm going to fall off." I thought to myself. A vision of a thousand steel wheels crossing over my body ran through my head. It was this thought that gave me the strength to pull myself aboard the Southbound Freight; the train that would take me away from my childhood, away from family and friends. Little did I know what I was in for. But I couldn't worry about that; after all I was fast becoming a man and a man had to look out for himself. Hell, I was already thirteen.

I pulled myself onto the boxcar and held on tight and then I didn't know what to do. The men had said that they rode inside the boxcars, but in the darkness I could see no way to climb down and into one of the cars, so I just lay there.

Time seemed to crawl as I lay there. The wind cut like a knife, and the cold was gnawing to the bone. There was no where to get any warmth and finally I just surrendered and accepted the cold. Somewhere in the darkness I must have fallen asleep, for the next thing I knew, I was trying to open my eyes, but they were not cooperating. My clothes were wet and there was a chilly feeling that I had never experienced before. When I finally got one eye to open I thought that I must have died for everything was dark and foggy. Then I saw an orange flashing light, and startled I raised up. It was a neon sign that said "WOLF BRAND CHILI CORSICANA TEXAS." Then I remembered where I was, only the train wasn't moving.

"Boy get yore ass down from there". A voiced boomed out! I raised up further and could see that the boxcar was on a siding, and that there men working loading boxes into the boxcar, that I was on. "Boy get yore little ass down from there" I looked and the voice had come from one of the workers. I crawled to the side of the car and started trying to climb down the ladder, only my hands were so cold that they would not hold onto the cold steel. After several minutes of trying I was able to get a good hold and was able to get down from the boxcar. A big gruff looking man asked "How old are you boy? " I wanted to say eighteen but knew he would never believe me. "Sixteen Sir! " I answered. "Where are you going?"

"Houston, I'm looking for a job." I wondered if he believed my age. I heard a roar of laughter and one of the other men yelled "Shit boy you're not big enough to handle a job." "Where you coming from? "It was the big man again. "Arkansas" I lied again. "Get over to that office and have a seat while I decode what to do with you." The old man looked mad, but really didn't act like it. I went into the office and waited what seemed like forever. Once inside the little office the warmth hit me and I began to relax even though I was scared

and tired. I pulled the chair a little closer to the fire and dozed off. "Boy let's go " The big man was shaking me. I got up and followed him out to an old '47 Chevy pickup. "What's your name Sir" I asked as we got into the truck. "Bill Trammel! What's Yours? " "I'm Pammy Norris " It was the first time I had been truthful with him. "Where are you taking me?" "I thought that you might be hungry, I'm going to breakfast." "I'm not hungry " not wanting him to know that I didn't have any money. "but I'll drink some coffee, do you think you could take me to the edge of town when we're through?" "When's the last time you ate boy?" He asked as we pulled onto the dirt parking lot of a little cafe." " I had a big supper last night." It was the truth again. "Come on in with me and I'll take you to the edge of town after I have my breakfast." He was grinning real big. Once inside the cafe the smell of food almost doubled me over. I looked around for the rest room sign and asked to be excused. Inside the rest room I looked into the mirror and didn't recognize myself, I had streaks of dirt running down my checks like I had been crying, my clothes were filthy, my eyes looked like cherries they were so red, and they were swollen. I turned on the water and let it run over my hands for long time, they were cracked and swollen too. I finally got up enough nerve and splashed the water over my face and into my hair. I felt for my pocket comb but it was gone so I used my fingers and combed out as many tangles as I could.

Back in the booth I finally really looked at the man. He was an old man, probably fifty. His face was scared and tough but his eyes were tender and kind looking, I liked him a lot I thought.

"Are you sure you won't have something to eat?"

"No I'll just have a glass of water." I had to force myself to say; I was really starving! "Do you know where I might get some work for a few days? Just to make enough to get a place to stay when I get to Houston. I'm a hard worker, I've picked and chopped cotton all my life and I've helped the blacksmith a lot."

"Jobs are scarce as hen's teeth in Corsicana!

The waitress came to our table. "Hello Bill! Same as usual?" "You bet" Was his answer. "And what'll your boy have?" She asked. " Can I have a glass of water, Please Ma'am?" Not bothering to explain that I wasn't his boy.

By the time Bill finished his first cup of coffee; The waitress had returned with the rest of our order. While Bill was chowing down, I noticed that there was a basket of crackers and a bottle of catsup on the table, and started eating crackers with catsup on them. Damn they were good, I ate one and then another, and another and

"Damn boy, for someone that was not hungry you sure are gobbling down those crackers." Mr. Trammel. I stopped eating and must have really turned red, because he apologized for embarrassing me and said that it was alright, that he had been down and out before. "You know" he said " sometimes you can get a cup of hot water and make soup out of the catsup and hot sauce on the table, sometimes the owners will ask you to leave though. Most of the time they won't notice if they're busy."

After Bill had finished, he put a dollar tip on the table and went to the rest room. I sure wanted to steal that dollar but decided the waitress probably had kids and needed it as much as I did. I left the table and went out to the truck so that I wouldn't be tempted further.

"Boy, I'm glad to see you didn't take that tip off the table." Bill had just come out. We were silent on our drive out of town, but as we neared a cross road he slowed the truck to a stop. "This is where I turn back East, here take this." It was a ten dollar bill. "I can't take that!" "consider it a loan, you can pay me the next time you're in Corsicana." He said pushing the money into my hand. I watched as the old truck turned and sped down the country until it finally disappeared.

I was on highway 75 south. I stuck out my thumb to a passing car.

CHAPTER TWO

"Well I remember Rachel, her golden hair and flowing gown I never knew why she left me, all alone in Houston town. So pass around the bottle boys let's talk about old times."

The weather had become increasingly warmer the further south I traveled, and when I stepped out of the car that had picked me, the bright sun had turned orange and starting to go down on the horizon. I thanked the couple, and closed the door, once again I stared at the vehicle until it was just a tiny speck reflected in the sunset. Only then did I search my surroundings to get my bearing. I was still on Highway 75 south, there was a sign that read Texas City 3 Mis. and an arrow pointing off to the left. I started out walking that way, a had not gone a full mile when the skyline revealed the enormous oil rigs and storage tanks. It was like a sponce fiction movie with the clouds of smoke and flames off the wells in the dusky sunset. Quite a sight for a boy from Cass County, Texas. The last time that I had seen the town

everything in it was burning and smoking, the emergency people were looking everywhere for bodies and there were so many that they were putting them on flat trucks and carrying them to the auditorium to be identified. My neighbors wife identified her husband by the finger nail polish that she had painted his toes the night before with. Another neighbor survived but had an iron bar through his chest that Doctors were afraid to remove; I wondered if he was still living. Hell I didn't even know his name, I had only been six of seven. I wondered why I always took off on trips like that even at that age, we had lived in Galveston and this was thirteen miles away; A long bike trip for a six or seven year old. It seemed that every day I would be punished for going off and then as soon as no one was looking it was "Adios" again.

At the other side of town I came upon a combination store, bar, cafe and service station; The yellow neon flashed BLUE N(O)TE (I)NN the o and the i were burned out. I went in and bought a quarter pound Baby Ruth, quart of milk, quarter pound box of crackers and a pack of Pall Mall cigarettes. I thought that the cigarettes might make me look older if I was smoking. I had experimented with smoking before at school. The old woman said "That'll be sixty four cents" as I was fishing for the ten spot that Bill had given me. Back outside, I went across the street to wait for a car to flag just as the store lights went out and it closed its doors for the night. Sitting in the darkness beside the road I ate my food and drank the milk, when the crackers started absorbing all that milk I thought my stomach would burst. I was as full as a tick. Then I laughed aloud remembering that was a saying PaPa had always used. The reason that it was so funny is that we (PaPa and me) had never gotten along very well at all, as far as that goes I had never been close to anybody family or otherwise. I had been a loner from the day that I could walk. Perhaps having a name like Pammy had something to do with it. I had certainly had enough fights in school because of it. To make matters worse I had a quick temper and if you wanted to fight just say so and I was ready. At thirteen I had already broke my shoulder once, my collar bone twice, had my scalp pulled loose from me skull and too many black eyes to mention and other various injuries, all from fighting. It was a good thing that I had been a small fry or the whole county might have suffered from my anger. "Hell all that's behind me now " I thought. I was getting cold again now that the sun was gone so I walked back over to the store to seek shelter from the breeze that had come up. From the side of the store I could see steam coming from a room at the back, and where there's steam there's heat. At the back of the store I found an open motor room of sorts with a bunch of empty boxes in it, I pulled one of the boxes over close to a motor to catch the heat crawled inside and drifted off to a fitful night of sleep. It wasn't quite daylight when I awoke, but I arose wide awake. I was cold to the bones, and I was hungry again,

I ignored the hunger but had trouble ignoring the cold. I walked back across the street and waited for a ride to come along. The sun was high in the sky when I did catch a ride. There was lots of traffic but no one would stop. The car that did stop had two young boys in it; Going to Galveston.

In Galveston they let me out at the edge of Island City Homes. A small housing project of fourplexs on the right, bounded by fence with a store inside on the left. The hand lettered sign read "A - J Super Market" in black letters on a peeling white wall. I walked inside and bought a quarter pound Baby Ruth a box of crackers and a quart of milk, the bill was 39 cents.

I walked down Sixth Street, eating as I walked, sloshing milk up my nose as I tried to drink and walk at the same time. At the end of Sixth Street I could see an open field to the left and past the field there was the Ocean (Gulf of Mexico) off in the distance. To the right there was the Palamar Riding Stables. I headed for the stables and the familiar barnyard smell that accompanied them. The stables consisted of three rows of stalls in a u shape with the office and tack room near the one on the left as you entered. I could see that all the stalls were empty and the horses were at pasture out behind the stables for the winter season. There was an old tin barn in the pasture about 300 yards behind the stable. I turned and went back across the field to the beach.

All the beach front restaurants were close for the winter, but there was a bar called the Palamar Club that was open. It was nothing but a long bar up on beams about 10 feet off the ground. I went in and ordered a nickel coke. The bar ran the length of the building on the right side and the whole left wall was filled with slot machines. I had seen them in the movies and knew that they were supposed to pay off (if you were lucky). I felt lucky. I took a dime out of my jeans and put it in the machine. Nothing! I counted the change that I had left, eighty two cents. I kept out three dimes and rolled the rest of the change into the bills and stuffed them into my watch pocket. I put another dime into the machine. Nothing again! I tried again, and this time three lemons came up and dimes started pouring out of the machine. As I started to gather them up, the bartender came over and told me to get the hell out of there that I was too young to play the machines. I stuffed the dimes into my pockets and carried two hands full outside with me onto the beach. Once outside I found a clear spot and sat down to count my new found wealth. Twenty Five Dollars in dimes, that along with the eight dollars fifty two cents change form the ten spot; Hell that was \$33.52 more money than I had ever seen at one time. Who said I couldn't take care of myself?

For the rest of the day I walked the beach, stopping only when the sun started to set and the cold started to set in again. Then I headed back across the field and back to A - J Super Market. Once there I did my grocery shopping. Quarter pound Baby Ruth, box of crackers and a quart of milk. Thirty nine cents!

From the store I headed back to the Palamar Riding Stables, only I went around the stables and across the pasture to the barn. Inside the barn I gathered hay and made a "nest" to knock some of the wind and cold off me, I leaned back to have my supper, as I ate I thought about the last three days and how my life had changed so drastically. I missed home and Momma's cooking, but I was proud of myself, never again would I be a burden for PaPa and Mamma to worry about, I could take care of myself. Then I thought of the cold and wondered why it didn't seem to bother me as much. I drifted off to a dead sleep. The next morning the chill was in my bones again, and I thought that I would freeze to death. My hands and fingers were hurting again, and my mouth tasted like I had eaten a bale of cotton; boles and all. I wanted to brush my teeth. After shaking as much hay off as I could I started back to the store. That morning I bought a donut and a pint of chocolate milk. The change of diet was good but, less filling. I asked the man that I thought to be Mr. Janka how far it was to town and he replied that it was about ten miles. I walked. In town I bought two pairs of jeans, a comb, a tooth brush, two shirts, and a towel the bill was sixteen dollars and thirty four cents.

I went into a service station rest room and took a bath in the sink, brushed my teeth and combed my hair, loosing about half to the tangles that I had to pull out, then I walked back to Janka's store, bought my usual supper and headed back to the stables. Feeling "chipper and spry, from the cleanliness I spent a restful night and didn't have as much pain in my joints when I awoke the next morn. IT must have been ten o'clock when I left the barn. As I was passing the stables there were two men, two boys and a girl of about fifteen in the center of the stables. One of the boys was trying to ride a small horse, but it kept throwing him before he could get in the saddle all the way. I walked over to watch. When I walked into the stables, one of the men; A small fiesty looking man with greying blonde hair and blue eyes looked at me. " So you're the one been sleeping in the barn! Heh? " "No Sir" I lied surprised at how easy the lies came these days. The man frowned and said in a very firm voice. "Boy don't lie to me, you still have hay all over you!" He had a heavy German accent. About this time the other man; a large gray headed man in his mid sixties spoke up. "you're the boy I had to run out of the club for playing the slots. Have you spent all your winnings yet?" Then I noticed that it was the bartender from the Palamar Club. They all laughed at me, and I realized that I must have been cowering

down as the big man was speaking. I had to learn to control that if I intended to lie and get by with it. " NO Sir! I still have most of it. Would you all like for me to show you how to ride that horse?" I asked. "I suppose you can ride him too?" the smaller man jeered at me. " Yes Sir! I can"

"I'm Herman Fischer," the smaller man was talking again, " this here is Sam Gibbons," pointing at the big man "that is my daughter Rachel, and my son Adolphe, and the other boy over there is Jim Cooper." Pointing to each of them as he introduced them. My eyes kept following his finger as he pointed to each of them, but kept going back to the girl in between introductions. I really couldn't concentrate on what I doing, for watching her. I hadn't been interested in girls before and thought that it was "sissy" to like girls. I was embarrassed that I was interested in her. She was small , about five foot, with Herman's blue grey eyes and light golden brown mane that hung to one side; sort of reminded me of Roy Roger's horse Trigger mane; straight and off to the side like that. She was wearing a white shirt that was about ten sizes too big for her; tied in a knot in front, tight-tight jeans, penny loafers and white socks rolled down at the top. You could tell that she was maturing to womanhood even under the loose fitting shirt. My eyes were glued to the rising and fallen of her breathing; hoping that she might bend over with such a loose shirt on.

"Well, are you going to show us how you can ride this little stud horse?" Herman was asking. "Yes Sir!" I grinned as I started for the horse. I had ridden some stubborn horses that were not yet bridle broken but never one that was not saddle broke. Papa had told how to break mules, and I hoped that the same applied to horses.

"Hold his head" I said; and Sam grabbed the little stud's halter, after the horse had quieted down some, I reached over and took his ear between my teeth and bit like hell. The horse stood just as still as could be then, I stepped into the stirrup and swung my left leg over the saddle, and held on tight, the pony still didn't move. "It works" I thought to myself, this is going to be easy. Then I let go with my teeth, the horse shot straight into the air and snapped my head back so hard that I saw stars and my teeth rattled, but I held on for dear life. The next few minutes seemed like eternity, the horse was tireless; jumping and bucking trying to shake me loose from his back. Someone shouted " get him away from the stalls." But it was too late the horse was under the overhang and the next jump smashed me into a 4 x 4 beam. The beam caught me square across the nose, the left side of my face, and the left shoulder. It was like a bomb went off, all that I could see was a blinding flash of light, and felt so much pain that I was nauseated. I was out of the saddle but my foot was hung in the stirrup, but it only took one kick in the ribs to free it. I was on the ground and Sam

was lifting me. " you are one hell of a cowboy." he was saying.

Herman drove his pick up and Sam held me trying to steady my shoulder that was pulled all the way over to my chest. The trip to the Hospital seemed to take hours though it was only ten miles. At the hospital they put 32 stitches in my eye lid, 13 in the bridge of my nose, taped my shoulder and my ribs. The Doctor said that I had a broken shoulder, three broken ribs. He told me to come back in ten days to take the stitches out, and for him to check my broken bones, and for me to take it easy. I never went back, I took the stitches out myself with a pocket knife.

The ride back to the Island was worse than the ride to the hospital, the damned truck seemed to seek out every bump in the road just so that it could bounce over it. The feeling had come back to me and i was throbbing all over, I bit holes in my lips, to hold back the tears, no one had ever seen me cry and I sure wasn't going to start now. "Where do your parents live?" Herman asked. "Where are you going to stay until you're well? " It was Sam this time. " I'm all right." I tried to laugh, but it was half laugh and half cry. "You'll stay at my place until you're better." It was Sam again. "By the way what's your name and how old are?" I guess he just realized that I hadn't volunteered my name at the introductions. "Pammy Norris and I'm sixteen." "You sure are young looking to be sixteen." He said. You can't put a lot over on him I thought to myself.

Back at the stables everyone was gone and i was disappointed, because I wanted to see Rachel again. Sam steered me over to a shiny new Cadillac, and we left. It was only seconds until we were parked behind the Palamar Club. " I live above the Club. " He said. We went up the back stairs and he showed me the bed. That night I dreamed of home; Papa was treating me like a man at last; Mama had a new dress and for the first time she was wearing make up. She was prettier than I remembered, she looked young and rested.

When I awoke the next morning I was sore all over. I couldn't hardly stand on my ankle. It was swollen, My ribs and shoulder were a constant throb (like a bad toothache). My left eye was swollen shut, and wouldn't open, My mouth felt like it was glued shut. I looked around the small apartment, it had one bedroom, a small bathroom with a shower, a living room with a kitchen at one end of it, a small sofa and two end tables. Then it dawned on me that Sam must have slept on the sofa. How in the hell did he do it, he must be six foot five and the little couch wasn't over five foot long. I laughed aloud at the thought. I wished that I had my clean clothes and towel, I would take a shower. I had never been on a shower before. We always bathed in a galvanized wash tub on the back stoop. I looked around for Sam but I found that I was alone in the apartment.

As I hobbled down the back stairs I could see Sam through a back window, he was at the bar. I went on out and headed for the stables and the brown grocery sack that had all my belongings in it. I'm going to die! I thought as I forced one foot in front of the other. Then I remembered the cigarettes that I had bought. I had only smoked one of them, I took one out and lit it. I felt a rush spread over my body and I felt dizzy. I held the smoke deep in my lungs for a long time until it subsided. I exhaled and took another long drag off the cigarette, the smoke felt good as it circulated over my teeth and sore gums, the faint rush and dizziness eased the pain. I felt better.

Back in the security and seclusion of "my barn" I leaned back on a bale of hay and lit another cigarette and smoked it slow and easy, holding the smoke deep in my lungs for a long time before I would exhale. I experienced a feeling of security and relaxation come over me in the dim light of the barn. "Hi" My heart nearly jumped through my ass because I hadn't heard anyone come in. It was Rachel with her brother Adolphe. "How are you feeling?" She asked. "I feel fine." I lied. "We are going horse back riding. Do you want to come along?" "I've got to back to the club and help Sam." I lied again; Not wanting to let her know that I hurt too damned bad to think about riding a horse. "Daddy said that your name is Pammy! What kind of name is that?" Adolphe asked. "It's Irish!" I replied as nice as I could. I didn't like the sarcasm in his voice, but I didn't want any trouble. "What kind of a name is Adolphe?" "It's a mans name, Pammy sounds like a girls name to me!" "Adolphe sounds like a kraut name to me. Are you a f_____ kraut?" Rachel stepped between us and said "Let's go Adolphe, don't be trying to start trouble. Then they were out of the barn and heading towards the stables. I watched as they walked away and my anger swelled, "I'm going to have to fight Adolphe, before this is over." I thought as I gathered my things and left for the club.

Back at the Palomar Club, Sam was washing some glasses when I went in. "Where in the hell have you been? You don't have any business out of bed." "I had to get my clothes and things, I want to take a bath." I started for the stairs behind the bar not wanting to debate him. "Don't get those bandages wet, and don't get water in your ears!" He ordered. Once upstairs I did everything that he had told me not to do. I let the water flush the dried blood out of my ears, and swallowed large amounts of the warm water as it ran down my face, as I was drying I took the bandages off my eye and nose, the stitches looked bad, but the swelling was already started to go down. The bruises had starting turning a putrid yellow. I dressed and went back downstairs. "Is there anything that I can do to help?" I asked Sam as I reached the foot of the stairs. Sam looked at me with fire in his eyes.

"Boy are you crazy? It's stupid to do things that are going to hurt your health." He was really pissed. "What did I do?" I asked. "For one you removed all the bandages from your face. You need to take care of your body, it's the only one that you'll ever have. Number two you tried to pick a fight with Adolphe today. Hell boy he's twice your size, and you're not at all well with your broken shoulder and all. Third that little 'son of a bitch' is crazy, he'll hurt you bad if you give him a chance." I didn't answer, but I wondered how the hell he knew about the trouble I had with Adolphe so soon. Damned I liked him, "why was he so good to me" I wondered. I was nothing to him...

I went back upstairs and fixed a can of chili, cream style corn and pinto beans. Just about the time I had everything ready Sam came up. "Are you closed already?" I asked. "No Dorothy just came in and I'm taking a break before we get busy." I wondered who Dorothy was, but let it slide. "Dinner's ready!" I said instead of asking. I ate in complete silence not wanting to arouse the anger in him again. After supper we went back in the bar, there were about ten men lined up at the slots and another four or five at the bar, there was a stout, blond lady, thirty or so behind the bar. So this was Dorothy. She was attractive enough, but her face was one of someone that had spend a lot of nights in a bar and had experienced more than just a few barroom brawls. "May I go for a walk?" I asked, I was out of the bar and on the beach before they could answer. On the beach my thoughts turned to Rachel, did she like me, I wondered. She was friendly to me, but was it just being nice or what? I would never know if that f----- Adolphe was always around.

December 1st. My scares had almost healed and I was almost as good as new. I had become the official chef of the apartment. We each had a quart of milk, a quarter pound box of crackers, and a quarter pound Baby Ruth for lunch everyday, and we had chili, cream style corn, pinto beans, and crackers for supper every night. The only time the menu changed was when Dorothy would bring something from home, and then it was a real feast. I had taken over the couch, and left the bed for Sam, which he shared quite frequently with Dorothy. For the past month and a half, I had stuck very close to Sam and the club. Most of the regular customers had started calling me Sam's boy and I never corrected them. I had not been to the stables or the barn since that day that I had seen Rachel and Adolphe, although I could see the stables from the beach when I took my evening walks along the seashore. It was on these walks that I met Chico. Chico was a seventeen year old mexican. Our first meeting was not a friendly one, but was one that I would not forget easily.

It was on a Saturday evening, as I was walking on the beach that I met him. He was in a swim suit and was sunbathing, I walked by trying not to look at him; It was trait that I had

developed to try to avoid any contact (or trouble) with anyone. It seemed that every time I looked at anyone they accused me of trying to start trouble, I have never understood the reason for that happening, but it went on until I was in my late twenties; "Hey are you trying to kick sand on me?" He yelled. I looked his way, but then tried to just ignore the question and keep walking. " Hey punk, I'm talking to you." He shoved me from the back. I turned and looked as menacing as I could at him. I didn't want to have to fight, but didn't know how I was going to be able to avoid it. He shoved me again, "What's wrong punk or you scared?" That was the wrong thing to say. I drew back in anger, but before I could swing, he hit me square on the nose and I landed on my ass in the sand. My nose and both my eyes were bleeding profusely. " What's wrong punk" he was smiling as he reached down and helped me to my feet. When i finally got my wits together I was ready to fight some more, but he was already up the beach a ways. I shouted some vulgarities at him but he never even looked back. That's all the fight there was. One lick to the nose and I was out of it.

It was another two weeks before I went back to the stable and then it was with Sam. It seems that Sam and Herman were partners in the Palomar riding stables and Sam owned the Palomar Club outright. Sam was of Italian and French parentage, and Herman was a German refugee. It was said that both men were mean and ornery with a hot temper. I had heard it said that Sam had killed a man in a fight, and spent twenty years in Huntsville Prison, and that he had connections with organized crime in Galveston. But Sam was always good to me, he gave me good advice and never lost his temper or interfered with me when I didn't adhere to it.

Rachel was at the stables when we arrived, but Adolphe wasn't "Are you ready to ride Blazer again?" I knew that she was talking about the little stud horse that had almost killed me. "I'm ready anytime." I answered. "You're crazy." " No I really mean it if no one has ridden him yet, I'll ride him only this time we'll take him outside to where he can't run under something."

Sam butted in and said "You'd better stay off that damned horse before you get yourself killed." And I knew that he believed it.

Rachel and I walked through the stables and talked, she said that her father had said that I could have job at the stable, if I wanted it. "You could live in the tack room" She chirped "we used to have a winter care taker that lived there. You don't have to do anything but keep the horses watered and fed. There's stove and everything. We round the horses up the last part of April to get them ready for the riding season. "

I was not ready to go when Sam called, but I gave in without saying as much. on the ride back to the Club, Sam asked. " You're kind of sweet on that little filly aren't you?" "Sam, I want to ride Blazer again, I think if I take him down to the beach and get him out to his belly in the water he won't buck me off. If I can ride him I want to go to work at the stables." I ignored his question. "Shit boy you can go to work at the stables without trying to kill yourself on that damned horse. And you don't have to try to impress Rachel either she's already sweet on you. Hell she broke up with Jim over you. She really likes you." " I still want to ride that Son of a Bitch." I said. " You'd better watch your language or I'll wash your mouth out with soap." That was what my Mother had always told me when I got too vulgar. I was silent after that, but when we turned in behind the Club, Sam asked when I wanted try to ride Blazer again. "Anytime" I said. "We'll get him down to the beach next Saturday." There was no more talk about it. That night Dorothy fed us chicken fried steak, cream gravy and french fried potatoes, it was the best I have ever eaten before or since. She spent the night with Sam that night, but was gone before I got up, even though I was up and on the beach by 6:00 A.M.

Saturday came and I didn't want to get out of bed. I was scared to death of that damned horse. Hell, I must be crazy like everyone says. I stumbled around and tried not to mention my infamous ride that I had scheduled for that day. My fear apparently showed through all of my bravado, because Sam said that I didn't have to ride that horse " if I was afraid". With all his good intentions; that was the wrong thing to say if he wanted to talk me out of it, because I had a greater fear of anyone thinking that I was afraid, than I did of any damned horse or anything else for that matter. All my life if you wanted me to do something all you had to do was to mention that I was afraid to do it. A trait that got me into more trouble that I could ever get out of. My fear turned to anger. "I'll be ready." I said wanting to show my anger, but not wanting to make Sam mad. Sam drove to the stables, but I wanted to walk, but ended up running all the way instead. When I got there Herman, Adolphe and Rachel were all there, they had Blazer tied to a railing. They had an old mare that had a backbone like a razor blade tied along side. "Sorry but old Nellie here is the only one that we can catch on foot, and she can't wear a saddle because of her backbone. We always use her to catch another horse to use for the roundup each spring." Herman was saying. "Okay" I muttered even though I wasn't paying attention. MY attention was on Rachel.

Rachel and I rode in the back of Herman's truck, and led Blazer and Nellie to the beach. Once at the beach I pulled Nellie alongside the truck and climbed upon her back. I thought that she was going to castrate me. I've never seen a horse with such a narrow, sharp backbone that protruded a

full four inches before. I took Blazer by the reins and began to inch the horses towards the water. Nellie balked a little, but Blazer fought with me all the way. When we got into water that was waist high on the horses, I pulled Blazer alongside and crawled on his back. At first he tried to buck, but each time he would start to loose his footing, and his head would start to go under, he would calm some. After the first few minutes, he quit resisting and I was able to ride just fine. I started to nudge him along, through the water, being careful not to let him get closer to the beach. The little horse was very nervous so I started talking to him and smoothing his mane. Caressing him and calming him. I was still holding onto Nellie and needed someone to take her, so after about an hour, I began inching closer to the shoreline. He was still calm, so I let him keep going towards the shoreline until we were in water only up to his ankles. I yelled for Rachel to come take Nellie off my hands. Blazer started jumping and raising hell when Rachel came close to take the mare, so I turned him and headed back to deeper water. As soon as Rachel and the mare were completely clear he calmed and I headed back towards the beach. When we got to water just up to his ankles again, I turned and headed up the beach towards the seawall. Blazer did not understand nor wish to respond to the bridle, so I had to hold the reins way out to the side and jerk his head around to make him turn. I guess I looked like a 'tin horn' riding that way, but what the hell. I rode him up and down the beach for a couple of hours. Somewhere close to noon Sam suggested that we leave, and I started towards the livery stables on Blazer. Rachel led Nellie behind the truck.

When we got back to the stables, we let Nellie out to pasture and rubbed down Blazer and put him into one of the stalls. I felt really important now, especially when Herman invited us all to his house for lunch.

The Fischers lived in a large house, (what I would have called a mansion) on Broadway Street in the older section of Galveston. Lunch was an experience in German cuisine, we had German Sausages of all sorts, beans of some sort, and German potato salad, the potato salad was made with sliced potatoes and a sweet and sour sauce, with bacon pieces in it. Nothing like Mom would have made. At first I didn't like it but after a while the taste sort of grew to my liking. For desert Rachel brought out some white candy, she said that it was made out of potatoes, I've never found anyone else who knew how to make it, but I loved it. After lunch Herman offered me a job at the stables, for \$7.50 per week. I knew that Rachel and Sam had influenced his decision, because it was obvious that he didn't really like me, or want me around.

Once I got moved onto the tack room at the stables, life really began for me. I still went by and had lunch with Sam everyday. Still the same old menu. Herman had on older pick

up truck at the stables the kind with the small bed on it. Not the kind they build today. It was about a '39 chevy. I started driving it all over the pasture carry hay and then up the dirt road to the Club. Rachel was coming by every evening after school to check on me, and I had lost some of my nervousness, when I was around her. I had the feeling that she was getting irritated or impatient with me about something and I had no idea as to what the problem was. Then one morning when school was out for the Christmas holidays, she came early. "Let's go down to the barn." She said. We jumped into the truck and before I could even get it started she was up against me and put her hand on my leg. I felt uncomfortable as we started out for the barn, but I didn't want her to move. "Do you have a girl friend at home?" I managed to stutter "No!" "Do you want to go steady?" She asked. "I guess so!" Not knowing exactly what that meant, or what else to say.

When we were inside the barn, she put her arms around my head and kissed me full on the mouth. I had never kissed a girl before, as a matter of fact I had never even thought about kissing a girl, until I had seen Rachel that first day. We spent the next hour kissing, her warm lips and firm body felt great pressed against me, but I was breathing so hard that I couldn't catch my breath, so I pushed her away and looked into her face. It was kind of distorted, with a glazed far away look in her eyes. Her lips were parted slightly and she was panting just as heavily as I was. "Do you want to make love?" She asked with a smile. I don't know if my shock showed or not, but I was very shocked by the fact of her asking me. The bigger boys at home had bragged about their excapades with the girls, and I was almost sure that none of the girls at home had ever been the aggressor. "I sure do" I answered not knowing for sure what was expected of me. That first time was clumsy and uneventful, but in the days of vacation that followed we became fairly adept at our love making.

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day was spent with the Fischers and with Rachel. Rachel encouraged me to visit her room at night after everyone was asleep, but the coward that I was I remained in the guest room alone, with my thoughts of Rachel so close at hand, yet so very far away. New Years Eve found us at the club. Sam was having a party, and I opened a beer and drank it. It was love at "first (bite)" taste. I loved it. I'm not sure as to how much and what all I drank that night but I woke up on the beach and Rachel was still with me. We were out on the beach in Herman's old truck. We were both scared to death, and talked all the way to the Fischer house, debating on whether Herman was going to kill us or not! When we pulled up in front of the house Herman was in a rage. He cursed and called me every name in the book, and then some that had never been thought up. He said that if he ever caught me with Rachel again that he would kill me. He

fired me from my post at the stable and never wanted to hear about me again.

I had to walk home (back to the Palomar Club) and along the way my thoughts turned to the last two and a half months. And how different it was being alone, my own man, if you will. I thought of Mama and Papa. Why was it that I could never get along with that man? Dear god I worshiped the ground he walked on. Everyone said that I was just like him. Why didn't we get along? I remembered the fight that me and my older brother had before I left. It was over nothing except that I wouldn't apologize to him. Dad had taken sides with him, as he did everytime. Damned was I always wrong to want me way sometime? The ensuing confrontation with Papa had left me with my scalp pulled loose from my skull. Not that he had done it I did the damage myself, pulling from the grasp that he had on my hair. Again I didn't think he meant to grab my hair, it's just where his hand landed and me ever defiant jerked too hard. But always it was me and my temper that caused "me" the greatest pain. And Mama why did I always seem to make her cry so much. Didn't she know that I loved her? Why couldn't I show my love? hadn't I beat the living hell out of Robert Dupont in front of her when he said that she was a bitch? Hell he was twice my size and already sixteen, I was only twelve and barely weighed 80 pounds.

When I went into the Club I burst into explanations to Sam, I told him everything, how I felt about Rachel, about our exploits in the hay, the works, I held nothing back. Sam remained calm and told me not to worry that "I'll take care of everything. Go get your stuff from the stables and move back in here with me, until I can figure out something." On the way to the stables, my thoughts again went over the last months, my arm and jaw still ached a lot, but by large I ignored the pain. Outly there was no display of the trauma that I had experienced, but inwardly, I was a walking torture chamber. When I returned to the club with my "stuff" I went to the back room and started drinking hot beer. I drank the night away. January 2nd came on a Friday and found me still in the back room. Sam was rattling bottles, and making enough noise to raise the dead. I woke up cursing, my head hurt my eyes were sunk in and my stomach was swirling. "Get up" He shouted, taking no pity on me. "if you're going to dance you have to pay the fiddler!"

Later in the day, after I had started moving around and the headache had passed somewhat, Sam told me to clean myself up that we were going to the store and see if Mr. Janka needed any help. When we pulled into the lot Sam told me to get a Soda Pop and let him talk to Janka first. I went to the Pop Box opened a Coca Cola and swallowed it in one gulp. It took care of the hang over that was still "hanging over" me. Sam motioned me over. "Sam here tells me that you need a job. How old are you?" "Sixteen Sir" being overly polite and showing my best fake smile. He said that he could only afford to pay

me 35 cents per hour, but that seemed like a lot to me. " Be at work Monday at 8:00 A.M. sharp and you'll be off on Tuesday and Wednesday."

Monday morning came and I was at the store before 7:00 A.M. when everyone else arrived. Mr. Janka put me to racking bottles, and it took until noon to separate all the bottles and put them into the right cases. At noon I met Don Steinberg the butcher, and had lunch with him. After noon I was assigned to help him in the market. Don was the kind of person that ran everywhere, all the time. If he waited on a customer he ran, if he operated the grinder he ran. Hurry! Hurry! Hurry! That was Don Steinberg the butcher! I tried my best to work as quickly as he did, and that evening at 8:00 P.M. when my twelve hours were up, I was sorely tired. I fell into bed and sleep the sleep of the weary. Tuesday morning found me with the blues. I wanted to see and talk with Rachel. Wednesday morning wasn't any better, so that afternoon I walked to the school and waited for her to get out. When she saw me she ran to see me, and I took her books and started walking her home. We hadn't walked a block until wham, someone hit me from behind. I dropped her books and spun around to see what the hell was happening. It was Adolphe. " What do you think you're doing 'boy'? My Daddy told you to stay away from her!" "I don't want any trouble, I was just going to talk to her." " Listen PAMMY " Phonetically! I hit him as hard as I could and backed off. It was not what he had said but the way he had said it. I knew what was coming next and didn't wait for him to finish. Adolphe rushed me like a bull dozer. He outweighed me by a good thirty pounds and I went over under the weight. He literally had me under his control, when he picked up a popcycle stick and gouged it into my eyeball, right between the eyeball and the bone of my eye socket. The surge of pain went over my instantly, I went crazy and drew strength from I know not where, but I was up and Adolphe was down, my feet were flying, I kicked him in the head, the stomach, all over, he tried to cover his face, but my feet were there. Then just as suddenly something knocked me from my feet again. It was two of Adolphes "home boys". They were ready to flounce me when suddenly on of them fell like a shot, the other boy took off running down the street. It was my old "buddy" chico, the one that had beat the tar out of me with one blow. Te boy that Chico had knocked down was yelling " Hey Chico man! What's wrong? We done nothing to you man!" Chico looked at him and said that " anyone that comes back like that deserves an even vreak that's all man." He helped me from the ground and told Adolphe that I was all his. " Man I've had enough." Adolphe said still lying on the ground. " Are you through with him man?" Chico asked me. "For the time being" glad that this thing was over. I wondered why everyone was so afraid of Chico.