

Young, Gay And Restless

My Scandalous On-Screen & Off-Screen Sexual **Liberations**

Thom Bierdz

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DEDICATED

To Tequila.

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* 1: **SEX IN MY CHILDHOOD**

THE DADDY FANTASY



I posted this photo on Facebook, March 25, 2018: *“HOW COULD I NOT HAVE A CRUSH ON MY DAD AND NOT TO THIS DAY STILL HAVE DADDY FANTASIES? LOOK AT HOW SEXY HE WAS IN 1970. LOOK AT HOW SEXY I WAS AT 8.”*

Me being sexy at 8 was an obvious joke: I don’t think kids are sexy and besides I hated being a skinny gay geek – and even though in my twenties I was arguably the top soap opera hunk on the #1 soap opera which played to a hundred million viewers worldwide, I personally did not find myself sexy then. *Did I have hundreds of sex partners over the years because I was looking for validation and to convince myself I was sexy – or could be? Or was I simply a slut? Was a friend right when he said I had as many issues as a magazine stand?*

Having daddy fantasies was not a joke, and my FB friends and followers knew to expect shocking posts from this actor turned reclusive artist venting from an isolated forest cabin in scenic Lake

Arrowhead, California. It was clear I was finally rebelling against my early Wisconsin Catholic 1960's / 1970's sex-shaming, and even objecting to my silenced homosexual storyline on *The Young and the Restless*. I would gladly reprise the role of Phillip Chancellor III, but not because I was a frustrated nonworking actor but because the publicity was always good for painting sales, and I had rent to pay.

With sincere apologies to those millions who suffered sexual abuse from their father, I wished I had -- I mean I longed for him to be in love with me -- but he was entirely respectful and never touched any of us inappropriately, besides unwarranted spankings almost assigned to middle-class homes in the 1960's.

As decades bounced away, my passive hands never spanked a human (unless it was their fetish), but my mind spanked the limitations that humans forced upon me, and forced upon us all. Facebook substantiated that the American consciousness was riled up, and millions of us citizens knew there were injustices needing to be punched, but we didn't know exactly where, or who was the bad guy; which was the fake news. Like most of you, I accepted the drama invites to argue on FB, but I was in the small minority who questioned the corporate albeit commercial narratives, eventually growing comfortable with such unique philosophies that none of my 10,000 friends agreed with me. Weekly I'd expose (embarrassing?) things about myself that I never had before, partly to inspire others to cut tradition and free their minds, and partly to challenge myself. "No limits!" I'd frequently comment. *But was it really true I was unlimited? Come on, I am 56 at the publishing of this book. Even though nothing is broke yet, won't it break soon? Do humans have limits – or NOT?!*

"No other celebrity shares so openly," I'd be messaged every couple hours. Truth is it was wholly unnatural for me to be a pretty actor on a red carpet who smiled biggest to the brightest camera; the real me was an unpredictable social misfit and could never abide a soap opera actor's moral clause contract. Fortunately, my Facebook friends were turned on by the rebel in me; a free-thinking wildly-opinionated unconventional artist, more akin to expressionism and art brut than the commissioned dog portraits that I churned out weekly. It amused me that not only was my face unrecognizable from my early *Y&R* fame, but so was my personality. Not only did I like the idea of posting

controversial taboo subjects, and being a controversial taboo subject, I LIVED for it. Not in the sense of a reality TV star addicted to tantrum PR, but an aged has-been mountain recluse who recognized his soul, and wings, were clipped by other people's limitations in the past, and would never allow that again.

My dad, now 78, lives in Washington state with his third wife, his best friend. He is an easy-going man with a great sense of humor and drinks scotch after noon and writes suspense novels after that, under the name Tom Bierdz. Although he supports me because he loves me, he said he has no interest in reading my sex memoir and cannot imagine why anyone would.

MOM AND DAD

My mom, Phyllis, was a dark-eyed five-foot Italian beauty. Her short black hair covered a head so small she had to wear children's hats. When people remarked about her stature, she would grin and remark, "Big things come in small packages." More than likely she'd then lick her finger and "chalk one up" in the air.

My father, Thomas Alexander Bierdz, Sr., about 5'8", also had dark hair, but his soft hazel eyes were as passive as Mom's dark ones were engaging. Their eyes perfectly summed up their differing temperaments; he observed and commented from a distance, while she loved, laughed, held, argued, and cried in your face. Mom never did this for effect; rather she did not have the ability to censor or hold back her truth. It appears I inherited that quality of hers to "overshare." She personified authenticity and integrity, in as much as a woman in her 20s with four kids could. I have spent my life attempting to match her authenticity and integrity, but it's probably impossible to achieve.



My introverted father, a very honest and responsible young man, dreamed of becoming an actor. He rarely mentioned that in 1960 he was accepted as an actor at the renowned Pasadena Playhouse in California, because he was embarrassed that he chickened-out of going to Hollywood. Raised by an over-protective mother who never even let him spend an evening out with relatives, he lacked the confidence to venture out on his own. So the 21-year-old tossed his dream out the window and did the expected: he married his passionate 19-year-old girlfriend who gave birth to my sister, Hope, the following year. Part of me wondered if I, born the next year in 1962, had crawled outside that window and gotten my hands on Dad's discarded Hollywood dream. I inherited his desire to be a famous movie star; in fact, this had been my number one focus each minute of my life from when I was six years old until my mid-life crisis at 49.

Instead of being Walter Matthau or Frank Sinatra, Dad studied psychotherapy and earned a master's degree. Pregnant mom made big sacrifices to support him while he attended a Chicago university. The only apartment they could afford was in a very dangerous Chicago neighborhood. For our safety, Mom was advised to lock us in the basement with her when doing laundry. She took in people's ironing to help pay bills. Her mother taught her how to make meatballs taste expensive to satisfy Dad's scholarly college friends when they came

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over. Mom felt left out because all of her husband's buddies and their wives were advancing their educations and social lives while she was imprisoned in a rough building, without any friends, and nurturing two small children. When Dad's peers weren't over for supper, Mom cooked discounted ground beef with noodles. She finally grew so sick of it, that once we left that apartment she would never again eat hamburger.



I don't remember 1962-1964, those first two years of my life in Chicago. I do remember when Dad got his master's degree and we moved 90 minutes north back to our hometown of Kenosha, Wisconsin, which was about 45 minutes south of Milwaukee. Both sets of my grandparents visited our little house and spoiled us four kids with what they could afford. Though the Bierdzes loved us and

made Sunday lunches after we went to St. Mark's Church, the DiLettis were more generous with physical affection and daily help. Grandma DiLetti, with dyed-red hair, spent all day playing Matchbox cars with us on the rug, while my mother waitressed and my father worked as a social worker. On weekends, short Grandpa DiLetti, with a round head and little hook-nose like an owl, helped my father fix up our basement. My mother called her parents "saints." I understood this to mean that the harder someone worked, the closer they were to God; God being a giant, handsome white-bearded man who roared in thunder -- but penis-less of course because penises were naughty.

FIRST PENIS

At nine years old, I fell in love.

Me at 9.

Buddy Brikstein was an eight year old German kid with blue eyes and blond bangs. We lived across the elm-treed street in a middle-class neighborhood where the one-story houses were all on a 45-degree angle to 10th Avenue. On a sleepover in his bedroom, with the lights off, door closed, we lay next to each other on Milwaukee Brewers sleeping bags, my head by his feet. Our little hands explored our bodies and each other's and discovered that



a foreign finger on our tiny balls sprang our penises up like Jack in The Boxes. The smacking of hard little boy-penises against our stomachs thwacked as loud as the *Three Stooges* hitting each other, but luckily no one else in the house heard us. I was feeling more than my friend's boy penis. I was feeling more than hard. I was falling in love. He probably doesn't even remember me, as I believe he grew up to be a handsome tall straight husband and father.

He probably also does not recall the baths his mother gave us. Together. One day, my mom came to the Briksteins when we boys

were in the tub, as I was rolling the bar of soap on Buddy's freckled back. Frustrated Mom made it clear it was naughty for two boys to share a tub and I was swiftly removed from it, dressed in my overalls and brought home.

It wasn't only my mother who saw how naughty the naked body was. Her younger sister, Aunt Mary who looked like a Breck shampoo girl, also knew how naughty the body was. At a holiday barbecue Aunt Mary saw me and Buddy swimming in our standing backyard pool and me slipping my bathing suit to my knees underwater. She tattled to mom and I was swiftly removed from the pool and sent to my room to be alone.

But I did not feel alone. I felt that the 50-foot-tall, white-bearded penis-less God around me approved of me even when others shamed me for being naughty. My independent spiritual journey was beginning, as was my sexual journey, and these would forever battle for my attention, and at best, would balance my frenetic energy. For the next 47 years, my soul would jump as if it were on a trampoline, reaching for the sky and the unseen godlike forces, then being immediately pulled in reverse to base sexual pleasures. Interesting perhaps that this metaphor granted me physical touch only to the bounce of tightly sprung material, and no physical reward no matter how hard my hands grasped for the invisible entities in the heavens. It could also be noted that although my jumping between sex and spirituality was where I spent the most physical time, there was nothing en route either way giving me physical gratification or any degree of contact to satiate. Only sex did.

Maybe all incarnate females inherently knew nudity was naughty whereas we males did not? One night, not only did Buddy get to sleep over in a tent outside in our backyard, but our sisters got to join. My sister, Hope, a shy brunette, was a year older than me, 10, and Buddy's sister, Dora, blond, was a year-older than him, 9. Holding the flashlight, I initiated an idea that we all be naked and flung my pajamas instantly to my knees.

"Look what my penis can do!" I exclaimed proudly, and swung my hips back and forth waving my dick like a hotdog nailed to a washing machine on spin cycle.

Less enthusiastic, Buddy dropped his pajamas exposing only part of his penis. Dora showed a couple inches of lower stomach flesh, but my sister barely even moved her panties. Apparently, my gyrating antics were horrifying to the adults who gasped at my bouncing flashlight silhouette on the tent exterior. I was punished and informed how truly sinful it was for me to treat my penis like a public yo-yo.

GIRLS' PENISES

If Hope or Dora had revealed their genitals, I would have learned that girls had vaginas. Since they did not, and this was before the computer age, I had no reason to believe otherwise. I grew up thinking girls had penises, but imagined they were smaller like baby penises, not big hairy man penises which I luckily caught sight of one night on a camping trip.

My modest dad walked me and my younger brother, Gregg, from our Starcraft extendable camper to the campground showers, and was dismayed not to find individual showers, but rather one big shower area lit by a hanging bulb. He may have been uncomfortable and awkward undressing and showering with his young sons in this wood shack, but it was perhaps the most exciting minutes of my life. I felt I had won the lottery seeing my dad's adult penis with black pubic hair so long it equaled his bangs, underarm hair and lamb chop sideburns. This was the first and only time I had ever seen my dad naked, and it just made sense to me that because women did not have sideburns and underarm hair, they did not have grown man penises. Obviously, women had little boy penises with no pubic hair.

The day after my strip show in the tent with the Briksteins, Mom dragged me to Grandma DiLetti's house. My Mom's mom was informed of my heinous antics, and my typically loving grandma paused making homemade ravioli to form a scowl like when she read about robbers in the newspaper. As my mom egged her on, grandma fingered her crucifix and lectured me that the body parts in the underwear were private and to be kept that way, lest I end up in Hell. This kind of made sense. Never had grandma dropped her pants and

flung her penis around, smacking it on her thighs to make loud noises. Mom never interrupted making her meatloaf and scalloped potatoes, exclaiming, “Look what I can do with my dick,” using her penis to push Tupperware containers in the refrigerator. Not only had my attention to my evil penis caused everyone upset, it changed my relationship with my grandmother. Grandma DiLetti was the most loving person on the Earth, but it seemed she would remove that love if I were naked or touched my penis, so I was from then on in a pickle.

PAUL HAUGLE

Me at 11.

Good thing I never told them about Paul Haugle’s sleepover. In fifth grade, when I was 11, chubby blond Paul Haugle invited me over for a sleepover. He was not a popular kid, but I was because I was an A-student, extremely polite to my teachers and captain of the crossing guard. I wasn’t popular in the sense that I laughed loudly with friends at recess; I was more of an admired quiet kid.



In any event, Paul had invited me and two other boys to spend the night in the old square white Winnebago camper parked in their stone driveway. Jerry was a year older, and Lenny even older from another school. After pretzels and RC cola, Jerry popped a deck of cards, and suddenly I was participating in my first strip poker game.

Even though Paul and Jerry had winning hands, they volunteered their

clothes, and soon we were all naked and giggling, silently streaking through their moonlit grassy yard ironically right across from our elementary school. After we went back inside the Winnebago, Paul laid his chubby body face-down on a camper bed, and Jerry climbed on top of him, simulating intercourse. I kind of pretended it wasn't happening, and declined the invite to join in, but I watched in shock as Jerry then started to grease up Paul's butt and actually penetrate him. In, out, squishing his body on top. Paul hardly moaned or groaned at all. He just smiled like a pumpkin. Minutes later, Jerry climbed off, and his small erect penis dripped white fluid and then shriveled up. They turned the lights out and went to sleep.

I lay awake knowing I had to tell someone about this the next day! And I knew exactly who!

The priest in the confessional asked how long it'd been since my last confession. I told him six months.

"Grandma told me sex is wrong," I stated to the priest I could not see. "She never plays with her penis and I am sure she never even gets a boner..."

"Your grandmother?"

"Yes. But I played with mine. A lot. And yesterday, Jerry intercoursed Paul Haugle."

The priest stopped me and said God would forgive me if I said 30 Hail Mary's.

"Will God forgive Jerry and Paul Haugle?" I questioned.

"God has no limits," he said kindly.

After I whispered those prayers, I tried, but I could not ignore wondering what Paul Haugle and Jerry felt while they did what they did. Seems now that my pubic hair was growing, I was always erect and hiding my dick under math and history books when walking home from school. As if I didn't stand out enough already in my bright yellow shirt and plaid bellbottoms...

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When I was 12, my father asked Mom for a divorce, and he moved out. Was God punishing our whole family because of my constant erections regarding the Paul Hagle sleep over?

My younger brother, Gregg, nine, blond, and I shared a room in the basement. With our twin beds covered in red football blankets, the next best thing to being naked with a hard-on was wearing a jock where my hard-on was restrained like an epileptic in a potato sack.

Gregg was not the least bit interested in my raging hormones as he sat in his pajamas with me in my stretched-out jock over a board game called *Prize Property*. For some reason he was much more fascinated with the play money and pretend real estate. He was never interested in playing around sexually with me, and looking back, I am glad because I never would have wanted to make him uncomfortable or subject him to what some consider molestation or sexual assault; an older brother enticing the younger for sex. That being said, I was a horny lonely kid, with extreme guilt and shame, and I would have welcomed sex from him, or an older brother if I had one, or a cousin, or an uncle, or dad. Of course, I am speaking from a perspective of not knowing the consequences of what that would entail, and while it's true that most seduced youths are bothered or traumatized, there remain some who are not and who liked it. Maybe it's because I felt rejected, unloved or unbonded with my dad and brothers that to this day porn videos on that taboo family incest role-play excite me more than others? Though I regularly fantasized about all my male relatives spanking their manmeat between my eyes, oddly I never fantasized about sucking my mom's cock or having grandma teabag me by pressing her wrinkled hairy scrotum to my forehead.

THE WINSLINTER BASEMENT

Decades later, Gregg would confide that even though he and I never had sex, at 10 years-old he let a neighbor kid blow him up the street when almost everybody in the neighborhood was fucking Vana Winslinter. To my shock, Gregg apparently had a great deal of neighborhood sex, fucking Vana Winslinter on the green shag carpet in their basement, as did younger brother, Cory Winslinter, and Buddy Brikstein, who had long ago cut me off from playing Jack in The Box. Vana was a heavy, wallflower C-student with stringy brown hair who was quite unpopular in school. The only reason I knew her name was because we passed the Winslinter house on the way to school.

I do remember one birthday party in the Winslinter basement that I attended. When we were unchaperoned, every couple minutes a junior cheerleader turned the lights off and we kids had to kiss who was next to us. I kissed Liz somebody, and hated it, but did not tell her that because I did not want to hurt her feelings. It was not really a roaming kiss, but just a mutual touching of lips frozen for an agonizing 20 seconds until lights were flicked on again. This minimal saliva exchange was a new alien sensation which grossed me out. Maybe Liz felt a tingle in her penis, but I sure did not. I felt intruded upon and intrusive.

Later that night, as I kissed my mother goodnight, I closed my eyes and kept my lips planted on hers, like I had with Liz. Mom let me keep my lips pressed on hers for maybe 15 seconds until I pulled them off. I did not get a boner and I doubt Mom did either. She probably had thought nothing of it, but I felt entirely exposed and predatory. No one had to tell me how naughty this was. Mom was too pure to do anything done in that Winslinter basement.



Younger Gregg was better-looking than me, more popular and won sports awards. Notice we grew up with fine art (dogs playing poker).

While pre-teen Gregg was secretly double-penetrating Vana Winslinter with Buddy Brikstein down the block, I was only fucking my twin bed in my bedroom. The whole shaft felt great rubbed anywhere, but it was the head being stimulated that brought me to orgasm. While I do not recommend anyone else fill a sweat sock with warm oatmeal and fuck it between their sister's large teddy bear's legs (oatmeal hardens—ouch), I did discover God's greatest temptation that year in my mother's dresser drawer.

1974 *PLAYGIRL* CENTERFOLDS

Kitty, one of mom's loose divorcee friends usually in halter tops with frizzy blonde hair and large hoop earrings, bought Mom one issue of *Playgirl* magazine, and for some reason Mom told us all about it, laughing at the absurdity. As time went on, whether Mom was outside weeding the yard, making a rhubarb pie or at a Parents Without Partners meeting, I secretly tiptoed to that drawer and pulled out that Holy Grail. Using her floral-scented skin lotion I waxed my dolphin to the most beautiful thing in the universe: hairy grown men with bushy pubic hair surrounding their beast penises like wide frames around art. I would trade my car for that issue just to see again the gorgeous blond man with cleft chin and mustache, fishing naked, or the hairy dude on his motorcycle with dark hair, sideburns and huge black pubes that seemed to stretch from his thighs to his neck. I was in love with all the 1974 *Playgirl* models, and since I believed anything was possible and was optimistic to have the love of a dream man, I went to sleep fantasizing about us as lovers, and to this day, nothing turns me on more than that Paul Michael Glaser 1970's look.

Another friend, awkward teen, Marvin Zurich, was allowed to spend the night when his parents were out of town. Trying to be as quiet as possible, in my bedroom with the door closed and light off, Marvin and I played with each other's erect boypoles.

He whispered, "Don't you think we're missing something?"

"Like what?" I asked.

"Maybe we should do something with the mouths," he offered.

"Oh. My. Godddd," I whispered, disgusted. Marvin Zurich was obviously a pervert and should be in a straight-jacket. I could not imagine doing anything with the mouths! Gross! Mom taught us never to even eat off each other's forks or drink from another's glass, and I am sure whatever Marvin was suggesting would also be a hellish germ extravaganza spawning diseased bodies that even Jerry Lewis couldn't telethon-save.



Me, 15. Troy, 7. Gregg, 12.. Hope, 16. Evidence I was the geekiest teen.

PORNO IN DAD'S BUILDING

When I was 16, with braces still on my teeth, my sister was 17, Gregg 14, and youngest brother Troy, 8. Mom was working three jobs to feed us; as a jewelry store clerk, waitress and secretary at the police department. She was an extremely lovable woman—fun and devoted—in addition to her warm honesty and integrity which she extended to everyone. That being said, for some reason we were not getting along. I guess I was no longer listening to her strict rules, and when she grabbed my arms to discipline me, I threw her hands off. She told Dad I hit her and demanded he take me into his Racine apartment one city away. I think she felt this would punish both Dad and me.

A loner in school, I didn't mind transferring to another, and I was fine leaving Mom's rules, although I have no recollection of any in particular that led to our argument(s). I do recall her pointing to my face and ordering, "Change your disposition, young man!"

Dad set me up in his spare bedroom of his small apartment with green walls and palm trees, and when he was at work being a psycho-

therapist, I scoured his place for porno. To no avail.

But finally, one day I found a photo-less dirty paperback titled, *She*. Three times a day I jacked off to sentences like, “His stiff member entered her,” or, “He dropped his pants exposing his furry manhood.” Strangely, it never read, “He rubbed his big hairy man penis against her hairless little lady penis.” This is when I learned women do not have penises. They have meat curtains, fiery love tunnels, man-craving pokeholes, G-spots and cock ovens.



From what Catholicism taught, I was not going to Hell only because I masturbated, I was also going because I had become a thief. This A-student had previously only stolen one candy bar from the White Hen Pantry when he was 10, and guiltily returned it only slightly opened afterwards. But doing laundry in the basement of Dad’s apartment complex when I was 16, I discovered each unit had a large storage area, divided by floor-to-ceiling chicken wire. One lucky afternoon I saw from the corner of my eye a porno magazine poking out of a neighbor’s storage bin. Making sure no one was coming downstairs, I quietly reached under the wire fencing, inching my finger toward the nude flesh image, but could not grab it. It was just too far away. Nevertheless, somewhere deep inside me I knew nothing was impossible and with mumbled prayer and fervent concentration my arm slowly extended an inch in a feat no less unexplainable than Moses parting the sea. Trying again, and scraping my bony shoulder under the wire, I tore the magazine cover. Then I moved it slightly nearer. Eventually using a hanger I hooked the *Hustler* magazine and dragged it across the cement then buried it under my brown plaid

bellbottoms in my laundry bushel to sneak upstairs.

Once in Dad's bathroom, page after page showed young women spreading their legs. In all my life I had never known girls or women to stare so aggressively, nor twist their naked body parts at odd angles, their wet fingers yanking on their secret skins. Women, too, can have massive pubic bushes like wide painting frames, but in my opinion the art was missing! There was no penis, just meat curtains which actually did look like rare roast beef sandwiches a bit. This did not excite me. But luckily on the back inside cover there were a couple small ads that showed naked men with mustaches and pubic hair and sausages in various stages of erection. Mesmerized, I beat off incessantly.

The next day I used two hangers and pliers and was able to heist a second magazine, a *Playboy*. Page after page of bodies without penises; another grave disappointment to me. Within weeks, I had dozens of *Hustlers*, *Cheris*, *High Societies*, *Healthy Handfuls*, *Titties*, *Betty Pages* and *Playboys* hidden in my dresser, but unfortunately no *Playgirls*. Worse, the pile was spilled all over the neighbor's bin, so anyone walking past to do laundry would see tons of porn, and obviously deduce that there was a demonic masturbator in the building.

Between my wanking sessions five times a day the guilt was too much. This is when my 40 years of insomnia began. I placed all the porno neatly in a paper bag, taped it shut, and put it on the doorstep of the apartment matching the storage bin, with a note, "I am sorry that I stole your magazines. You can tell my dad if you want. Tom Junior in Apt. 8B."

Don't know if the perverts ever talked to dad. He never mentioned anything.

HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS

Many of the girls at my new Racine high school were very welcoming to me and squeezed me in on their lunch table. When I read my ambiguous love sonnets to a few bookworm girls in the library, they

seemed enthralled. I overheard a librarian with frosted hair say to another, “He’s the new Ben Shannon.” Having no idea what that meant, I later did my research and found out Ben Shannon was a popular guy who had graduated and was known to be gay. Yikes. The librarians with frosted hair had perfect gaydar.

Even though it was my first year there, I was surprisingly nominated for Homecoming King. Jacqueline was the prettiest brunette in school with the white skin and unblemished big-eyed face of a doll, and she asked shy ME to the Sadie Hawkins dance.

Dad bought me an oversized tan Lee Major / Steve Austin on *The Six-Million Dollar Man* leisure suit “to grow into,” and an extra-large gladiola corsage to give to my wide-eyed beauty wearing a sparkly pink dress which seemed more apropos for an ice rink. Jacqueline and I double dated with some girl with short, curly blond hair and some guy with incredible biceps bulging through his light blue silk shirt. I have no recall of anything from that night besides his biceps stretching that blue material as I noisily sipped root beer through a straw across our pizza booth. Apparently, my awe of him was noticed because the next day Jacqueline started spreading rumors around the school that I was a fag. Oh my god! To be called a fag or gay in the 1970s, when homosexuality was still listed in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, was a stigma that could destroy one’s job, social life, reputation and future.

There were no gay role models anywhere, and the only implied visibility to gays was the transsexual tennis player Renee Richards, so it never occurred to me to say, “Yes, Jaqueline, I am a homo. So, what?” Instead I frantically tried to figure out how to deny it—or shut her up.

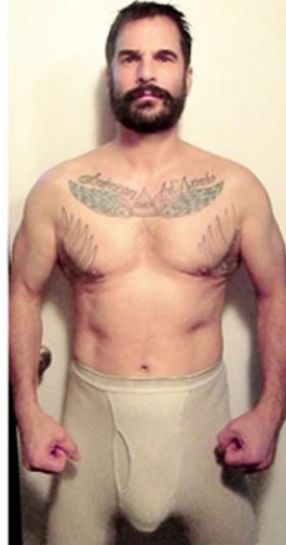
The next week she again challenged my manhood by bringing a new boy on a date to Gusto’s Italian restaurant where I was a fry cook, so I had no choice but to take her frozen shrimp into the bathroom and pee on it, then fry it, have it served to her, and have my best girlfriend, Marla, tell her the next day in school that I’d peed on her shrimp. Perhaps I was inspired by the grill man who wiped the toilet with another high-maintenance customer’s steak before he broiled it. It is amazing to me that few closeted gays have figured out this way to stop gay rumors. Some closet-cases actually marry suspicious

YOUNG, GAY & RESTLESS

Jacquelines and have kids to prove they're hetero. They stay married 50 years to someone they are lying to, and they work their entire lives to pay for these big families, when all you have to do is pee on their shrimp and they'll forever avoid you.

* 2: **2016, ALMOST PRESENT DAY**

ME AT 54 YEARS-OLD IN 2016



Leaving Hollywood after 28 years for the woods five years ago when I was 49, it was almost like I died and went to Heaven. My aesthete eyes filled with joy as I turned my attention from crowded Whole Foods stores and busy parking lots to meadows of evergreens and Stellar Blue Jays and oaks and squirrels and my homemade food. Working from my new cabin home painting portraits for FB clients (who were fans of my soap opera character) at my leisure, I was in pleasure all day, and that included great sex—by myself.

Why did I write such a candid sex memoir? One reason is because in the 2016 presidential election news, women were accusing Trump of sexual assault, and I wondered if it were true, and if a candidate should be disqualified if it were true. Then in 2017, celebrity after celebrity, from Harvey Weinstein to Kevin Spacey, was accused of sexual assault, which pretty-much seemed to end their careers. On FB, I asked what people considered to be sexual “assault” and shared that I thought I had been sexually assaulted at least twice, once involving

me being drugged to the point I was unconscious, sexually violated, and then when I awoke hours later and drove home, I was so drowsy that I hit two cars. The other instance paled in comparison; dropping off one of my paintings to a celebrity, he gave me a tour of his home and in his bedroom grabbed me and forced open-mouth kissing.

(Cue the *Y&R* theme: the hauntingly gorgeous piano concerto composed by Barry De Vorzon and Perry Botkin, Jr. in 1971. Often referred to as “Nadia’s Theme” because Olympic gymnast Nadia Comăneci performed to it at the 1976 Summer Olympics, it’s been expertly used to underscore heterosexual drama and romance on *The Young and the Restless* since 1973. Isn’t it about time that gorgeous instrumental also enhances homosexual sex drama? Wouldn’t it be ironic and wonderful if this book gets made into a movie, with the *Y&R* theme blaring over unconventional and gay sex drama in movie theaters across the country, in ways the soap opera seemed afraid to use it?)

All my Facebook commenters agreed that I being drugged and sexually violated was considered sexual assault, but some felt the celebrity incident was merely me being “hit on.” Many FB friends remarked it was very rare for a man to reveal he had been sexually assaulted, and, inspired, men started sharing their own stories of their assaults and rapes on my post. Folks urged me to compile a book of men’s perspectives on sexual assault—from both the victim and perpetrator perspectives. They also wanted more insight into the hidden male sex scene in Hollywood.

These were very easy books (this memoir, and another compilation of men’s sexual assaults) for me to write and to give assaulted men a voice, and since I was no longer acting but a painter in the woods, it could pay my rent. But the bigger reason I decided to write this sex memoir was to challenge myself to see if in fact I had fully conquered the sexual shaming of being a closeted gay Catholic kid in the 1960s / 70s. True that in 2009 I had the pride and honor to be the first openly gay player on a soap opera in a principle role, also playing a (romance-less) gay character, but by 2011 the TV serial had once again all but forgotten there were homosexual men in fictional Genoa City. I am guessing they aired about 10,000 scenes with heterosexual kisses over the four plus decades, but they had never even had one gay kiss (until

a lesbian kiss in August, 2017, but still never two men kissing). Why is that? Is that naughty / disgusting / unforgivable / shameful?

Did homophobia still exist to the point of Bible-thumpers burying soap opera storylines? Dare I push the envelope even further and force this gay sex memoir on the public? I had never considered my sex journey particularly interesting or noteworthy—just privately trial-and-error amusing.

Between painting and walking the dogs in Lake Arrowhead's magical forest I sat at my home desk, recalling and organizing my sexcapades. Having given up watching TV and all social life I had plenty of time, since I had invited no one to my home for years, besides Mary.

Mary, the pretty 77-year-old neighbor who lived a couple blocks away was such a hoarder that she seriously could not get into her home. The long-haired beauty, who could be a senior model, slept outside, through the previous four winters, under her front stairs, where drop cloths hid a miniature refrigerator, grill, DVD player, coffee maker and electric blanket. Her million other possessions were not hidden from the neighborhood: her windows were stacked with plastic bags of clothes and mystery items, and her mountain yard was piled with boxes, plastic chairs, drop cloths, enormous umbrellas, crisscrossing hoses and countless potted flowers and trees. Those plants she had assigned herself to be her work, apparently much more a priority than removing whatever items were in her home that prevented her from entering because she just could never "find the time." It was pointless for me to keep offering help, as she always put me off, but she knew she was welcome at my place anytime and had occasionally joined me for lunch; my dogs jumping against her legs and on her lap as she shared her meal with them. The sweet old woman got more pleasure giving to the dogs than actually eating herself.

"I can't chew with so many teeth missing," she laughed.

"Oh, I hear you. I don't have health insurance anymore and a dentist last year said I needed \$7,000 work to fix four cavities and maybe root canals. Can't afford even \$500 so I searched YouTube for home cures and now use a natural mineral solution, MMS and DMSO, if my cavities get too sensitive and I feel pain. Right now, that, and pulling with coconut oil, is working."

YOUNG, GAY & RESTLESS

Millions of soap opera fans were accustomed to seeing my wealthy TV character with a beautiful maternal older woman, Mrs. Chancellor, who dripped in diamonds. But in real life, here I was, visiting as warmly with a woman of her age and beauty, who was essentially homeless—both of us unable to afford a dentist.



With actress and friend Jeanne Cooper. 1986 and 2011.

* 3: **SEX IN RACINE AND MILWAUKEE**

FIRST MAN SEX: ME AT 17, 1979

John, Gusto's prime-rib cook, seemed to enjoy my peeing-on-seafood shenanigans to silence Jacqueline of gay rumors. The balding man in his late 20s with a Village People-like handlebar mustache whispered to me that he was gay, so I nervously invited him over to Dad's apartment as soon as I knew Dad was not going to be there. I was not quite a man and had never had sex with a grown man, and so I put on a record of love songs and then ripped open a large bag of M&M's, saying, "You don't have to eat them all at once," like Dad did when we watched HBO, and I assumed Dad did when he romanced women. However, I was too worried about the religious ramifications of sinning to really enjoy a grown man's body.

John orally pleased my teenmeat to Ann Murray's "You Needed Me" and then asked me to 69 to Rex Smith's "You Take My Breath Away" and we came that way. Then he abruptly took off. I felt incredibly guilty, so much so, that I am convinced I gave myself a horrific disease. While it is possible John was the one who gave me a disease, because my sperm was yellow for months after this, I do believe my excess guilt opened me up to negativity, like disease. In other words, if I was not so guilt-ridden I do not think I would have been trapped in bed for two weeks with a painful strep throat, so delirious that I thought I saw Ann Murray as the angel of death sending me to Hell at one point. *Was my throat in extreme pain for weeks because I'd had a full-grown hairy man kielbasa in it? Because I had done (gasp), "something with the mouths"?*

I healed just before my weeklong trip to a Wisconsin art camp where I met a short, dark, hairy 20-year-old named Tim W., and we gravitated to being alone in the woods at night, humming on each other's eager skinflutes. He was old enough to live on his own and have his own red Gremlin car, so one night, a month later, when Dad was sleeping, I dismantled the screen in my bedroom window and snuck Tim in, so we could cling clang each other's underwear swords and (gasp), do things with our mouths. We may have made love. I was

not sure, as I didn't really know what that was, but it seemed like there were two of us in the room flying into each other's heads, off and on, in slow-motion. He spent the whole night, then snuck out the window in the morning, and I felt puppy love for him and his musky, short, hairy man body—but also felt disgust for both of us at the same time. The passion we shared pissed me off because it was “wrong.” Something so sick should be reserved for the Winslinters. *Maybe Mom was right when she pressured me to follow a calling and be the (sexless) priest in our family?*

The next day at school I asked skinny blond Cindy Goldman with uneven teeth to go steady and dated her four months until we were making out in her car and she told me I put my finger in the wrong hole. I mean, how could I face her after that? It was way too embarrassing. How was I supposed to know how close her pussy was to her asshole? The *Hustler* spreads did not have cut-outs to finger. Ewww I would never want to put a finger in a butt! Butts had feces!! After washing my hands for 15 minutes in scalding water I phoned her and broke up. What a whore.

Because I had transferred high schools I had enough credits to graduate a semester early. I informed Dad I had made up my mind on my future occupation: I was going to be a dancer in San Francisco, even though I had only tap-danced for five minutes as a child inspired by *The Andy Williams Show*, which did not get applause from my reserved Polish grandparents, rather a frightened silence.

“San Francisco?” Dad paused, poured some scotch, and downed it.

I explained my real first goal was to be a movie star in Hollywood.

He told me I was not tall or good-looking enough to be a movie star and not going anywhere until I was eighteen. He politely insisted I finish off the school year at nearby Parkside College then consider architecture because I showed promise in drawing.

Despite it being a beautiful campus in a hardwood forest of ancient maple trees by Pike River, I hated Parkside. Even though I was 17 and had lifted weights for the last year and gotten my braces off a few weeks prior, I still looked like a skinny 14-year-old, and I was roaming

the halls of college with real manly hunks who could be in *Playgirl* even though they were just a year or two older than me. I wanted to look like a macho man so desperately... and to explore the body of every grown man at Parkside. I whacked off many times in campus restrooms, my eyes closed remembering how my arm had accidentally brushed a stranger's hairy forearm as we carried poetry books through crowded staircases.

For my birthday, my father gave me several gifts, and one was a book titled *There Are Men Too Gentle To Live Among Wolves* by James Kavanaugh. I resented him or anyone thinking I was gentle. Even though I was skinny and brittle, I wanted to be a macho rugged cowboy or construction worker or sideburned biker like in the Village People, and never opened that book, although I did not want to throw it away and hurt his feelings.

SEX AT MR. STEAK

At 17, I got a job dishwashing at Mr. Steak in Racine. The other dishwasher was a skinny, friendly, sweet Sicilian kid my age with shifty eyes named Louie. Working together for a couple weeks, paying attention to the things we said and did not say, laughing at certain things and knowing all of Barbra Streisand's song lyrics, we figured out each other was gay.

We carpooled and hung out. His short father with a beer belly talked with an accent and made it obvious he had expected a more macho son than Louie. Louie had his bedroom in the basement and we played with each other's dicks and used our mouths. I started to like this oral thing, but his balls smelled like Parmesan cheese. The scent of scrotum was an acquired smell which I had then not yet acquired. (By the way at that time I also had not even acquired a taste for Parmesan cheese.)

Pic of me and Louie years later when we were 21 in 1983.



Louie had gotten around in gay circles a lot more than I had and educated me on what bars in what neighboring cities were gay and in what parks and bathrooms gays could pick up other gays. One of the older guys he hung with worked at an A&W Drive-In and creped me out with his bad skin and perpetual grin. I stayed away from guys like that at pick-up parks, fighting my extreme urge to experiment with anonymous men. The idea of seeing strangers naked was a thrill, but I did not have the guts

for that. My sex remained to masturbating about TV heartthrob Paul Michael Glaser of *Starsky and Hutch* revealing much chest hair in his red long john underwear photo.

However, I did sneak another Mr. Steak dishwasher, Don, handsome, dark black, 17, 5'10," into my bedroom on another night when Dad was sleeping. About sneaking through the screen, Don said, "This is not good. It could lead to something." Don was bisexual and tried to fuck me, but it hurt, so we just jacked off. Leaving, he commented on the jar of silver dollars on my Dad's dresser.

A day later, Dad leant me his car, so I could take a date to a drive-in movie. He did not know my date was a boy. I was so nervous that I drove Dad's Cordova too close to the speaker post and scratched his car door. Don and I pleased our power rods with Vaseline as we pretended to watch *Kramer vs. Kramer*, but the night didn't end as well because Dad was pissed about the car damage. The next night when Dad and I were not home, someone stole Dad's jar of 70 silver

dollars, and I could only surmise that Don snuck through the window screen as I just showed him.

For one Mr. Steak employee party, Louie came over and we made a chocolate cake, and we both jacked off in the white frosting. Hey, it's like we were new adults with new male bodies and new hairy schlongs and new ideas. We didn't tell anyone. Looking back, I can see if we weren't so repressed we would not have acted in that passive-aggressive way.

The young group of employees might not have actually minded anyway. When shifts were over the waitresses put on heavy makeup and curled their hair and the geeky cooks and gang would joke around in a booth and then they'd move the party to a bar or apartment. Everyone was rather promiscuous it seemed except Acne Kathy, who transformed into a beauty with heavy makeup. If big-boned Sue-Ann with the long, flat brown hair was the last one working and no other waitresses were around, after close she'd be laid out in the back of the station wagon as the male employees took turns fucking her. One ride in the front seat watching was enough for me, and I politely refused access to Sue-Ann's meat curtains, but everyone else plowed away. I remember peeking at a blond cook's furry ass crack and big hairy balls banging away as he could not refuse the opportunity to roast his man member in her hot-oiled preheated cock oven. Geeky cook Roy surprised us all by removing his coke bottle glasses and pounding his hammer in her toolbox, and within a few years he actually married her (and they are still together almost 40 years later).

TAKING A NEW NAME: T.J.

The week before I turned 18, I felt it was time to have a heavy talk with white-bearded God who seemed to be giving me crossed signals; a pecker that liked men, not women. God seemed to say at times man

was unlimited and could have everything, and yet many church elders explained how we must deny our sexual thoughts and actions. I wrote out a letter saying, "God, I am gay. I know one day that I will be a famous and important gay man, and if you do not want that, kill me in my sleep before I turn 18. If you allow me to live, I will take the new name T.J. Not for Thom Junior but for To Jesus. I promise to dedicate my life as a gay man To Jesus."

Obviously, awaking on my birthday was a reason for an extra celebration that year. Louie and I, wearing loud silk shirts with large collars usually reserved for clowns, hurried out to Kenosha's only gay bar, aptly titled The Shack. We were now legal drinking age. Seems most homo hideaways in small towns were run by the drag queens, and this dark bar was no exception. Nosey transvestites with perfumed wigs and Virginia Slims in long sparkly cigarette-holders surrounded and befriended us, but my eyes went to a James Dean character entering in tight Jordache jeans and a white T-shirt. He was greeted warmly by the drag queens as well. His name was Billy.

On a future trip there, when I came alone, Billy and I took our bottles of Schlitz outside, and into his car. He wanted me to fuck him in the backseat after he finished his Marlboro cigarette. That excited my unit a lot, but I didn't want to be arrested. Nevertheless, the sexual tension increased as minutes passed, and I could not refuse. This was the first time I fucked anything besides my sister's large teddy bear with the sock full of oatmeal. This felt a lot better and I was surprised there was no poop on my injector afterwards, but I still hurried home to wash it 10 times.



I never saw him again after that, but I soon fell in love with another Shack patron named Rusty who was blonder and taller, with a full reddish mustache. I fantasized us walking on St. Thomas beach a million times, as those lyrics from Kenny Nolans' "I Like Dreamin (Cuz Dreamin Can Make You Mine)" played over and over

on my record player. Everywhere I went, I pictured him and me in a great love story, or on *Fantasy Island*. My mom and sister had no idea why I was smiling so often that summer.

After long anticipation, Rusty and I only fooled around once, and it wasn't as romantic as our song. We went our separate ways and never saw each other again.

Shortly after I turned 18, I told my parents, separately, that I thought I was bisexual. Neither believed the bisexual thing so I leveled that I was gay and if they did not accept it I would not talk to them ever again. Certainly, I loved them and was grateful for all they had done for me, but my inner core felt I deserved the romantic love in ballads and fairy tales and being near haters would jeopardize my chances. My dad was a very laid-back passive psycho-therapist, and poured a scotch and nodded, offering his support. He mentioned that in 1974 homosexuality had been taken off the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* to be categorized as "sexual orientation disturbance," and he knew of other homosexuals in town who seemed like nice men.

Mom was a bit more dramatic. I suppose it was the company I kept the night that I told her. As tall drag queens Gloria P. Hole and Ginger Spice, sitting on Mom's couch, adjusted their eye shadow, I told Mom

I was gay. Mom hugged me, burst into tears, then gestured to Gloria P. Hole, “Tommy, this is your next step, isn’t it?” After, Mom fled to the kitchen to dry her tears with a paper towel. I followed her, but there was no way I could convince her that I did not want to be a transvestite like Gloria P. Hole or TV’s Renee Richards.

SEX FOR A WAITER JOB

I was not as naïve as I looked, even though I was definitely a slim 18-year-old who looked 16 at most. However, I was completely knocked off balance, in more ways than one, when the owner of the Auctioneer’s Inn, Jeff, 30, moved his eyes off my employee application to my crotch. We were the only two people in the old western saloon bar / restaurant 40 miles away from Kenosha or Racine in the middle of nowhere. No moon—so it was pitch black outside, and Jeff, in a fox coat, had lowered the lights inside so all I could see was the roaring fireplace and the glass of Bailey’s Irish Cream in his big fist. The handsome black-bearded half Cherokee chugged what was left of his drink, then he reached for my Wrangler belt buckle. *This was crazy. I had done nothing to indicate I wanted sex. How did he even know I was gay?* He was a total stranger; my potential new boss. Yet Soft Cell’s “Tainted Love” played on, perhaps prophetically.

I looked at my waiter application and realized it was quite clear that if I wanted the waiter job I had to also get a blowjob. Well, it wouldn’t be my first. Not like they hurt. As he dropped to his knees and played with my flaccid teen-tool and oversized pubic bush, I stood there in shock, but I dared not resist. I needed the job because I’d just moved into my own apartment. There was no other way to pay my bills besides a work check... from somewhere. I prayed as he blew me that I would fall in love with him, and somehow that would take away the sin and make it all right.

He was a striking well-built man with a rugged manly face: a King of Hearts in the deck of cards. I did not reciprocate oral sex that first night, and I let him kiss me on the mouth even though I just wanted to go home. Over the next couple of weeks, I did fall in love with him. He was masculine and paternal, and sex was okay, even though I was weirded out that 70% of his body below his face was burned, making it pink and lumpy and strangely baby soft. I didn't know what to say or what to do, so I just avoided asking him about it as not to hurt his feelings.

I was very naïve not to realize that his business was a front for drugs. When he took me to The Playboy Club in Lake Geneva to play billiards, he was secretly selling large baggies of marijuana, totally hidden to me. His hushed conversations when I approached his friends at these places did not alert me. I was barely 18 and had never done drugs. In fact, I was decidedly anti-drug, consistent with me being a straight-A teacher's pet momma's boy. Rumor had it rock stars visited the Auctioneer's Inn for more than the two-pound lobster tail. Even though I was making great tips, I warned Jeff that if those rumors were true and if he ever did drugs, I'd break up with him and quit. Jeff assured me that he did not do drugs.

Months later, after my shift one night when all customers had left, in his bedroom on the second story of the saloon structure, I was just about to fuck him doggy style, but too eager slipped head-first off the bed between the mattress and the wall. From that angle I saw more of his fur coats covering maybe 30 huge plastic bags of marijuana beneath the bed. I was furious. I dressed and shouted, "I told you no drugs!" Before he could catch me, I ran down the stairs and went to the cash register and took out the \$60 owed to me from my shift, then I stormed outside, still dressing as it sprinkled rain.

Though he, still naked, tried to prevent me from leaving by smiling and standing in front of my used Javelin, I backed the car and squealed off, reaching almost 80 mph until I knew I was safe and away. Over 30 minutes of fast driving and speeding, the rain became a storm and I

pulled into a Piggly Wiggly grocery store a mile from my new apartment.

After spending my last dime on groceries, my car would not start. I forcibly tried the key in the ignition for 10 minutes. How could this happen? I did not have money to fix a car. And I had no job. I punched the steering wheel with a can of string beans.

As I walked home carrying my three paper bags of groceries, the rain shredded them. I was many blocks from my apartment and had no car and nowhere to put my groceries since the bags had ripped. I took off my waiter shirt, packaged my food in it, and walked shirtless, shivering. *Being an adult was too hard*, I thought. *I will never be able to make it on my own.*

Looking back, and realizing how extensive Jeff's drug dealing was, he must have worried that I was going to report him to the police. That thought had never crossed my mind. I personally did not care if he or other people did drugs; I'd just never known any drug story with a good outcome, so I decided it was not for me and did not want to be around "burn-outs." How strange, though, that I could have been arrested for drug trafficking with him during our entire three-month relationship, when I had no clue what he was doing. Imagine that, if at 18, I had been arrested for drugs, and that undeserved reputation and stigma would have always followed me.

Selfless Mom cut back on her groceries so she could afford to get my car fixed, and I followed her lead for a waiter job across from her favorite bowling alley. As we bowled, and shared a pitcher of beer, I told her about Jeff, and asked who she was dating, wondering if we liked the same type of men. She was not quite ready to compare boyfriend notes with her son. She was dating, however, and I told her I would be again, soon. Not excited for that possibility, she told me if I were a priest I'd find great satisfaction helping others and never have to worry about food, shelter or clothing.

A week later, at The Shack, I met an older preppie guy with a goatee named Neil who asked me to his home immediately. He had the smallest adult penis I had seen, and I didn't really like his personality. We did not phone each other afterward, but that did not mean I never thought about him. Of course I did. I was neurotically preoccupied with sex and men. I didn't know if I would see him again or not, so, to be safe, I bought him an early Christmas gift in October—a cheese board with a wedge of local Wisconsin Muenster cheese. I kept these wrapped for months, and when he did not call, I thought I'd surprise him with the gift on Christmas Eve.

He opened the door quite shocked to see me. I am not sure he even remembered me. Maybe my beginning of a mustache threw him off. It was awkward, and he had friends over. He fidgeted with his bow tie. Nervous, I handed him the present and said, "I got you this."

He was stunned, and quickly mumbled, "I have something for you, too," and grabbed a small box with a tree ornament that I think someone had given him.

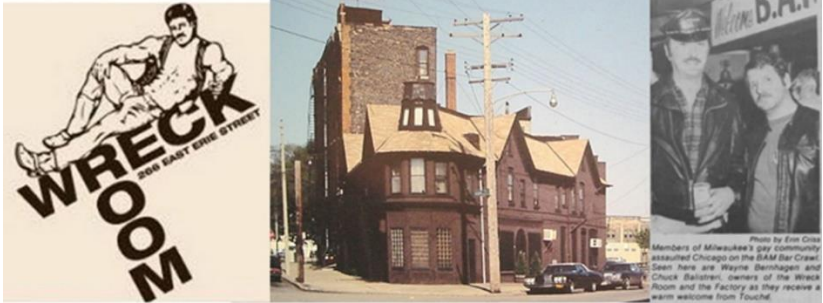
"Oh wow. Thanks," I said, and tripped, stepping away.

He opened his gift. It reeked horribly, as unrefrigerated cheese would do after several months in wrapping paper. I learned that dairy needed to be refrigerated. I felt so stupid surprising him with a present, and one that stunk up his home, and putting him on the spot to give me something. I'd just always felt I SHOULD give presents. Mom always did. To everyone. But to me it felt forced and fake and brought expectations which made everyone tense and fake.

COWBOY GARY AT THE LEATHER BAR

Louie and I wanted to explore the few gay bars in Milwaukee. Singing

we had nothing to be guilty of, to Streisand's "Guilty" CD, we drove through the snow to the indiscreet Your Place tavern, a rather quiet, small joint, with a back garden of trees in white Christmas lights. There we learned about a leather bar called the Wreck Room and hoped the clientele would be more exciting.



After our drinks, we drove to the building with some painted black interior and few brick walls. It wasn't a terribly busy night, and as we passed a few men in cowboy hats and leather pants, and an old man in butt-less chaps, we approached a tall muscular blond bartender, 30, in a cowboy hat. He was shirtless except for a leather vest way too small for his bulging hairy chest, and he smiled when I said hello. When I asked for a gin and coke he asked for my ID. Louie showed him his, and I explained that I really was 18 but had forgotten my wallet. The bartender' blue eyes sparkled but he said I would have to leave. I called him an asshole. The towering muscle-god looked a bit taken aback, like I was a small deer bucking against his three-foot antlers, and he pointed me toward the door.

The next night I came back without Louie and slapped my ID on the Wreck Room bar. The same bartender laughed, checked it out, and poured me a gin and coke. I was glued to his muscles as he took my cash and rang up the sale, then gave me my change. It was a busy night, and my eyes did not leave him as he gregariously served dozens of older guys, but none were the Tom of Finland wet dream that he was.



Ten minutes later he asked, “You want a refill?”

I said, “What I want is to take you to Big Boy on Friday for Lake Perch. My treat.”

He smiled, amused, and when he returned with my drink, said his name was Gary and he liked my confidence. I said my name was TJ. He touched my teenage mustache and said yes, he’d like to go to dinner. I had three more drinks, flirting with him but growing jealous at the other guys trying to do the same. Eventually I shook his hand then left.

Driving home through a snowstorm on the I-94 highway, singing loudly to Kenny Rogers, “Coward Of The County,” I realized, too late, that I was drunk and should not be behind the wheel. A Kool cigarette truck ahead had stopped, and I floored the brakes. My car spun out of control over inches of fresh snow. Situations like these often kill the driver or others but luckily no one was hurt. My car was not even damaged as I hadn’t hit anything, and few cars were around, so I could make a clean start and drive on, this time going much slower.

On Friday I took Gary to Big Boy. He was already a role model to me; I

was wearing a brand-new cowboy hat inspired by his. He looked 100% German but was part Native American, like Jeff. Gary was very affable, —a perfect gentleman—someone Mom would approve of.



To be sure, I asked her to come to the Wreck Room when he was working so she could meet him.

It had been awhile since I'd come out to her, and I didn't know if she'd cry that I was dating a shirtless guy in a leather bar. She may not have wanted to meet her son's boyfriend in a bar with barbed wire walls

and Tom of Finland posters, but in her petite furry-collared winter coat she mustered the courage and was her typical polite and sincere self. Stirring her gin and tonic while chain-smoking Pall Malls, she asked Gary many questions, like why were the men wearing different colored handkerchiefs in their pockets? He chuckled and explained the colors pertained to their sexual appetite. When she pressed for more info, he explained.

Color	Meaning
Black	S&M
Blue (Dark)	Anal sex
Blue (Light)	Oral sex
Brown	Scat
Green	Hustler/Prostitution
Grey	Bondage
Orange	Anything, anywhere, anytime (but not necessarily anyone)
Purple	Into piercing
Red	Fisting
Pink	Dildo/Anal toys
White	Masturbation
Yellow	Watersports

Mom and I both needed more explained, like what was fisting?? After he told us some men put their hands and forearms in other men's butts, she and I both were horrified. To appease her worry I told her I was only light blue, and apparently boring—and did not share I was yellow curious (watersports).

Mom put out her cigarette and told Gary to turn around, so she could check his hankie. He wasn't wearing one.

She said people at the police station where she worked told her to beware of bears in the Wreck Room, and she looked around puzzled. Gary chuckled and coyly pointed to men and explained which were considered bears, polar bears, pandas, chubs and otters. Mom then turned to me and straightened my oversized collar on my tie-dyed silk shirt and asked what I was. He said a twink or chicken. A very cute one.

Gary owned a ranch house on Big Cedar Lake an hour north of Milwaukee. He had just purchased a white motor boat, and as he drove me around the lake, I put nightcrawlers on our fishing poles, feeling guilty for stabbing the worms who had done nothing to deserve it. Gary stopped the boat in a weedy cove and waved to some

shirtless guy at a pier. The young stranger had a much better body than me, and I was jealous. I asked who it was, and Gary chuckled, as he always did, said it was just some neighbor family that he knew.

We dated off and on for several years. Friends called us Dick and Liz because we always broke up at my temper tantrums every couple of weeks for the littlest things. One time I found poppers by his bed after I made it clear I wanted nothing to do with drugs or poppers, so I ended our relationship—until he profusely apologized and said he'd throw all the poppers away. Looking back, I would never act so jealous and immaturely today, but hey, I was 19, and had no relationship experience. My parents divorced when I was twelve, and it's not like there were any gay relationship models on TV shows to emulate.

Reflecting on our photo, my confidence must have been sexy to Gary - because my body certainly was not, in my opinion. I was never attracted to young skinny guys. He had a phenomenal smile and a fantasy body any which way you looked at it. And I looked at it every way possible.

How did I go from a shy high school nerd to having a hot man boyfriend like out of a Tom of Finland book? I was a jealous, bossy, high maintenance chicken. *Anybody looking at us would see Gary was the more manly.* Believing masculine men were tops not bottoms, I refused to let him fuck me just like he refused to let me fuck him. However, he did fuck me one time, and told his Wreck Room boss, so I broke up with him because I was so embarrassed he told. Weeks later I'd forgive him when I heard Sheena Easton's "For Your Eyes Only."

Gary and I never lived together. I had three different apartments during my two years in Milwaukee. One was an enormous loft apartment at Swiss Chalet with 30-foot ceilings in a refurbished furniture factory. The Tuesdays Café on the main floor hired me to wait tables in the day.



Gorgeous Bobby-Jo with Scott Evans, a friend I'd soon meet.

A co-worker was busty blond Bobby-Jo, with a model heart-shaped face. In her twenties, the beauty had a little padding in her stomach in an area where occasionally she was asked if she was pregnant. She

was not, but certainly was sexually active, and had the best sense of humor, and hung with us gay guys. I'll never forget how she and I would seat customers at each other's tables then say something like, "What do you get when you cross a frog with a firetruck?" If she said this, I'd walk almost giggling to my new customer, fully expecting a person who resembled a frog to be wearing a red sweatshirt. Those poor customers never heard us joke, and probably just thought they lucked out with an overly smiley, laughing service person.

Gary got me a night job bartending at Your Place that was owned by his Wreck Room bosses. He and I were two popular bartenders for different crowds in different bars. He had leather guys and gawkers. Even though I spent \$120 to get a pair of 28-inch waist leather pants, at Your Place I served drinks to older men looking for chat and a quiet cocktail hour. It was so exciting to be openly gay and have such attention and validation and make my living by serving drinks. Music was mostly old ballads like "Love Is in The Air" or Johnny Mathis's "Chances Are," until the small dance floor was lit, and I threaded up the disco reel with "Gloria," "I Will Survive" and "It's Raining Men."



Your Place bar. Local gay mag, fellow bartender Kevin.

Apparently my newfound freedom and confidence behind the bar was interpreted as arrogant. One of my regular customers had a Middle Eastern accent and told me that I needed to learn humility. I did not feel I was cocky, but maybe I was, but I knew I wasn't THAT attractive—certainly not the best-looking man in town, or even in that room. That honor would go to Mr. Gay Wisconsin, and I never wanted anything more in my life than to hold that title. But no way was I even a Mr.; I was just a chicken. My high school days were painfully closeted, so I had come a long way, but I was not big or muscular enough to be Mr. Gay Wisconsin.

However one of my nerdy customers took the title of Mr. Gay Wisconsin the next year! Terry P. totally transformed himself, replacing his glasses with contacts and pumping massive iron to transform his body into a super hero. When the hunky Terry, now Mr. Gay Wisconsin, was being celebrated by everyone who knew him and sat on Gary's lap, I slammed down the jar of olives from behind the bar and marched over, yelling, "Get. The. Fuck. Off. Of. Gary!"

I yanked Terry off Gary, and everyone looked stunned at my temper, since Terry was only goofing; he and Gary were just friends.

My jealousy was dangerous then. I was secretly pissed and humiliated

that I could not attain the dream of being Mr. Gay Wisconsin, but my insecurity held an even greater goal. Soon, when I'd saved \$5,000 of tips and was 21, I would go to Hollywood and become a movie-star. Then Terry and all my customers would see what a star I was.

This secret I only shared with Gary and a new customer named Scott, who was my age.

Scott, short black hair, 5' 11", thin, cracked me up like nobody else, and when we hung out, it was relatively harmless. He loved to play Doris Day and Dean Martin records, but had a wild side, too. We both were curious what a glory hole was, so one night we went to an adult bookstore and squeezed into a little movie booth. We giggled as we put a quarter in the dirty movie machine and grainy porn played of a man rimming another, and then a real penis came through the hole in the wall. Holding our mouths to stop from laughing, Scott reached for his cigarette lighter and flicked it at the underside of the penis. The man screamed, and we ran the hell out of there before he could zip up, catch us and beat us up.



Another time we sat in the back of a theater that played porn on a large screen, chuckling as we filled water guns with white hand lotion then squirted what appeared to be sperm at people.

On one of my break-ups with Gary, I pursued the man who lived in the apartment above the Wreck Room, a man named Bill, who looked

exactly like he could be my father. We were the same height, same coloring, but he was 25 years older and stockier like I wanted to be. My paternal cravings took over and my eyes followed his every move, lusting after him. He was as masculine as Gary and his place was rugged with just a metal cage bed, butcher block table and a fridge. The rest was empty rooms with cement floors filled with hanging plants. Very exotic. We had sex a couple times over a few months, and he told me he liked me as much as his other boyfriend, Del. This did not please or upset me; I knew it was only a sex thing and not a relationship.

My Milwaukee years were active; bartending, waiting tables, watching Doris Day and Rock Hudson movies with Scott, or dating Gary—but I also had lonely nights. Seems as long as I can remember, I was always in a hurry, and when I did not have a man in my bed, I felt I should.

Like it was yesterday, I can remember making the rounds looking for love at bar close; walking into the large Factory, or Park Place on gay Sunday nights. As Donna Summer's "Last Dance, Last Chance for Romance" blared, I ordered a drink from the bartender, and shyly peeked at the four or five seated customers to check if they were my true love. Disappointed, I sipped my drink and strolled past them, hating the loud music, peeking in every room and corner to see if a fairy tale prince was hiding. Never stopping my cruise, by the time I checked out all the customers, my drink was empty, and I'd walk out, lonely, defeated, embarrassed, and cursing under my breath.

* 4: **2016, HOARDER MARY**

2016 - MARY

As I recalled my lonely Milwaukee nights from decades ago with my Lake Arrowhead neighbor, Mary, the hoarder, she shared some of her dating history with me. "In Hawaii, I dated a bit," she said, "Fifty years ago, when my daughters were kids. I worked on a cruise boat, and many men followed me around."

The pretty old woman combed her long white hair as she shivered in my faux leather chair in my rented mountain home. Her wet jacket was hanging by my heater, drying. I convinced her to have lunch and leave the rain which was invading her secret hideaway under her front steps.

Pouring almond milk in her coffee, I said, "You have to get in your house and out of the rain."

"The house is probably leaking, too," she said, concerned. "Maybe mold."

"But wouldn't it be better to live INSIDE it? It can't be leaking worse than your drop cloths?"

"I can't get in," she frowned. "I have to use the window."

"Why can't you use the door?"

She looked at me as if the answer was obvious: "There are too many boxes by it. I can't get in the door."

"Let's move the boxes out of the door to your storage facility."

"Well, I don't think any of it will fit in my storage."

“Your storage is packed, too?”

“Yes.”

“But wouldn’t you rather throw some boxes away, so you can at least get in your house and sleep in a small, dry, warm area?”

“I have such beautiful things...a lifetime of collecting. I can’t just throw them away. I could GIVE some away if someone needed anything. Do you need anything?”



“No. Can we empty stuff out your window and you could keep more in your yard?”

“Oh no, the neighborhood fines me for the way it looks now. There’s that man that gets drunk every couple months and hollers at me for making the neighborhood ugly.”

“Can we move stuff out your window, so you can sleep inside?”

“We’d need to get rid of the old refrigerator up there, but then how would we get it off the high deck?”

“We could do it with help. What about the neighbor lady, Patricia?”

“Oh no. She’s mad at me.”

“Why is she mad?”

“I gave her my first batch of grapes. She said they were sour!”

“Pat is mad at you for sour grapes?”

“If she gave them to me, I would have eaten them. She THREW THEM AWAY!”

“Because she did not like them, not because she does not like you, right?”

Mary shrugged, bothered. I couldn't tell her I'd hid most of the sour grapes she'd given me in a sweet fruit smoothie.

I mumbled, “I think we run into problems when we have expectations from others. Like when I was walking around the Milwaukee gay bars expecting to meet Prince Charming. Those expectations did not serve me. And you gave grapes to Patricia expecting to get a thank you. I just don't think you can expect anything from people. I just don't think it serves either party. Like your daughters and your car.”

“I didn't demand that they buy me a new car, but they have plenty of money. I was 15 when I had my oldest daughter, and the other at 16. They saw how much I sacrificed to raise them. I didn't plan on driving into my friend's garage door and totaling my vehicle. My shoe got stuck.”

“Right, but...”

“My Social Security barely covers my pain pills and groceries. How was I going to buy a used car?”

“My point is that all people seem to expect things but maybe we should not. If a relative gave me a toy as a kid, I was expected to smile and say, ‘thank you.’ But what if I did not like it? Mom said honesty was the most important thing. If I honestly would rather not have received it, wasn't a thank you a lie? Was my honest reaction, ‘This is awkward now,’ a good thing or a bad thing or a right thing or a wrong thing?”

“Depends.”

“It was almost impossible to stay honest in Hollywood. Friends asking me to be honest about their behavior or appearance but not really wanting me to be honest; America's facade as a two-party democracy

run by the people but elected Repubs and Dems are both taking bribes from corporations who are really running the country; politicians holding and kissing babies for the cameras, TV shows with hidden agendas, women hidden by make-up and wigs, closeted men hiding their attraction to other men, waiters forcing a smile when you want dairy-free substitutes, touchy-feely talk show hosts pretending to love celebrities who they've never met before. Auditioning and pretending you remember the casting person. So much fake stuff. So much expectation, right? Who does it serve though, in the end? Mary, I hate pretense. I hate traditions, and people doing what they are supposed to but not what they want to."

"Oh, I do, too!" she laughed. "The husband of my oldest daughter wrote me the most despicable letter, saying they won't visit me because of my house condition, but they drove to Vegas, which is only a few hours away. They could have stopped here."

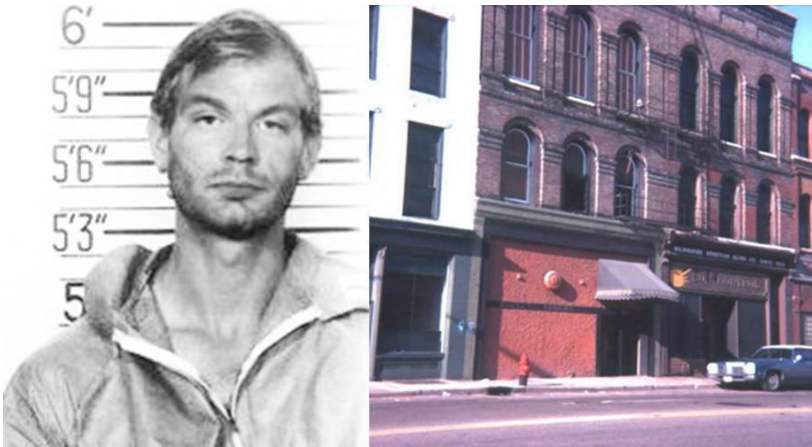
"I don't think we can expect people to do what we want."

I looked around her yard, piled with things. If I were her daughter in another state, I also would not want to visit her house. It was a hoarder house, a hoarder yard. I, too, would have preferred Vegas. I loved Vegas; slot machines brimming with potential. No limits, right?

* 5: **GETTING TO HOLLYWOOD: 1982**

SEXUAL DEVIANCE AT CLUB 219

Back when I was 20 and feeling lonely, another bar opened in Milwaukee called Club 219. They hired me to bartend upstairs at the wide dance floor where my little ass could be seen in ripped jeans from the lower bar. There was also a small basement dungeon bar for the leather crowd and Gary worked it. He and I became a couple again, and one night he told me a psychic voice said there was a serial killer in his presence. Creeped out, he stalked the entire bar, making sure I was all right. Then he went back to the basement with his only customer, Jeffrey, a handsome blond bearded man.



Years later Gary would see on the news that his regular customer was Jeffrey Dahmer, the serial killer who lured 17 young twinks to his nearby apartment where he killed, cooked and ate them. Perhaps I had been protected by an unseen force because Dahmer was exactly my type and I certainly would have gone home with him if he'd asked me to dinner at his place, not realizing, of course, that I would be dinner. There's no doubt he came to my bar and I served him, and we

cruised each other.

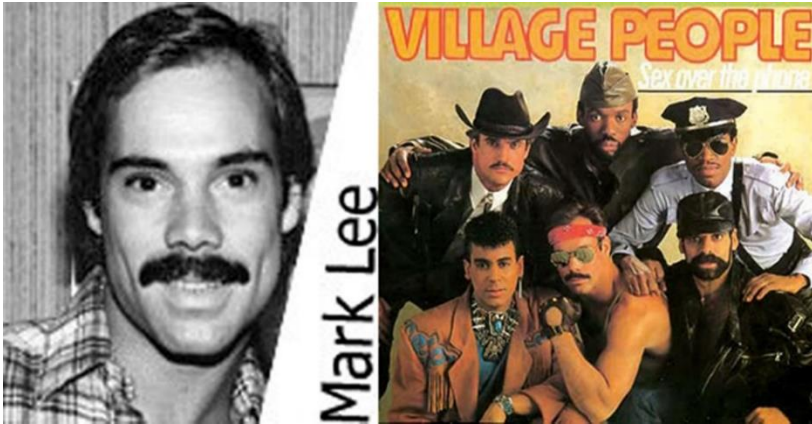
This sex memoir was originally initiated because of the discussion of sexual assault. For that reason, I'll include this next event about the owner of Club 219. He was named Cleveland, an Italian guy with a big wide nose, maybe 45, maybe my height, 5' 9", who had been married to a woman but divorced her. His lover was Del, who went back and forth with Bill as often as I broke up with Gary. When I was once again broken up with Gary, Cleveland kept giving me shots of Peppermint Schnapps. I went to pee, and he followed me into the bathroom and seduced me by the urinal. I was so drunk I do not remember if he blew me or if we jacked off or what. I do know I was never attracted to him and he knew that, so this boss definitely took advantage of me and planned it. Still, if I told my mom this, she'd say I allowed it and was accountable, so I just place it here for discussion.

I was so drunk that I could not drive and vomited on the bus ride home.

Gary and I remained very close and he wished me the best as I, at 21, excitedly took my \$5,000 bar tips savings with plans to head to Hollywood. Louie had moved to Key West and loved it and said to make sure my destiny was Hollywood, I had to experience Key West first to rule it out.

KEY WEST

Louie lived in a flat trailer park and his shifty eyes floated above his enormous grin as he whispered about the sexy straight guy in the neighboring trailer whom he blew on occasion on his ripped couch. That drama, and the bars with drag queens lip-synching to Dionne Warwick's "Heartbreaker" were not enough to keep my interest in Key West in 1983, but I did get to have sex with a rock star.



Mark Lee, of the Village People band, caught my eye at a noisy large disco. I could see why years ago he'd caught the eye of French music producer Jacques Morali who hired him as the mustached construction worker. (Morali placed ads in music trade magazines which read "Macho Types Wanted: Must Dance And Have A Mustache." The ads stated no voice talent was needed since they would not be singing on the record. But Mark had a great voice.)

Mark Lee was breathtaking and hypnotized infinite men with his "Y.M.C.A.," "In the Navy" and "Macho Man" stage action. Since he was not at the moment performing, but cruising, I zeroed in on him like a shark, and after buying him a drink, we went back to his hotel. All I remember is how absolutely stunning and macho he was as he stood on the hotel bed naked, asking me what I wanted to do. I was naked as well, laying on my back, staring up at his hairy thighs, balls, salami, abs and hairy chest and strong man-arms and mustached movie star face and I was tongue-tied.

Flashback to a science class in junior high school when sexy mustached Mr. Sorenson called on me to answer how the body eliminated fluids. I knew the answer was urine, but I was way too sheltered and uptight and nerdy and self-conscious to say a naughty word like that in public. I blushed and shrugged my shoulders when I wish I would have said, "When your big hairy cock pees on my face, teach."

Lying under the perfect-looking Mark Lee, when he asked me repeatedly, “What are you into??” I wanted to say, “Dude. Don’t you get it? You’re as beautiful as a Chippendale dancer! I want to do anything! But stand like that for a whole hour please because there’s nothing more beautiful on Earth...” Instead I turned into a little girl and shrugged. He kept asking me what I was into, but being raised to think sex was bad, I couldn’t emit a sound. How I hated myself. I could certainly boss Gary or Jeff around, but I just lay there looking up at the legs of a Village Person, afraid to speak and afraid to move, and afraid to disappoint him, which I am guessing I did, because I certainly did not offer much.

CALIFORNIA

Mom arranged for my dad’s aunt and uncle to pick me up from the Ontario airport in California. They greeted me in my cowboy hat and took my bags and extended an invitation to stay with them as long as needed in their double-wide mobile home in a lushly landscaped motor park in Orange County. I had not seen them since I was 11 when our family took the Starcraft camper to meet all our Polish relatives in the west. Petite blonde Aunt Emily was one of my favorite aunts and so nurturing, always making sure we had plenty of strawberry jam for our warm homemade biscuits. She had not changed, and sexy Uncle Joe was still a tough macho guy with long white bangs.

Uncle Joe seemed exasperated the next week when I bought a used Chevette with half my money, \$2,500, because I had never driven a clutch and he had to teach me.



Between jerky lessons on the clutch with sexy macho Uncle Joe, I sat with Aunt Emily as she watched her soap operas. She couldn't believe how beautiful Susan Lucci was and seemed confused why I was not as spellbound. I was, however, for the first time intrigued with the idea of being on a soap opera, but my goal was motion pictures. I wanted to be 50's movie-star Montgomery Clift. Within two weeks I was comfortable driving the car and left them money for food and a thank you note, then ventured toward Hollywood, first secretly stopping in Newport Beach to see my dad's gay uncle, figuring he may have advice and know where to go.

GAY UNCLE

Dad's Uncle Wally wasn't the handsome uncle I remembered from our camper trip to California ten years prior. He was shorter, and his brown greasy hair gripped his ears, obviously a drinker from his red

cheeks and nose. Walking me around his neighborhood, his bright blue eyes danced as he pointed out cruisy parks, but I had no interest in trying to pick up men in parks. I told him my only goal was to be a movie star and I regretted that I did not come to Hollywood before I was 21, thinking I'd already missed my opportunity.

He was shocked and said most men do not reach success until they are 40 or even 50. He mapped out exactly what highways to take to Hollywood, informing me that West Hollywood and Silver Lake had a lot of gays. After he made us pasta and Caesar salads at his place and we talked about the relatives, he offered me his couch to sleep.

We met eyes, and he said, "If you prefer, you can sleep in my bed with me."

As much as I had fantasized having sex with every one of my male relatives, it just didn't feel right to do so at that time. Not like I was actually attracted to him. I mean, he was not a stunner like Mark Lee or Gary or TV's new heartthrob *Matt Houston* played by Lee Horsely, so I just said, "Naw. The couch is great, thanks."

That was the only time we ever spent together. He died years later, and I never went back to visit him or Emily or Joe. My focus was Hollywood.

* 6: **SCARY INTRODUCTION TO HOLLYWOOD**

WEST HOLLYWOOD

My Chevette putting on Robertson Blvd, I asked the driver in the lavender Pacer next to me where was West Hollywood. He pointed right with his glitter glasses, so I took a right and jerkily drove my clutch car until I eventually saw a bar with an Eagle sign. There were many gay bars in the USA called Eagle, and my gaydar found this to be one.

It was afternoon and the handsome dark-haired bartender had no other customers. I bought a brandy and coke and told him I was there to be a movie star, tipped my hat and said I needed a place to live. Lucky for me, his friend was renting out a guesthouse in Silver Lake for \$250 a month. Apparently Silver Lake was a large residential community surrounding a small reservoir with hipster hangouts and great restaurants, half an hour east of West Hollywood. He confirmed as my uncle stated that it was a very gay area.

The youngish gay landlord approved me and rented me the one-room place with bathroom and kitchenette.

I was hired a couple of weeks later at the nearby New York Bar And Eats, a large gay club that I was reticent to apply at, afraid for casting people to peg me as gay. Even though I had several years bartending experience, the NYB&E refused to employ me as a bartender because I looked too young, even in my cowboy hat. I took the position bussing tables with the understanding that they would eventually make me a bartender. True—I was nowhere as macho sexy as the bartenders they had; the hairy French one with a *Colt* model body I slept with the first week.

He wanted to see me again, but I did not want to get tied down. One

night I adventured half hour west to West Hollywood to check out the many bars stacked along Santa Monica Boulevard...

THE PHOTOGRAPHER SEXUALLY ASSAULTED ME

The Revolver was a dark West Hollywood hotspot with a high TV screen over the bar playing campy movies or MTV videos, and I could sit on a bleacher in the far corner and check out men. A medium height Asian man, about 28, was cruising me, but I was not interested and instead looked into my beer. He smiled and looked me up and down. I smiled but again looked away, politely making it clear that I was not attracted.

Later he introduced himself to me and said he figured by my cowboy hat that I was new in town. I explained that I had come from Wisconsin to be a movie-star. Lucky for me, he said, because he was a photographer that did head shots. He went by one name starting with an L. I said I had head shots already and showed him wallet-size pics that a Your Place patron took, thinking these would be the ticket I needed to be a movie-star.



He explained casting directors would not find those very professional

and suggested I come to his place to look at his portfolio and see what working actors used as head shots.

Driving my car, jerkily, behind his toward the San Fernando Valley, I was thanking Jesus for my good luck. After parking where directed, I followed L. through a long boxy apartment complex. Opening his apartment door for me, we were met by several cats. Being allergic, I immediately began to sniffle. A few minutes later, as I paged through his very impressive B&W portfolio of attractive young wannabes, my asthma kicked in and he offered me allergy pills and a glass of water. After taking the pills, my vision got foggy. My body felt weak and my motor skills left me. He caught the portfolio from my lap before it fell to the floor.

Blackness was all I saw for a few minutes and then I got quick fuzzy images of his hands by my pants. Blackness again—until I saw a few seconds of his fingers lowering my pants and underwear. My head fell back and sometime later, no idea how long, I saw him performing fellatio on me for a second, but I quickly passed out again.

I have no idea what else he did to me that night. *Did he fuck me?* I had no idea. *Did he photograph me naked?* I had no idea.

When I awoke about six hours later, everything was fuzzy, and I had little strength. I was lying in his bed without pants and underwear. I did not get angry at him and scold him or fight him, not that I had the strength anyway, because I could not see how that would serve me. I just said I needed to go, and tried to dress, unsuccessfully, as my arms and legs were not doing what my brain told them to. He ordered me not to go, but I insisted, and somehow I got on my pants, shoes and cowboy hat, and stumbled to the door, only falling once. Again he told me not to go, that I'd had too much to drink, but later I would realize he had snuck me some kind of drugs, maybe Quaaludes?

I do not recall how I found or got into my car. The next memory I have is being on a busy street almost to my Silver Lake apartment. It must

have been morning rush hour because there was a lot of traffic. Unfortunately, my foot did not have the strength to stay on the brake at a stoplight. Even with all my might the foot still did not stay where I wanted it to and it lifted off as if it was helium, causing my vehicle to hit the car in front of me.

With my hands I forced my knee to push my foot on the brake as the driver jumped out of his car. I apologized. He glared at me then he checked his back bumper. It was okay, so he got back into his car.

Luckily he drove ahead just as I lost strength again, my foot gave way and my car followed his by inches. But ahead there was another stoplight. I do not know if it was the same car or another, because again my feet were numb and could not keep the brake pedal down so my Chevette hit the car in front of me. Again, the driver looked pissed, and I apologized. That is all I recall.

This story that I shared on FB in 2016 was the reason I started writing this book—because people wanted to hear the concealed stories of men in Hollywood being sexually assaulted. Certainly, at 21 I was drugged and sexually assaulted by a photographer. Maybe I was even raped. I didn't know. But I preferred to think of it as a one-night stand gone wrong. Even though I was not attracted to the photographer, in my history I had gone home with guys I was attracted to and then realized during sex that I was not. Instead of getting creeped out or angry, I just tried to erase it from my mind. This assault was similar to Jeff from The Auctioneers Inn seducing me as I applied for a job, or Club 219 owner getting me drunk and forcing himself on me at the urinal. By now I had a pattern of ignoring sexual assaults, and so I did again.

I instead focused on the positive: I was in Hollywood and needed head shots and L. the photographer said he would photograph me for free. So, I called him later in the day. He was shocked to hear my voice, and sounded guilty - and was surprised to hear me ask when I would get free head shots. Later that week he photographed me. I just made

sure not to take any pills from him or drink anything that he gave me. They were actually very good headshots. As good as any of James Dean or Marlon Brando, I mused, and when Scott from Milwaukee visited me briefly we snuck my new 8x10's with the name Thom Bierdz into Hollywood memorabilia shops and hid one behind a Marilyn Monroe pic and one behind Montgomery Clift. My excessive drive to succeed demanded my presence be visible among my idols on Hollywood Boulevard, and it did not matter to me that fans of the greats would finger past me wondering who the heck I was. Scott and I thought we were hysterical. Not like we were shoplifting; we were doing the opposite: Providing free merchandise, as invaluable as it was.

FB commenters wanted to know if I called the police on L.. That never occurred to me; that he could be a serial assaulter or rapist. The thought that dozens or hundreds of innocent men could fall victim to him never even entered my mind until 2016. When people said I should confront him 30+ years later like the Bill Cosby accusers, I refused. I had no idea who this man had become. I myself had done stuff that was embarrassing 30 years ago that would be unfair to bring attention to now because I was a completely different man. However, if I found out new allegations had been made about this photographer and he had not changed, I would step forward now and give my testimony from this event in 1983.

Many of my FB friends shared their stories of sexual abuse and I compiled dozens of their gripping events into a book that stands on its own. I chose to include only one of their stories in this particular book because it shows how deep and dangerous it can be for a newcomer in show-business. The next gripping pages are NOT my experiences, but alleged events from an anonymous man we'll call Mark. I have every reason to believe he is telling the truth, but I do not have proof, and must emphasize for legal purposes that his pages are alleged, not proven. I have deleted most the names or reduced them to an initial.

EXPOSING THE SECRETS OF THE HIGHEST PROFILE MEN – BY MARK

While skipping high school to go surfing a photographer approached me on the beach. "Want some easy cash? I know an agent who'll get you some jobs modeling swim suits."

Zippering toward Miami on my motorbike I was wild, horny and cocky. With life in the fast lane blasting on the radio, I was ready to jump on the casting couch. In 1978, most of my classmates joked about raging gay parties. Speed boats full of drugs. By that night, I had a photographer slipping me in the backdoor of club vice. Minutes later I was being pushed into a corner. My drink laced with LSD shattered as I went through the looking glass.

Mostly the modeling work was underage soft-core porn getting shipped off to Copenhagen. At first, it was exciting being admired and desired. I'm not sure if it was true, but my agent insisted I had real talent. He paid for my acting classes then convinced me to think of sex acts as an experimental way of improving my acting skills. Madness in the method acting of playing a hustler. Pretending I was preparing for a role in a Midnight Cowboy remake or Midnight Express prison film. I tricked my mind as I slowly stripped bare to turn actual tricks for the chance of getting featured on TV.

In 1980, I flew from small movie roles in Florida to landing in Hollywood. My agent told me, "Mark, give blowjobs to both casting directors" of a [deleted] soap opera [not Y&R]. They were both notorious for lusting after young boys. Since the [deleted] storyline was generating huge ratings I was thrilled to do anything I could do to get on the show.

Certainly I, Mark, was not the only 17-year-old who was seduced by the rewards of getting a contract with [a major network]. Beyond the

screen test I knew I had to compete in the sexual favors department. Back in bed with my agent he told me to carefully seduce a network casting director while playing innocent. Quickly, I learned the [sci-fi primetime show] casting director needed to feel in control of boys by giving them spankings.

One night in his apartment full of nude boys mixed with men in Roman togas, the director explained the philosophy of being a NAMBLA member. I was careful to keep closely shaved. Smooth butt. Anything to try to appear forever young. Appeasing. Appealing to the demands of commercial society that tells us we must sell ourselves.

On the sound stage a few crew members and the costume designers often wanted to suck my dick. It got awkward and annoying, but man was I afraid of falling out of favor with anyone. Outside the studio gate there was always a line of new arrivals. Piles of pictures and resumes that constantly reminded me I was paid to play in more than one way.

D[deleted], who was an actress on [a soap opera, not Y&R] took me to a party at P. Pictures where I met the president of production, Don[deleted]. Don was constantly on coke lusting after strip dancers. He didn't like guys, but he'd get drunk and whip out his dick to pee on me while working on the script for [deleted].

That success shot us all into the box-office stratosphere. The leading man was not yet a closely-guarded superstar, so everyone really had fun on location in San Diego. Especially with all the young soldiers at the El Toro Marine base. The film production trailers were rocking with orgies. Lesbians, drag-women and cock fights imported from Tijuana. Everyone was losing it. I was a really good sport about everything, including dealing with the director's gambling debts and overdosed hookers. So much money poured in from that movie that we were constantly running loads of cash to Elizabeth[deleted]'s empty house in Puerto Vallarta.

I met Rock [deleted] at D[deleted]'s Malibu mansion parties which

were packed with the most handsome young men. Star-studded events with more cocaine than sand on the beach. And always the desire to pump up the volume on the kinky stuff. Keep the executives entertained with daring surprises. A survival of the fittest in the sexual stamina stampede.... Then total secrecy. Acting like none of it happened the day after. In those days, the Hollywood Gay Mafia was very undercover. Membership came with the threat of murder.

Men who dared to blackmail a box office superstar disappeared in the desert. When they went to collect a suitcase of cash in Vegas, they were drugged. Their bodies were found days later in a broiling hot, broken-down car in Rancho Mirage. Eventually one of the desert murders that was connected to a [soap opera, not Y&R] player made the news.

The original Gay Mafia term "don't ask don't tell" was deadly serious. The 'boys' cleaned up the mess with [deleted]'s dead transvestite. Dealt with T[deleted]'s cover ups. Eventually, the rise of Scien[deleted] as Hollywood crime scene handlers eclipsed the network of actors and executive assistants who were connected to the Gay Mafia.

By early 1986, I knew a silent pandemic was spreading. Some horrible virus from the bathhouses in San Francisco. Yet of course, we were supposed to keep all the sexually transmitted diseases a top secret inside the studio. So many players were sex addicts, constantly demanding all manner of sexual hits. Bloody fist fucking. Nipple clamps. Penis piercings. Risky business games. I was getting really frightened.

Barfing up sperm and bile I collapsed in a dressing room closet. I was only 24 but I knew I could no longer go on with the show. The material world tells us we must sacrifice for success. But in truth, it's not to die for. It's not. I went to the Betty Ford clinic to detox then continued to assist [deleted] when he became the president of [deleted]...

My father was a congressman, so I helped with planning the formation

of Homeland Security in 2002. Today, I continue to work as a CIA and NSA contractor formulating Argo programs, tracking the Dark Web and our DARPA development of ultra wave direct-to-mind audio signals. The public can already experience mind wave programing in grocery stores where you can stand on a blue spot to hear advertising focused entirely inside your head! Imagine how this new technology will transform us far beyond WiFi connectivity.

Hollywood might seem glamorous but most of the stars and power players are not very happy. They live with lots of competition and stress. Similar to the way the AIDS epidemic exploded after first being ignored, our most sophisticated computers calculate that new biological disasters are brewing. Like sands through the hour glass....so are the days of our lives.

----- OFFERED BY ANONYMOUS / MARK

THE ABOVE WAS FROM A FB FRIEND. NOW BACK TO MY OWN HISTORY:

While it's true that I could have been killed if I went home with Jeffrey Dahmer who frequented the Milwaukee bar where I worked, and I could have been killed by L. the photographer that drugged me, I continued to take chances by going home with strange men—and not just for sex.

When I was 21, I was grocery shopping at Ralphs in Hollywood and a short mature white-haired man, maybe 55, kind of effeminate, approached me. He said my cowboy hat made it appear as if I was new in town, and he asked if he could be of any help. I said I came from Wisconsin to Hollywood to be a movie star and asked him where the protein powder was. As I followed him, he gave me his business card and said he'd like me to come to dinner that night; he and his family

may be able to help me out.

I drove to a large Tudor house in the Hollywood Hills. When he opened the tall doors, I was in awe of the estate and view of the endless city lights below. He said his husband (not legally of course) was a doctor, and introduced me to a more masculine, handsomer taller white-haired mature man with stubble, a very sexy doctor indeed. During the comfortable dinner, I also met a very studly school teacher, maybe 35, with brown hair and mustache, like a slightly shorter Tom Selleck. He was rubbing the back of a tall, hunky, muscular, young blond man, maybe 25, who seemed to have been plucked off a Midwest farm. As crazy as it sounds, these four men were all in a sexual relationship together and showed me where they slept—a room connected by two king size mattresses. The effeminate man said there was room for me.

I walked away to the kitchen and helped myself to the vodka, refilling my martini, and theirs. Digesting his proposition, and countless olives, I was otherwise frozen as he explained I could move in with them and be part of their “family.” Eventually, my eyes locked with those of the doctor, and the teacher, and the blond god.

As I pictured the blond naked, I imagined me holding him from behind, maybe fucking his huge muscles. The Tom Selleck teacher could be tea-bagging my face and maybe the doc could be peeing on all of us. About 30 of these fantasy scenarios raced through my brain, but the one who kept commanding my sight was standing in front of me, batting his eyes like Loni Anderson. He had no sex appeal to me, no more than my Aunt Emily or my grandmothers.

That new orgy family may have been a fantasy worth considering, except that I was not attracted to the one man, and I have never had a romantic or sexual relationship with someone that I was not attracted to, unless of course I was being assaulted.

Maybe I stayed another two hours studying the bodies of these masculine gods hoping the effeminate one would have a spleen

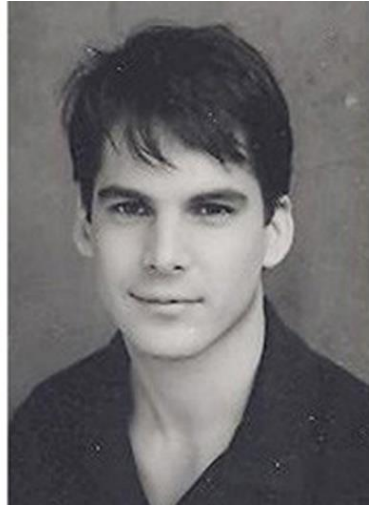
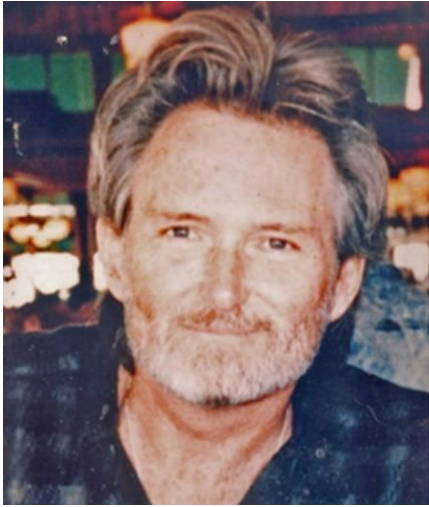
collapse and fall off the mountain to a painless coma, I do not know, but I eventually thanked them for the offer and politely declined.

I have never forgotten that unique household and mused how great it could have been to have such a rugged male family of sex, love and support—but without “her.”

Looking back at my bussing tables at the New York Bar and Eats, I am sure such a young chicken busboy, who was not their typical straight Mexican busboy, was gossip for the regular crowd. Joe, a man with scarecrow hair and the worst skin I had ever seen, 50, seemed interested in my journey, and we talked in the main bar after my shift. He said he may know a powerful acting manager for me and asked me if I'd come to play pool at his house after bar close. I said yes.

At his modern multi-level home in Silver Lake with immaculately framed art, Joe studied me intently as I shot pool in his den. He could not figure me out. But I was not playing any role, I just chatted with him like I did with my Your Place bar patrons, for several hours. He never put the make on me, as I was not giving him any signals that I was interested, and eventually he asked for my number to give to his manager friend, who he said managed teen star, Rob Lowe.

A week later I was summoned to the manager's house, off Crescent Heights in the Laurel Canyon area of the Hollywood Hills. Tim Wood reminded me of Jeff from Auctioneer's Inn—handsome, tall, black beard. He explained that he and his partner Chet managed Rob and Chad Lowe, Brooke Adams, a few others, and a baseball player named Drake Hogestyn (who would later become a longtime star on *Days of Our Lives*). I knew who Rob Lowe was, and was very impressed. Tim said he liked my look and confidence and he'd send me to a few casting interviews to see what the response was.



Tim Wood, manager, sent me to acting classes and photographers.

The response was that I was “very green.” This was an extremely polite way to say my acting sucked. Tim did not give up on me though and suggested I audition for parts in student films to gain experience.

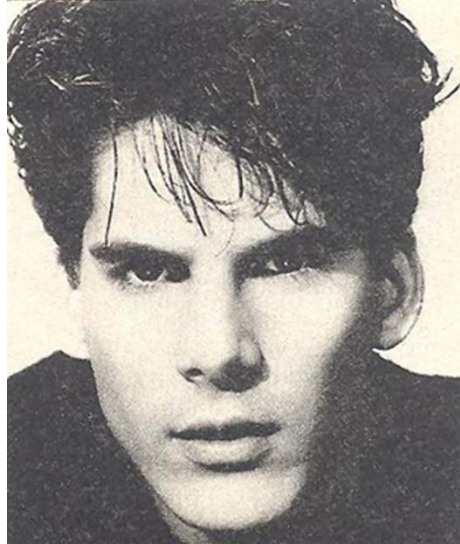
I booked the lead in an AFI project, and don’t really recall what it was about, but I do recall walking through East Los Angeles holding a gun. Since the student film had no budget for security, looking back it seems very irresponsible to give an actor a gun and tell him to walk through seedy alleys where gangs abide. At the time, it didn’t faze me. The director was a young guy named Jim, who was grappling with AIDS and his infatuation for his leading man; me. Jim died after finishing the film.

Jim bequeathed me a reading from Kate Diamond, a celebrated numerologist. By my birth year and letters in my name, Kate had deduced that unless I committed to a love relationship early, my life would amount to little more than a series of dramatic love affairs. I was amused but did not believe numbers decided my fate.

In addition to getting me a line in *Back to The Future* and *St. Elmo’s Fire* (both were cut), Tim also set me up to have photos taken by a very established photographer, Greg Gorman, who had a similar look

and age to Gary in Wisconsin, but was taller. Gorman took iconic photos of all the stars from Streisand to Lowe to Bette Davis to De Niro to David Bowie to Blondie to Michael Jackson. He sure knew how to work the little side lights to make my thin face appear wider and sculpted—and the photos turned out great. Going over them at dinner, I felt special in the eyes of this older man and excited and confident to be on the path to be a movie star. After dinner, he showed me his entire house, and, in his bedroom, we kissed and had sex.

Photo by Greg Gorman.



A couple days later, I told Tim that, and he said Greg has the reputation of having the biggest penis in Hollywood. I just blushed because although that was probably true, I was uncomfortable talking about anyone's penis size. Even in this sex tell-all, I feel people's penis size is their business, and if they want to tell you, then they should, not me. In this book I may have suggested someone's penis size only if they are utterly unrecognizable, or dead. In any event, I did not feel a love connection and was too insecure to date someone 6'5", so did not want to date Greg again. And amusingly, I would find out he told Tim that, "TJ is no mental giant." Being a straight-A student who was usually considered bright, I found this more startling than insulting, but it was good feedback for me to understand how I came across to older people in this new metropolis.

BISHOP OFFERED MONEY FOR SEX

While I bussed tables, an older man with a small head, huge gray eyebrows and a high belly had me refill his bread basket several times, then asked me my name. He explained he was Bishop Harnold and would like to take me to a fancy dinner at West Hollywood's 5-star restaurant called L'Orangerie on La Cienega Boulevard. Never being one to turn down being alone with a strange man in a strange place for an unspecified reason, I went.

The sweating bishop was seated at one of the best tables which overlooked the entire place exquisitely designed in French Renaissance. He ordered us drinks and appetizers. I told him I had never had an appetizer before, and I selected my fish entrée with the help of his translating the menu. He asked me how it was going in Hollywood and I told him great, that I had auditioned for the soap opera *Santa Barbara* the prior month. I asked him what it was like being a bishop, and as the appetizer arrived, explained that my TJ name was an abbreviation meaning To Jesus, and that at 18, I'd told God I was going to be famous and important and to kill me if being gay was bad—and He did not. When I was real famous, my plan was to come out of the closet and push gay rights. The bishop agreed gay is okay but said that actors would never be hired if they came out and that gays would never have equal rights. My jaw dropped. *How could he think that?*

"Of course we will," I implored. "I'm gonna make that happen someday."

Unfamiliar with regal etiquette, I assumed I should raise my small appetizer plate to my mouth, and then use my fork to slide the food across a couple of inches to my mouth. He was slightly embarrassed, and maybe a little turned on by ignorance, and quietly instructed me to keep the plate on the table at all times. After a few more drinks he

said he'd like to have sex with me. That was not what I expected this dinner to be about and he must have seen stunned across my face. He said he could offer me money.

"Aw, thanks," I said, "But naw, I don't do that." I passed him the bread.

As we finished our entrees and watched celebrities eat from afar, he quietly offered me \$900 to have sex. I was very flattered and realized that was almost four months' rent for 20 minutes of pretty much doing nothing!! But again, I said, "Naw, thanks." After he paid for dinner and we walked to our cars, he withdrew a billfold and showed me nine one-hundred-dollar bills then asked how many tables I would have to bus for that. I didn't answer. He asked how much money I had in the bank.

I knew exactly, "After my bills clear, \$87. I need to get a better job, but I have a callback for a Dr. Pepper commercial in the morning."

He said, "God helps those who help themselves."

Was he suggesting God wanted me to have gay sex for money? This was a very different God than I grew up with. I thanked him for dinner, hugged him, declined the money, and got into my car. Driving away slowly, I slid my tape of Billy Joel's "My Life (I Don't Need You To Worry For Me)" into the cassette player and sang loudly to the rebellious lyrics.

As a child it never occurred to me to have sex with anyone for money. When Jeff seduced me and made it clear the waiter job depended on him blowing me, it felt horrible to do so. The guilt and shame made me feel small and surrendering my will and freedom to do what someone else wanted was completely foreign to me and made me feel powerless. It confirmed to me that I never wanted to have sex with anyone I was not attracted to.

Never a sound sleeper, I tossed more than usual the night the bishop propositioned me.

* 7: **FIRST CRUSHES IN HOLLYWOOD**

MITCHELL ANDERSON AND IAN ZEIRING



The next week Tim phoned to say that I got my first job! That Dr. Pepper commercial ran a lot and brought me in about \$15,000 that year. Not long after, I also did a Duncan Hines commercial with Mitchell Anderson (later he would do *Doogie Howser M.D.*, *Relax...It's Just Sex*, *Jaws: The Revenge*, *The Richard Carpenter Story*, *Party of*



Five, etc.) and Ian Ziering (who would later do *Beverly Hills 90210*, *Melrose Place*, *Dancing With The Stars*, *Sharknado*, etc.).

Teenage Ian in bushy blond hair was amazingly friendly and I envied his extroverted personality, which had landed him almost 20 commercials that year alone. I bonded even more with young Mitchell, and developed a crush on him, and deciphered he was

also gay.

Mitchell and I hung out after the shoot and became friends. He was so handsome and honest that I was falling in love with him, but I do not think he was attracted to me. We went to many parties with his roommate, a girl named Hailey. Never have I seen such a drunk—or anyone who matched my drive to be a star. My bet was she would kill herself from alcohol first.

To this day, Mitchell laughs about me telling him, “I came to Hollywood to be a movie-star,” because many other young people felt the same, but no one said it so directly and with such naivety.

I was also naïve to fall in love with his young friend, Chuck Janson.

CHUCK

Chuck, 25, was not the big, burly, muscular hairy type that I always went for. Instead, he was a good-looking, clean-shaven, small-framed blond guy, three years older than me, about my height. Brown eyes as soft as velvet, or almond butter, or weathered logs. Some people you come across and you can't explain why you love them instantly, and my feelings for Chuck were deep, as if he were a soulmate. I did not believe in soulmates, and Chuck was just a beautiful spirit in an oversized denim jacket who had such a comfort in his own skin. Later I would be told that several other men also felt the same way about him, one being a flamboyant throaty Broadway star. If I am not mistaken, they were friends, maybe Chuck was even a paid escort? I just know his past was very complicated, not that it showed. One time outside my apartment as he was dropping me off after we had joined a group at a dance club, and I asked him to come in, he refused. I was tense, and he asked, “Why are you always so afraid? What are you afraid of?”

No one in Hollywood spoke that calmly and directly. It was like he was from another planet.

Though I had no idea he saw me as afraid, he was entirely correct. I did not mind loud bars when I was behind the bar with many things to keep busy, but he saw earlier that with strangers in crowds I felt unsettled. My anxieties and insecurities ran deep and because my drive to be a movie star was so strong, my energy was peculiarly erratic. Maybe I appeared “jumpy” like a youth on a trampoline reaching for the stars above, and reaching all around me to be a star as well, and then needing to free myself from the failures by landing in primitive, base sex? I did not pass as the confident macho man I wanted to be, nor an easy-going one. Usually I slipped into being a boy who did not understand how the world, and people in general, operated. A stranger who intimidated me once described me as “brittle.” I was indeed brittle or bold or determined or near macho or afraid or needy, depending on the minute. I was definitely unpredictable. Chuck was always calm—always the same—and seemed to have no need.

Months later, I still pined for him, and one night at his apartment I suppose I charmed him so much with my pathetic adoration that he relinquished his borders and let me hold him. He surprised me by telling me he had AIDS and was dying. I said I didn’t care, that I loved him anyway, and I would expose myself to his AIDS, but his AIDS would not hurt or kill me because my mind power would kill the virus, as the new-age books taught. He looked me square in the eye as we undressed and made love. Oral, at least.

After that, he kept me at a distance, maybe because he knew how sick he was and that he would die soon. Weeks later, when I found out he died, it kind of made sense as to why he was so carefree and unbothered. He had been free of this complicated world of emotions a long time and ready to leave it. His spirit was so pure and sweet and centered.

AIDS, 1983

In Hollywood two years, it was time for me to fly back to Wisconsin and see my family and Gary. While fishing at Big Cedar Lake, supportive Gary listened to me recount my Hollywood adventures, and added that his bar customers were dropping like flies to AIDS. Not only had the owners of the Wreck Room died, but so many of the customers that the place closed. Bill, Cleveland and Del were also sick, and dying, and my friend Scott had just been diagnosed positive.

Gary and I spent a few romantic nights together, but my mind was on stardom.

Because I was an introvert, I often chose extroverts as best friends. Back in Hollywood, I met tall, blond, thin, witty Bruce at the New York Bar and Eats. His humor totally captivated me, and I also gravitated to his sensitive nature and good intentions. From NY, he had also come to Hollywood to be an actor and was 10 years my senior.

Though he initially had a crush on me, we easily transitioned to best friends. Most nights I'd go to his small apartment, and he'd cook, and then we'd put ourselves on video. Both of us loved being on camera, and we played on video until three in the morning many nights when I was not working. He sometimes smeared on lipstick and became Bette Davis in *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane* or danced in his bathrobe and wig as Dionne Warwick in his music video rendition of "Say a Little Prayer." He was as hysterical as anybody in drag on-screen from Milton Berle to Flip Wilson playing Josephine. There was a ridiculous rumor that Nancy Culp of *The Beverly Hillbillies* died eating her own feces, so, of course, one night we made a movie of that using a Baby Ruth bar, Bruce playing Nancy. He was the funniest man I ever met.

Usually, I opted to be Marlon Brando or James Dean to his brilliant comical characters. We had such pure fun and were such an interesting combination that I so regret we did not try to market ourselves doing comical videos, but this was 1984, well before the Internet happened. Another friend, Jamie, a wonderful singer who I knew from Wisconsin, joined us one night. Jamie insisted on lip-synching to Streisand's "Queen Bee" as Bruce and I in matching yellow and black sweaters tried to dance like little bees behind him.

Jamie and I first met when he ordered a drink in Milwaukee's Club 219. I loved his humor and accessibility. We became friends and roommates. The morning after L. the photographer assaulted me in Hollywood, Jamie had phoned me and asked if he could come live with me because he wanted to pursue singing in Los Angeles. I have no recall of that conversation, but apparently I said yes, because Jamie showed up with suitcases a couple of weeks later. We shared my tiny Silver Lake studio apartment.

One night there were loud footsteps on the roof that went on for 10 minutes. I joked, "What are they doing? Dutch aerobics?" We always cracked each other up. I gravitated to witty guys so wherever we went there was a joke every few seconds.

Even though I was an introvert, most nights when I was not working I went out to dinner and the bars with either extroverted Jamie or Bruce. Not only was I fascinated by their quick wit and theatrics, but they craved attention, which meant there were less eyes on me, and calmed my anxiety. Bruce and Jamie felt comfortable talking to any stranger, looking them straight in the eye, and were very accessible, warm and likeable. Either could have been successful at politics because they instantly made friends, and everyone immediately joked back with them. I was the tagalong nice guy butting in on occasion with one-liners when I felt confident.

CUBAN SHAVES MY ASS

One night when Bruce and I were in The Revolver I was mesmerized by a chiseled Cuban and after gulping two drinks for courage, cornered him and bought him a Corona. Big bushy eyebrows that met in the middle (my favorite kind), huge brown eyes, military build. Very masculine, and a couple inches taller than me. When he and I were alone, naked, on his West Hollywood bed, he told me his fetish was shaving assholes and that he wanted to shave mine. Not being one to avoid dangerous predicaments with strangers, I said, “Go for it.”

On my hands and knees, I looked over my back to see him grab a razor and graze me with it. The shaving didn’t hurt but I hardly knew him enough to trust him to that extent. Afterwards, we 69ed. He was so handsome, definitely my physical type, but he was gruff to the point of being rude. I never called him after that because he just didn’t seem like a nice, respectful guy—but it could have been the language barrier. I regret not calling him again because I really liked him otherwise and found him so sexy, and I suppose I could have been patient on a few dates to discover who he really was.

PARKER

West Hollywood had bars, restaurants and clothing stores packed tightly within a few blocks on Santa Monica Boulevard. Shopping for a leather jacket at All American Boy, a beautiful blond jock with a Kirk Douglas-dimpled chin, Parker, asked me if I needed help. His skin was a bit blemished, like Robert Redford, but he was as good-looking as Robert Redford and Kirk Douglas together. A wide chiseled jaw kept his straight teeth open as he whispered to me, staring straight into my eyes, “How does this fit you in the shoulders?” This was like a scene in

a movie; the instant chemistry we were feeling—two Midwest boys starting out in Hollywood, exploring new worlds. Everything was going in slow-motion. I bought the jacket and asked him to write his number down for me, because when I wanted something, I went after it. The next night I drove to his place to take him out.

He was renting a room in Los Feliz from a famous aging football player, David Kopay, who would soon come out of the closet publically. Kopay probably had a crush on Parker. Who wouldn't? Kopay was a nice guy and did not seem bothered I was taking Parker out. At dinner at the Spaghetti Factory, I paid more attention to Parker's cute throaty voice and familiar accent as he was from Minnesota, next to Wisconsin. Over salads, he shared what it was like being in the Navy for a year and having to hide his attraction to men. Over pasta, we talked about high schools, and no one knowing our secrets. I got lost in his wide light eyes. He caught me staring with my mouth open and said, "Didn't anyone ever tell you it's impolite to stare?" then smiled, reading my infatuation. The popular restaurant was packed with loud families and people waiting for tables, but all I heard was Andy Williams singing, "You're just too good to be true. Can't take my eyes off of you."

After dinner, I drove Parker back to his place, humming our song. He tried to hold my hand, but I had to keep moving it jerkily to drive the clutch.

Kopay was gone. I followed Parker back to his rented room. I took his hands and rubbed my face against his, then kissed him. I turned off the lights, but there was a slight glow from the streetlight outside issuing us silhouettes. In this sparse lighting, I watched his muscular legs as he took off his pants, and then lowered his white Jockey underwear briefs, and saw his amazingly long hairy ass hair in shadows. My heart skipped a beat. What could be more beautiful than this hairy-ass blond jock? He had the hairiest crack I had ever seen. That image was forever burned into my brain as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. We kissed some more, and I felt the hair in his ass with the side of my hand. I dropped to my knees and kissed his

cheeks, then his butt hair, then moved him so I could smell his balls and suck his cock. His pointed and arched up straight to his belly button. Was so hard and up that I could hit and thwack it.

We had several incredible dates until I accidentally spilled something on his letter jacket and he threw a fit about it. Never caring much about clothes, it seemed silly and pretentious to me that he had become a drama queen about a spill. Looking back, maybe he was just borrowing the jacket from his workplace and the spill meant he would have to buy it? I had no idea. The night ended with two 20-somethings bickering, and I never saw him again. At that time, not seeing him again was fine with me. My goal, after all, was movie-star fame, not a particular romance. But as the years passed, and I remembered him with such irresistible magnetism, I did regret losing touch with him. He has a piece of my heart.

LENNY

Maybe a month later I was lonely and horny and went to the Mother Lode bar on Santa Monica Boulevard in West Hollywood to shoot pool. On the high screen MTV played Tina Turner's "What's Love Got To Do With It," Madonna's "Like A Virgin" and Phil Collin's "Against All Odds" but no one in the bar knocked my socks off, however I went home with a tall black guy in boots, who looked a little like a younger Samuel Jackson. There was no chemistry though and as soon as we were naked it felt forced and I wanted to leave, but I did not want to be rude and hurt his feelings. I figured we'd made an implied agreement that we'd have sex, so I let him blow and rim me as he masturbated and I just pictured Parker instead. For some reason, I also felt like I owed him me to sleep over, but as soon as he fell asleep I tiptoed to my clothes and put them on as fast as I could. He woke up and said, "Where do you think you're going?" I lied that I needed to get home

and sleep because I had to get up early for work in the morning.

There was another black guy I saw sexually about that time; Lenny Hines. Handsome, wide chiseled jock jaw, and an incredibly muscular body. One of the times that we had sex in his Hollywood apartment a black girl kept walking past and discreetly knocking on his bedroom window. She couldn't see what we were doing, so we continued pleasuring ourselves and massaging each other's privates. Eventually I asked him why she keeps knocking and he whispered that she wants a booty call, that he was bisexual and fucked her on occasion. Lenny was a bit of a playboy and I couldn't trust him completely, so we only saw each other once more. The truth was that I was a jealous lover and at that time, could not deal with my man having eyes for anyone else.

MIDDLE-AGED MODEL

Marix was the most happening restaurant in West Hollywood. The cruisy Mexican restaurant and bar was so packed that people waited an hour to get a table, ordering pitchers of zesty margaritas. This particular night, a tall slender European flirted very heavily with me at the bar while we waited for tables. The stranger said he was a model and invited me to his house after dinner. I said no, but took his card, and called him the next day.

The model must have been very wealthy because he owned an incredible property above the Hollywood reservoir. It was white and spacious, had many palm trees in and out, a sunken pool, wide open floorplan. But as we got to know each other in a late afternoon over cheese fondue and tropical drinks at his bar, I could not feel any heat with him. When he moved to kiss me, my eyes searched his many forehead wrinkles and crow's feet. I was only 22 and had never kissed a person with so many wrinkles. It weirded me out so much I left, and

never talked to him again.

Did I ever sit back and wonder what my life could have been if I was more patient and accepting of these men I had sex with, if I would have allowed myself to fall in love with them, as I did Jeff, who at first, I was not attracted to either? No. I did not. Again, my goal was to be a movie-star, not be a husband, and Los Angeles had so very many gay men; I was sure to find the dream love portrayed in movies.



Tim Wood had me audition for *Highway to Heaven* and I won my first speaking role. We filmed at a Hollywood High School off Fountain Avenue that I often passed on my errands, and it was exciting to have my initial acting credit. After a short scene in the halls, Michael Landon announced the next scene to be shot and directed me through it, telling me where to move when I said my lines.

“What lines?” I asked. I thought I had already shot all my lines because I did not realize shows add scenes during shooting. The new blue pages I got the day before I just ignored. But there was a full page of lines I needed to learn very quickly! Michael Landon looked at me sternly and said I better know them in five minutes.

Fortunately I was able to memorize them, but was then not familiar with these infamous Pastor Martin Niemöller’s quotes about the cowardice of German intellectuals following the Nazis' rise to power, *“First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out, because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out, because I was not a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out, because I was not a Jew. Then they*

came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.”

The episode was about Neo-Nazis, and in the van ride from the makeup room to the set, I was already feeling a sexual connection with one of the Nazis. We kept our eyes locked longer than straight men do, and our backseat body language, with legs spreading, knees touching, indicated a sexual interest.

He looked the Nazi part; tall with Aryan features, a small tight nose and piercing blue eyes, and I was a sucker for a man in a uniform. Literally. And I demanded him to keep on the uniform. Man, I loved uniforms. We saw each other once or twice more, but he was at least 10 years older, and experimenting with drugs. I wanted nothing to do with anyone who did drugs.

A few commercials brought in enough residuals for me to pay my acting classes, gym, and other bills, but the New York Bar and Eats did not promote me to bartender as they'd promised, which totally surprised me because I was raised to keep promises. Keeping my word was top priority. I quit being an underpaid bus boy and applied for other jobs.

Joe Allen's was the trendiest eatery in Beverly Hills, but they did not hire me, however, I found work a block away, at Kathy Gallagher's restaurant. Kathy, 35, blonde, petite, was a former model, and her industry friends like Marcia Strassman who played the wife on *Welcome Back Kotter* were regulars. Leonard, the manager, did not hire me as a waiter, but as a host to seat the customers. But when I showed up to work, Kathy did not like my Levi jeans, flannel shirt and cowboy hat. Leonard took me shopping for tan khaki pants and blue long sleeve button-down shirts. No hat. I felt ridiculous in preppie attire but did my job. I seated stars like Streisand, Genie Frances, Travolta, Tom Cruise, Cher, Emma Samms, Rock Hudson, Nancy Walker, and my favorite, Ann Bancroft. She smiled back and could tell by the way I looked at her that I just loved her, but probably thought because she had played infamous Mrs. Robinson who seduced Dustin

Hoffman in 1967's *The Graduate*. The truth was I loved her because she reminded me of my beautiful dark-eyed Italian mom back in Wisconsin.

Jamie was also working at a Silver Lake restaurant Casito Del Campo and saw celebrities—so we kept a long list on the fridge of our star sightings. This was such an exciting time, even for friends like Bobby-Jo back in Milwaukee, who soon moved out to Hollywood to share our fun.



The list of stars and posing for a calendar by photographer Kal Yee.

One evening at Kathy Gallagher's, I seated a large group of fairly well-known actors. As I stood at the end of the table, reciting the specials, under the table, sexy young actor Andrew Stevens grabbed my leg. I didn't know what to do, so I kept on talking. He grabbed it harder—like really hard. I froze, like when naked Village Person Mark Lee had stood over me asking me what I liked to do in bed. As a child I learned that a stranger touching a body part was naughty, and stupefied and confused, I ignored Andrew and instead focused on the vegetables du jour, but Andrew kept grabbing me up and down my leg the entire minute I answered questions from the table until I walked away. One

fellow waiter surmised he was bisexual, but that was probably only a rumor, and his grabbing me was so obvious it was like he wanted me to say something to the entire table, so I do not think he was coming on to me but was rather trying to be amusing and I was probably part of a group joke.



Restaurateur Kathy Gallagher and heartthrob Andrew Stevens.

Kathy Gallagher's had hired so many handsome employees that the head waiter initiated making a calendar with one handsome face for each month, and I was surprised he selected my face as the cover boy! That same year I was also featured on another calendar.

Lisa Lond was one of the pretty cashiers. The toothy redhead could have been a stripper, and she was as seductive as one. One night, she brought John Travolta his ordered meal and flaunted her cleavage like Jane Mansfield and she outright asked to be in his next movie. There was obviously nothing she would not do for a part, but Travolta just smiled politely and said thank you. Wonder why he never pursued her?

* 8: **THE BILLIONAIRE**

BILLIONAIRE DAVID GEFFEN

Risky Business had recently been a huge hit. As Tom Cruise walked to the bathroom once at Kathy Gallagher's, I stopped in his way and said, "You're Tom Cruise! People say we look alike." What could he say? He smiled politely, and then continued on.

A couple weeks later, Kathy actually spoke to me, more than her quick hello and goodbye. She pulled me to a table and sat directly across from me, saying, "David Geffen wants to go out with you."



Actor Steve Antin, David Geffen, Cher.

I said, "Who is David Geffen?"

"He made Tom Cruise a star."

"Sure, I'll go out with him."

David was a nice-looking Jewish millionaire in his 30s, soon to be a self-made billionaire, but at that point, my type was still Matt Houston or a hairy Chippendale with a porn stache. David invited me to his Bel Air mansion and showed me a structure and furnishings you'd see on

Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous. He was also thoughtful and conversational and complimented me on my shirt.

“It was \$4,” I said, “Got it at a thrift store.”

“Why did you say that?” he laughed. “My mom always says stuff like that.”

I just chuckled, and he continued to impress me with his house and art. I told him I was also an artist and he said he’d buy a piece if it was reasonable. He supported all genres of artists but was then concentrating on his own music label repping Cher, Donna Summer, and others. As we drove to industry hotspot, Spago, I wondered *why I did say my shirt was \$4?* I mumbled that mom had to work three jobs to support us, so we were middle to lower class, and bought the least expensive things. *Growing up, we knew no rich people. We never went into a mansion, or hobnobbed, or had appetizers at restaurants. Consequently, we never discussed wealthy people, or being wealthy.*

Not like Dad told my sister to marry a rich spouse. That idea would have never entered my sister’s mind, or mine, although it did seem to enter my brother Gregg’s.

Trendy Spago was too bright for my taste, overflowing with celebrities, many of whom came over to say hi to David, and he graciously introduced them to me. I told him that I wanted to be successful and so I wanted to hang out with successful men. He was very intrigued with me, especially when I offered to pay my share, but he wouldn’t hear of it and gave the waiter his credit card. He then took me to meet Cher backstage at her concert location. She was polite but in her recharge-for-the-next-number concentration.

David and I drove back to his place, and he said he’d had a good time. I said I did, too, thanked him, and left.

Not long after he asked me over again. We went to another very trendy restaurant in Beverly Hills where celebrities once again came

over to say hello to him, and he introduced us. When the bill came, I insisted on paying, which surprised him. Fair is fair, I thought. This is what friends do, and I paid, even though it was alarmingly expensive. After dinner, he took me along with him as he drove to the concert location where Donna Summer was performing and introduced me to her backstage. She could not have been nicer. Then he had his staff arrange a private screening at his mansion's cinema room for him and me of a movie that I believe he was involved with. The word America was in the title; I don't recall much else besides it being very long.

The third time I saw him, he told me he had been talking to his therapist about me. After dinner, he wanted to show me a movie. In his bedroom. As I sat upright on his bed, feeling a little awkward to be in his intimate quarters, he put in a VHS of *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, explaining it was his favorite movie. He sat next to me, and we were pretty motionless, except for maybe slowly inching down as one does when trying to sit up in a bed. Halfway through the movie, as I was almost laying on my back, he yawned and turned to lay on his stomach, hugging me, his arm landing over my chest. He was looking for me to respond but I could not. I froze. He froze. Once again, I did not know what to do, so I just did nothing. Thankfully the movie ended a half an hour later, and when the credits started I said, "Thanks!" He walked me to the door and as he opened it for me, he kissed me on the lips. I did not kiss back, but looked down and slipped away, walking to my car. I was too confused to return his phone calls after that.

Unlike my brother Gregg who was reading *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, I had no social agenda or "game plan." Looking back, since my only ambition had been to be a movie star, how foolish of me not to have pursued a friendship or more with the billionaire movie mogul who made Tom Cruise a star. But I never used people and felt that would be insincere.

Now at 56, in hindsight, after so many decades of wondering how I was going to pay my rent, and not being able to afford a dentist, I wondered what would have happened if I, at 22, tried to fall in love

with David, as I did with Jeff at Auctioneer's Inn? Could I have fallen in love with him? Could David have delivered me my dream of being a Hollywood movie star that I never attained on my own? I suppose if I knew then what I know now we could have made that happen. Do I regret that? I don't know. I do not think so. Would you?

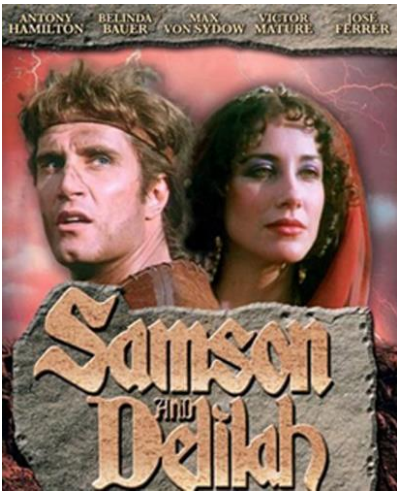
While it's true that I had rarely had more than one month's rent in the bank, I had spent my entire life—every day—working on one of my creative projects dreaming to hit the jackpot. Even though I did not win fortune, I had always done exactly what I wanted to do, and never did what I felt I should do—or was told to do—or what someone else wanted me to do. Each of those thousands of days I was inspired, excited and jubilant. I never had a million bucks, but I always felt like a million bucks. Also, I have had many loves and have never pretended to love anyone, and I had never stayed in a love relationship pretending love after my feelings were gone (I don't think I am a good enough actor to pull that off.)

So instead of being Thom Geffen living with my husband the billionaire and befriending A-list stars and contacts and building a career as a solid movie actor, or being one of the Geffen boys, who I later learned typically received a brand-new jeep on the fifth date, I continued to share a pull-out couch in my Silver Lake studio with Wisconsin friend, Jamie. While going to auditions and acting classes, and fantasizing true love, my car repeatedly played the 1970s CD with my love ballad, "I Like Dreamin."

* 9: **SEX WITH TV STARS & THE POLICE**

ANTHONY HAMILTON

Australian Anthony Hamilton who starred in the TV series *Cover Up* about a male model solving crimes, and also played Sampson in the *Sampson and Delilah* huge TV movie, came into Kathy Gallagher's. He and his male friend were so good-looking I could not look either of them in the eye. These were perfect 10s, both over 6 feet, football player frames, cover of GQ faces, smiles only seen in posters in dentist offices. Never before and never again would I ever see two guys this good-looking at once.



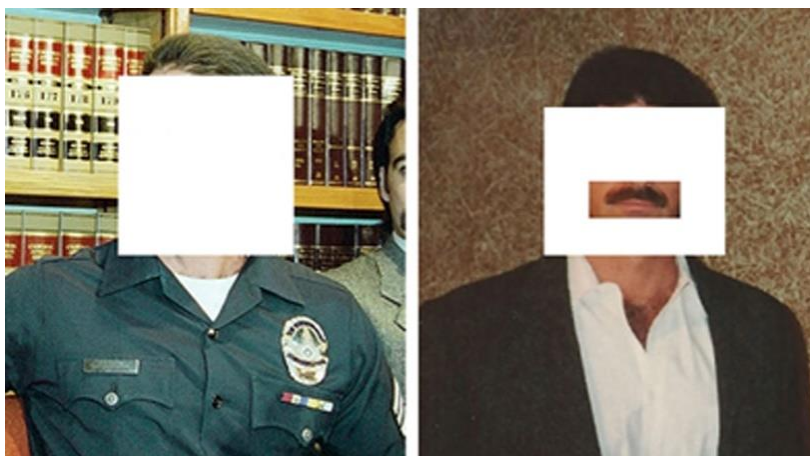
For some reason, Anthony / Tony liked me, and we had sex in his West Hollywood apartment several times. He told me, "TJ, if I wanted only one boyfriend, I'd pick you." Many people said Tony slept with a great deal of partners, and maybe he also told other guys the same thing. Never did I expect to be in an actual monogamous love relationship with a man that tall and rugged model handsome. My ego couldn't deal with that. Anthony died years later (Wikipedia says AIDS-related

YOUNG, GAY & RESTLESS

pneumonia), and he left a huge legacy. What a gift of beauty he was to so many. I wonder what his adoptive parents thought as he grew from an unknown baby into one of the best-looking men on the planet. What a wonderful life he lived, I am sure, with no regrets. I am just one of so many that were beneficiaries of the heroic specimen that he created and inhabited.

SEX WITH THE LOS ANGELES POLICE

Sergeant Pike hung with the head waiter at Kathy Gallagher's, and man, was Sarg my type! Macho cop with a great hairy body and a wide brown mustache! I respected him for being one of the first Los Angeles cops to be openly gay, a rarity so feared that his fellow homophobic straight cops once refused to back him up in a dangerous situation that almost cost him his life. His heroic trailblazing story was being featured on talk shows and developed into a movie.



Pike insisted he was a top, and insisted he fuck me. Some men have strict positions or fetishes, whereas at that point I was pretty much oral, but into roleplay, and still watersports curious, though I never seemed to meet anyone else willing to experiment with urine. If

anybody was going to fuck me, it would have to be a real cop with a mustache. He was very endowed but knew what he was doing. It didn't hurt too much. We dated a few times, but he was a real playboy I heard, forever conquering the new manboy in town.

A fellow waiter at Kathy Gallagher's introduced me to his friend, Aaron, a very sexy, funny guy my height, black short hair, who was the assistant to George Burns—who I happened to see in his underwear when I picked up Aaron for our first date. When my friend Bruce met Aaron, he described him as gorgeous. Aaron's sense of humor impressed me as much as his stocky hairy muscular body. He said we fit great together in bed holding each other. Absolutely right. What a hunk he was. As smoldering as his dark features were, one time when we were walking in the rain I looked back at him, and having his windbreaker hood pulled tight, his head looked huge. So, I had to break up with him.

I was beginning to see a pattern in my relationships. As soon as I discovered something in my partner that was not perfect, it worried me that at some point this imperfection would upset me to the point of breaking up, devastating him and breaking his heart like Dad did to Mom, so I broke up as fast as I could, thinking this would save him the pain of me breaking up later when we were more in love. Not dissimilar to the Jerry Seinfeld character who broke up with women for the silliest reasons like them having man-hands or looking different in bad lighting.

Were many men (and women) as surface as I was...or was I an enigma? Did I keep the world at a distance for their safety... or mine? I'd felt religiously persecuted as a gay child and crawled into a shell (where I eventually discovered what I felt was "God's" unconditional love and support) and became extremely self-reliant and self-sufficient because I could not trust the world which limited me and gay-shamed me. Did allowing someone into my heart and soul threaten the security of being whole (on my own)? Did I continually turn away from potential relationships because I really feared hurting

them like Dad had Mom? Or, did I just believe that I did not have to “settle”? The latter may be more consistent with the drive of a self-conscious skinny gay introvert from Wisconsin who incredulously believed he could be a movie star, right? Since I argued with dad all my life about him and others limiting me, and believed my future to be unlimited, and if I believed I’d be a movie-star when a billion others had failed, did I also believe I would find a love who was perfect to me in all regards at all times? Aren’t they about the same odds?

I was hardly perfect—I would never even date me—I would never even find myself attractive, although I admit I photographed well from some angles. In any event, I am deeply embarrassed even today about my continual dismissal of lovers because for one reason or another they did not meet my unrealistic surface expectations. Although part of me was on a perpetual hunt for the perfect man, my early 20s may have been more fun if I had been more relaxed and taken things one a day at a time instead of worrying what the future would bring.

STEVE ANTIN

Looking through a *Teen Beat* magazine at Tim Wood’s office, I saw Greg Gorman’s and L’s photos of Rob Lowe, and Chad Lowe, and then I came across the cutest man I had ever seen. His jock face and green eyes sparked my heart. THAT was who I wanted



to be in love with. The text said his name was Steve Antin of *Sweet 16* and *The Last American Virgin* (soon to be in *The Goonies*).

Since Kathy had “let me go” at Kathy Gallagher’s with no explanation of why, I got a bartending job in West Hollywood at a swanky multi-

level Chinese restaurant called Palette. Every night I would picture this super cute jock actor and me going on a dinner date, joking and laughing and holding hands on St. Thomas Beach like the lyrics to my favorite song, “I Like Dreamin (Cuz Dreamin Can Make You Mine).” Did my loving law-of-attraction vibrations bring Steve Antin to Palette? One night, I looked up from the bar, and he was standing there just like I’d pictured in my fantasies. I told him I saw him in a magazine, then served him and his friend their drinks.

When the man he was with went to the bathroom, I flirted with Steve and, well, just fell in love with him more. His eyes sparked, and he didn’t turn away. He grinned—so it seemed he might be gay. When he accepted a napkin with my phone number written on it, I was absolutely certain he was.

That same week, I arrived at his contemporary two-story Hollywood home, and he and his dog showed me around, giving me a feel of his casual life and beginning movie success. He was in jeans and a white T-shirt and he must have used bleach. *My white T-shirts never looked that good.* He was making steamed vegetables and when I looked in the pot, he said, “Summer squash.”

“What are the other ones?” was my joke attempt.

After dinner we had sex on his bedroom floor. I wouldn’t say made love because although I would have gone there, Steve was very experienced and instructed me how to please him. I am not sure I did. I just felt like an awkward nerd. He would comment, “Why do you seem depressed? You got a nice life, big dick.” *Not as big as yours, I could have said, or, I don’t know you, but I want us to be in a monogamous loving relationship and I’m already pissed and jealous that I’m not as sexy as you and afraid I can’t please you like other studs can.* THERE YOU GO. LOL. That’s the right energy for a first date.

Steve’s romantic interest in me diminished; the next week he said he was going back to an ex, but we remained friends. Later, when I

mentioned my experience with Geffen to Steve, he inferred it would be best not to mention to Geffen that we'd had sex. Apparently, Steve and Geffen used to be boyfriends, and I was unsure of their present relationship.

Each time I hear Chaka Khan's "Through the Fire (For A Chance To Be With You)" I think of Steve.

Steve was certainly one of the most sought after manboys by Hollywood moguls, and the Internet says he dated Geffen for a year and eventually had a longer relationship with Clint Culpepper, president of Screen Gems. Decades later, after much success wearing many hats, Steve not only directed Cher and Christina Aguilera in the hit *Burlesque*, but he was able to help launch his sister, Robin Antin in *Pussycat Dolls* and his sexy brother Jonathan Antin in the reality TV series *Blow Out*.

I will always be in love with Steve as he was back then. Unforgettable. And in love with Chuck, and Gary...and Parker. A young Marianne Williamson lectured weekly on *A Course in Miracles*, enlightening us with quotes like: "Love never dies. It just changes form." It was very clear why Steve did not return my love. I was so afraid, and already jealous: My energy was not attractive. Tim Wood once remarked of my similar energy and disposition when I walked into his office. "What's wrong NOW?" he'd asked. This reticence of mine, this playing low, this shrinking, this inner angst, this displeasure in public, the narrowed eyes and faltering smile, was as true to my core as the alternative; my beaming optimism. Maybe my concerned disposition started when grandma scolded me for being naked in the tent. Maybe it was earlier when TV ministers said gays go to Hell. I didn't know, but I'd never felt like I'd belonged in social environments—and I couldn't shake it.

However, the most attractive, joyous, free, unjealous, funny vivacious me was true to my core the majority of time. That was me when I was alone working on a painting or a song or a poem or a script. Only

introverts knew the pleasure and freedom of being alone and creating. From my Lite Brite to my Etch-A-Sketch to my designing my dream house and my dream man and my masturbating, my endorphins sailed high. How fortuitous that each time and each day I was alone, my spirit excelled, and I felt unlimited. The irony was that no boyfriend had ever seen me at my best or could.

How crazy that an average guy like me had been intimate with handsome TV stars and macho cops and studs with Chippendale bodies. I think they were attracted to my humor, drive and ambition more than my looks, because I did not find myself that good-looking, even though when I was buying a lotto ticket at 7-Eleven, a drag queen told me I had a face that could stop a train. I eventually took it as a compliment but for years wondered what kind of faces stopped trains.

My Hollywood apartment was not far away from a small gay bar, which I had never been in, but passed when I took my occasional stroll on Hollywood Boulevard to visit the Walk of Fame with the names of movie-stars.

“Excuse me, sir,” a short-haired young man said as he walked toward me rather fast from the mural of Joan Crawford and Charlie Chaplin. “Do you want a blowjob?”

I froze.

He explained matter-of-factly, “I do not mean to offend you in any way, but I was just wondering if you wanted a blowjob?”

I smiled politely, “Naw, but thank you.”

“I won’t tell anyone,” he said.

I looked at him incredulously, having the gall to ask a stranger that. He looked very young. Maybe he was not even old enough to go into the gay bar? Maybe he had been kicked out? Maybe he was a cop?

“Naw thanks,” I said again, and moved on. It wasn’t until I lost sight of

him that I realized he was attractive, and wow, that would have been weird, and maybe fun. Sex that anonymously was foreign to me in my early twenties, yet alluring.

Even though I had a number of sex partners and lovers, more often than not my ambitious heart was pining for one, and on the hunt. Of course, I wanted to go up to sexy strangers and ask them if they'd like me to blow them. But I never would. Sure, that'd be fun to just let loose the instinctive animal within me.

"Excuse me, sir." (As we stand in line to pay for groceries) "I was wondering if I could just smell your balls?"

"Excuse me, miss." (While you guys wait for your pizza), "Do you mind if I smell your husband's balls?... OK, just the left one?"

"Excuse me. You guys are such an attractive, young hetero couple. I was wondering if I could hold your husband's balls as he fucks you? Would it be inappropriate for me to ask if he could teabag my forehead as he plows you?"

"Excuse me. I noticed you two holding hands as you left church. Could I just feel how hairy your husband's crack is with the side of my hand?"

"Excuse me, football team. Can you guys all sit on the benches and lower your pants so I can see all your dicks and jack off?"

"Excuse me!!!! Would all of you hundreds of male tourists on Hollywood Boulevard drop your pants right now and stand in a line so I can feel all your pubic hairs and butt hair and smell your pits?!"

"Excuse me, all you handsome actors who are also auditioning for the part of Phillip Chancellor III on *The Young and the Restless*, can we rehearse while peeing on each other? Can I just slip my lubed cock in your asses—just a minute each?"

When I won the part of Phillip over many other talented actors and five call backs, my Italian grandmother who watched many soap

operas was the first one I phoned. I do not think she believed me. No one in our family had been an actor and no one had even left Kenosha, let alone sign a three-year contract on the #2 soap opera.

Bierdz makes debut on 'soap'

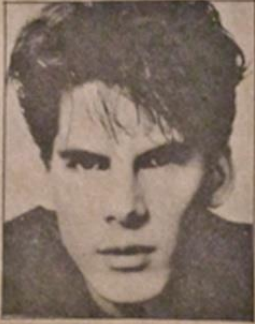
By DENNIS A. SHOOK
Staff Writer

It's ironic that former Kenosha Thom Bierdz is now on the TV soap opera "The Young and the Restless," because when he left Kenosha five years ago, that's exactly what he was.

Bierdz, the son of Thomas Bierdz, Whitefish Bay, and Phyllis Bierdz, 5116 58th St., is now 24 and has been living in the Los Angeles-Hollywood area since 1981. But when he was 19, his mother recalled, he was out of high school and unsettled.

She said she was "floored" when he said he was leaving to pursue acting in Hollywood. He had no prior acting training and showed no interest in it.

"There was a lot of rejection at first," she said of her son's efforts. "Some of his phone calls home weren't very happy."



Thom Bierdz

Then he started getting small jobs. He is in a TV commercial for Dentyne that her friends have seen but she is still searching the air waves for.

His big break came when he was signed recently to play the

bitter Phillip Chancellor Foster character on the "Young and the Restless." He told his mother and father about the role before taping began in April.

His first appearances were Tuesday and today. The show airs on CBS, Channel 2 and Channel 6 from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Bierdz also is scheduled to appear Thursday and all next week.

The character is the teenage son of prominent series character Jill Foster. She has been shot in the scenario, so her son — raised in military schools and distant from her — has returned after an hiatus of many years.

This is Bierdz's first acting role in a soap. His previous credits include appearances on "Highway to Heaven," the made-for-TV film "Gladiators" and the film "St. Elmo's Fire."

Mom got Greg Gorman's photo of me in the Kenosha News.

* 10: **SOAP OPERA STARDOM & SECRET SCANDALS**



Photos by Tony Rizzo for *Soap Set* magazine.

Though I was 24, I had a lot in common with my 17-year-old soap opera character. Phillip was sensitive and brooding, having been ignored by his mother and put in boarding school all his life. Still begrudging Dad for leaving Mom, as a method actor, I pictured him in the “Why did you desert me?” emotional scenes. Phillip was fought over by the maternal characters of Katharine Chancellor and Jill Abbott, played by Jeanne Cooper and Brenda Dickson (Jess Walton later), all three experienced professionals who were extremely supportive to this rookie.

Walking into the CBS Artist’s Entrance, I would be handed a pass to pin onto my clothes. After the guard cleared me, I walked the long, white hallway, awestruck at the poster-sized photos of some of the shows that were filmed in this studio over the years: *Let’s Make A Deal*, *I Love Lucy*, *The Jeffersons*, *Sonny and Cher*, *The Carol Burnett*

Show, The Price Is Right, Capitol, The Young and the Restless...

In the center of a 1986
cast photo.



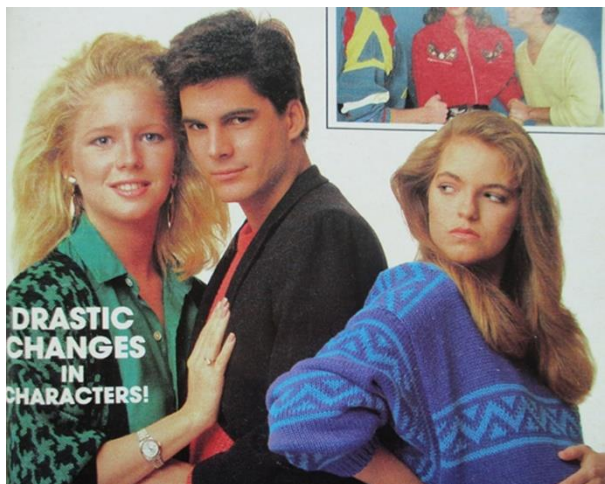
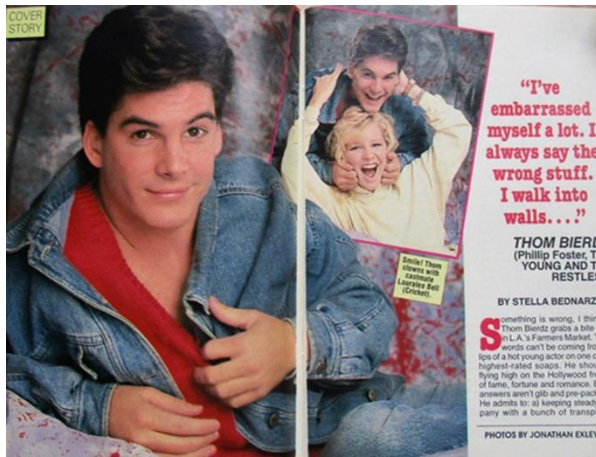
At the end of the corridor was a dark stairwell where I would catch my breath and try to calm my nerves before striding up a flight of steps to the stages. I would've loved shots of Peppermint Schnapps from my bartending days to relax me, but I figured drinking alcohol would get me fired if someone smelled it. My character, Phillip, however, did not have the willpower to resist alcohol. Philip sneaked swigs of booze, became an alcoholic, and would eventually die from driving drunk when his shiny red Corvette plunged over a cliff (SPOILER ALERT: some soap opera characters come back from the dead).

My love interest on the show was the producers' daughter, blonde 16-year-old Lauralee Bell. Although it might not have appeared so, Lauralee and I were similar. We were both inexperienced and from Wisconsin, where her family had an estate on picturesque Lake Geneva. I was a working class, closeted, gay guy in his 20s; while she was a naïve, sheltered, teenage, hetero Hollywood heiress. Perhaps we were both in our adolescence, as I was just starting to have fun, since my childhood had been so serious. I made her laugh especially on the road when we did personal appearances. On the way to our hotel rooms I would knock on strangers' doors then race away before they answered. This rich girl never had a friend who made her sprint on high-heels through hotel hallways. I'd never spent this much time alone with a teen-age girl.

YOUNG, GAY & RESTLESS



Y&R stars Tricia Cast, me, Lauralee Bell, Peter Barton, Kate Linder.



Lauralee was adorable in every way, as was Tricia Cast who played Nina Webster, the other actress in my romantic storyline, but I was naturally drawn to men, and I wanted a boyfriend. I fell in love with the show's florist, Danny Ellis, after months of secret eye contact and he leaving an orchid with his phone number attached in my dressing room. (Cue "Nadia's Theme," the timeless piano music played behind hetero romances on *The Young and the Restless* since 1973 and blare it here, baby!) Danny had the face of a young Paul Newman but a more muscular body.

Very quickly, I understood what my father meant about my mother being smothering, because Danny would allow me no space at all. He gave me an ultimatum in the first few months we were together: If the house I was shopping for wasn't in both our names, he was history. Against my better judgment, I consented to his pressure. Six months later, I fell out of love with Danny and begged him to sign the house back over to me. He resisted and became very vengeful. Our secret relationship was discovered when I showed up at work one day with a black eye; Danny boasted about giving it to me.

Danny Ellis was as cute as a cherub, and he exuded beauty from inside as well, with this punch to my eye being the exception. Little did he know that beyond my photogenic face was a guard to intimacy and / or commitment. He was ready for a storybook, devoted long-term marriage, but he had no chance with me. He was much too sweet and vanilla to have kept my interest, plus his jealousy pushed me away. We started out our soap opera star / florist relationship by walking naked on a deserted Laguna beach and making love in the sunlight of a sea cave. We planned a home together to Whitney Houston's "Saving All My Love for You" but when I drove him on the highway a year later and he told me I was too much, I snapped back that he wasn't enough. He opened the passenger door and he threatened to jump out. I did not want him to, but I did not give in to the drama he wanted. I drove on, ice cold, going 70 miles per hour as he screamed and held his door open.

YOUNG, GAY & RESTLESS

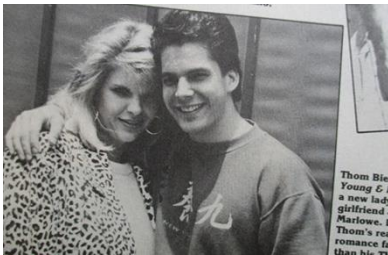
He did not jump out of the car and refused for months to leave the house or sign it over to me even though I had paid for it. Fortunately, my younger brother, Troy, had just arrived to stay with me (because he was fighting with Mom in Wisconsin), and at my urging he muscled Danny away from the front door several times until he eventually left for good and allowed me the house. Whitney's "Where Do Broken Hearts Go (Can They Find Their Way Home?)" was playing.

Though Danny and I worked on the same sound stages, we did not run into each other, since the florist is there earliest when the sets are going up. Years later I found out he died from AIDS, and have no idea if he was HIV positive before we were together, or if he caught it after we broke up. He was an angel of a man, despite our silly dramas, and he deserved better than me.

If somebody loves you, won't they always love you?

OTHER *YOUNG & RESTLESS* SCANDALS

There were other *Y&R* scandals besides the florist bragging about giving his secret gay lover, younger leading man Thom Bierdz, a black eye as they fought over the spoils of their relationship. I did bring my pretty friend from Wisconsin, Bobby-Jo, to a set party at one time, which sparked rumors she was having my child, but of course was not.



My beloved co-star Jeanne Cooper (Mrs. Chancellor) was secretly battling a serious alcohol problem, which she later openly shared in her own memoir, *Not Young, Still Restless*. She and I regularly rehearsed our scenes in her dressing room, and I got mad at myself if

I could not remember lines fast enough, because I refused to rely on cue cards, although Jeanne used them. One day on the set I fumbled my lines and apologized, saying, "I'm sorry. An actor should know his lines and not use cue cards!" Jeanne perhaps took that personally and immediately stated, "No, actors do not need to know their lines! They can use cue cards!" I think she felt attacked, but never had I ever wanted to hurt or judge her. She was a friend and idol. When I shared of my occasional asthma, she suggested I drink a shot of brandy, and I started to. Her alcohol problem went unnoticed by me until one day

in 1986 when my character wearing a Speedo had a scene with her temporary replacement, Gisèle MacKenzie.

Apparently, Jeanne had been ordered to go to treatment, and the show airing another Mrs.

Chancellor certainly gave her a motivation to get sober.



Jeanne and I on two personal appearances.

Jeanne compared our on-screen relationship to Auntie Mame and Patrick, and when I researched the movie *Mame* I understood the archetypes of the older, worldly, extravagant woman and the mama's boy learning about the outside world. Though I was worldlier than I let on in real life, our relationship was still similar to Mame and Patrick because she was so seasoned and full of advice. When she took VIP calls and tourists into her dressing room for chats, with me included, she later whispered to me to "build your army." Not being a networker, I did not understand that she was telling me to befriend VIP fans of the show, sponsors and CBS execs who could help me down the road if my career tanked and I needed them. Having been a starlet with Universal-International Studios in the 1950s, she knew to make herself available to socialize with the power players, like Joan Crawford did, and many shrewd actresses. Jeanne also knew that show business careers had ups and downs, but back then I could have never imagined I'd have downs. Jeanne opened her soul and her dressing room to all fans. She loved their attention and loved to make their day with her dynamic personality, which was always warm, but could be surprisingly raunchy. It is true that to loosen up actors in scenes she might grab their crotch—this was not thought of as sexual harassment back then—but silliness which truly relaxed the actor's faces exactly as the script called for.

Jeanne's character, Kay Chancellor, hated the character of my on-screen mother, Jill Abbott, who'd had sex with Kay's husband to birth my character. Jill was played by Brenda Dickson from 1973-1980 and 1983-1987 (Wikipedia source).

Brenda at first objected to be aged so quickly in the soap plot by having her son, played by a preteen boy, suddenly replaced with me at 24, playing 17. The fact that I was only 13 years younger than Brenda seemed awkward to play mother and son. Brenda was a former Miss California and a pretty ingénue used to men salivating over her. I think she had expected me to as well, and if I were straight, I would have. She insisted on wearing her own revealing gowns on the

show. Most were jeweled and very low-cut pushing out her boobs, and no one could understand why she wore such outlandish sexy clothes on days she only had scenes with her son. In hindsight, it was brilliant, because 30 years later, fans of the show still remember her wardrobe and over-the-top performances, often comparing her to the *Dynasty* characters.



Brenda Dickson and me in 1986, and her astoundingly young over 30 years later.



I recall the day my real mom from Wisconsin visited the *Y&R* set. Mom was petite and there was nothing glamorous or *Playmate* about her, and when Brenda was first introduced, Brenda looked my mom up and down and smiled in relief as if she'd won the beauty contest and that my mother was not a threat to her feminine wiles. Personally, I did not find Brenda as pretty back then as other soap actresses, but I am stunned by her beauty over the years. She is probably the most beautiful and youngest-looking woman in her 60s on the planet now—and looks like a 35-year-old blond *Playboy* bunny. Check her out on FB, where she appeases fans with photos of her today in similar shiny low-cut gowns. I wonder if part of her motivation to stay extremely beautiful and desirable is that her acting career stopped for the most part in 1987, besides performances in *Taxi Driver* and *Falcon Crest*? *Is that why I have stayed so young, too: never eclipsed my early fame?*

Brenda explains her being fired from *Y&R* in her own memoir. Even though she has been replaced for over 30 years, her fans speak of her like a goddess. Her presence left an indelible mark on celluloid, and it is puzzling and disheartening to see that such a talented star has been basically unused since 1987.

The first replacement for the character of Jill Abbott was Deborah Adair—but Deborah's sweetness came through and they dismissed her in a couple of days because they wanted to keep the character a villainess.

Jess Walton, a 1984 star from *Capital*, across the CBS studio hallway, was hired as the new Jill Abbott in June, 1987. Jess was already a very respected actress having guest-starred in the 1970's on *Medical Center*, *Kojak*, *Marcus Welby, M.D.*, *Ironside*, *The Rockford Files*, *Gunsmoke*, *Cannon*, and *Barnaby Jones*, as well as co-starred in the films *The Strawberry Statement* (1970), *The Peace Killers* (1971), *Monkeys in the Attic* (1974) and *The Hunted Lady* (1977).



Fan poses with Jeanne Cooper, me and Jess Walton around 1989.

Jess originally mimicked the shiny gowns and conniving drama needed for the Jill Foster Abbott part, and soon made it her own—going strong and winning six Emmy nominations and two Emmy's since! In person, Jess was a real sweetheart, and so open-minded. She supported gay rights and pursued similar spiritual courses as I'd done. She was a delight to work with and is also on FB.

Another *Y&R* scandal that hit headlines was the fist brawl between Eric Braeden (Victor) and Peter Bregman (Jack) in 1989. These were both tall, big-framed men, and although I was not there that day, I heard it was a bloody mess, quickly halted by a phone call from producer / creator Bill Bell. Rumor has it Peter's silence and refusal to sue was rewarded with contract benefits, but I do not know what really happened. It was obvious to me, though, that the Alpha male on the set was the macho Eric Braeden, and his fuse could blow if he felt slighted. I was on set a few times when he yelled at the crew to be quiet, so he could concentrate and "shoot this shit!" I think Bill Bell understood that when he hired actors, some of their personalities would take over their roles and direct the plots. Eric Braeden, in my opinion, remained the Alpha male on the show, and his recent memoir, *I'll Be Damned*, has received accolades.

Eric Braeden, near 80, is so macho I still have sexual fantasies about him. On the other hand, Peter Bregman is even more handsome in person than he is on-screen—almost to the point that he's hard to look at.

SEX AND FANS

From the years I was 24 to 27, during the first three years (1986–1989) I was on *The Young and the Restless*, the soap opera gained in ratings

and it went to #1. Not only was I making \$120,000 a year, I traveled many weekends to do public appearances.



What an honor to be paid a thousand or two thousand dollars to fly to a shopping mall and sign autographs for screaming fans. Even when

my mom and I went to Vegas to just visit and gamble, strangers would approach me in awe: I was on their favorite TV show in major storylines. I am glad I left a \$50 tip for the Circus Circus maids because before I checked out of the hotel, they swarmed me asking for photos and my autograph.



But here's something that only famous people know: You can't tell if a fan is attracted to you sexually. Normally, if a strange man gave me endless attention and a huge smile, I got that he was interested in dating me. But when a strange man at a public appearance gives a soap star attention and a blushing smile, he may just be star-struck by the TV character.

During a question-and-answer onstage for soap fans, where girls asked if I had a girlfriend, and I said no, they cheered. Afterwards I discreetly asked a cute male fan backstage to my hotel room. We were laying on the bed talking about the soap and he was all smiles and asking me questions, and I changed into a small swimsuit and asked him to join me in the Jacuzzi, suggesting he go in his underwear. While we were soaking, he asked the typical questions about plot lines and

cast mates, so I asked him personal questions to see if he had a girlfriend, and my erection was growing. (Cue “Nadia’s Theme” – a little up tempo here...) After 15 minutes, I said I was too hot and walked back to my room, him following. It was a small room and we lay on the bed in our wet suits talking more, and my erection was very obvious, but he ignored it. So, I took my throbbing dick out of my swimsuit, and he left pretty quickly. *Wow, I so misread his interest!*



Collage of photos taken at many personal appearances.

Did he later tell people that I had sexually assaulted him because I misread his energy and showed him my erection? I’d tucked it back in the second I saw his horrified face and apologized, saying “I thought you were gay.”

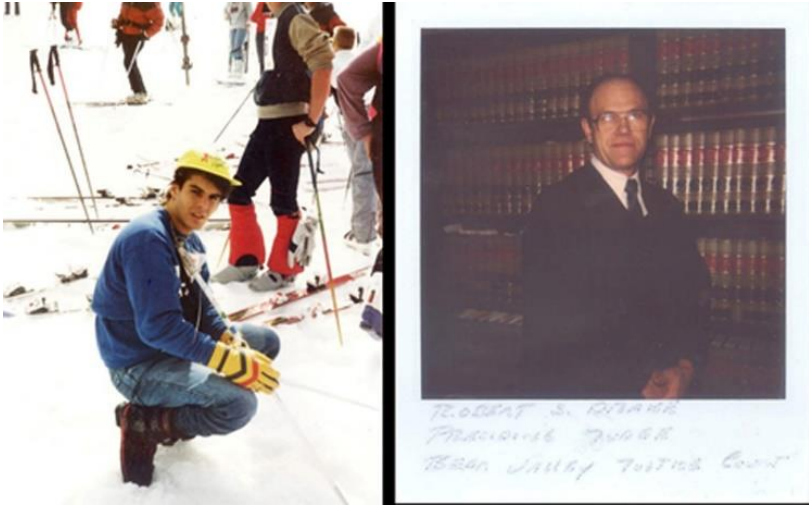
“I’m straight,” he said, “And should get home to my wife.”

YOUNG, GAY & RESTLESS

I'd never picked up anyone, no fan or other soap star, on any of my dozens and dozens of personal appearances, though when I was single I certainly tried. Hotel rooms could be very lonely, and one had so much free time, a bath tub, bed and room service could be perfect for a romantic tryst. Many of the straight soap guys were known to be real hounds and routinely picked up female fans and fucked them in their hotel rooms. Being gay and in the closet was a huge disadvantage on those trips in 1986-1989.



Photo of soap hunks by Tony Rizzo



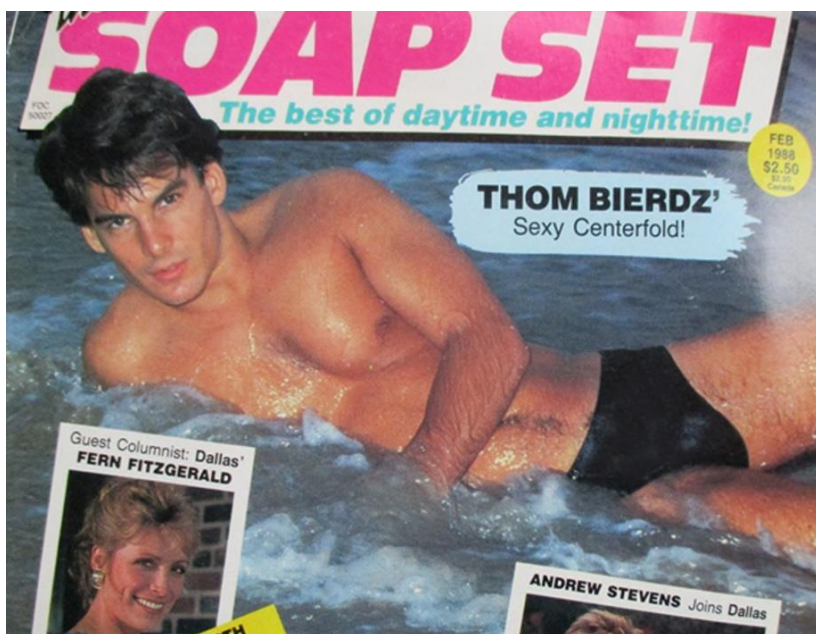
A bad skier, and the photo the Big Bear judge mailed me.

But being arrogant was also a disadvantage, and that bit me in the ass so hard once that I was arrested. I was paid to be at a celebrity ski event in mountainous Big Bear, two hours from Hollywood, and was so excited I brought Bruce and another friend along to share my suite. I was a horrible skier, and cost our team the win, but worse was that I refused to follow the law. I guess I turned right when I was not supposed to, so a cop pulled me over and ticketed me. Thinking I had no intention of ever returning, I tore up the ticket. And when the reminder was mailed to me in Hollywood, I wrote back explaining that "I was there as a CELEBRITY on a PERSONAL APPEARANCE." Instead of sending a check for the amount of my ticket, I sent a signed headshot. The next week, I received a signed Polaroid from the judge saying I still owed the ticket fee. Bruce thought it was hysterical. In any event, I ignored it.

GAY SOAP OPERA STAR AND SECRET PENIS PUMP

For years, I had had a crush on another gay soap opera hunk (okay, I

had crushes on almost all soap hunks), but he never seemed interested in me, until after my bathing suit layout in *Soap Set* magazine. I am not saying the layout was the reason he was interested in me, but when I went to his condo for our lunch date, that magazine was on his table. Narcissistically I gave a smirk like, “Wow, you like me if you have this!” But when I picked up the magazine, he quickly humbled me by saying, “I am in this magazine, too,” and rifled through the pages to show me.



Nevertheless, he said he wanted to see my dick, and I gladly obliged, unzipping and lowering my jeans. He felt me up a bit, then when I tried to feel him up, and asked to see his, he disappeared into his bedroom. Putting my ear to his bedroom door, I swear I heard him use a penis pump, because I knew what that sounded like. I had used one before. Eventually, he opened the door and let me see his enormous inflated penis.

But he wouldn't let me touch it, and he cancelled fooling around. So, I left totally confused. Why did we show each other our penises if we

THOM BIERDZ

were not going to at least jerk off together? Was his only intent to secretly pump his penis to look as big as it could, then wave it to me to show he was bigger? Who did he want me to tell? The Y&R casting people? I suspected this was a sketchy way he intimidated people. I had heard rumors that he'd regularly had sex with people to get his roles, or at least, had flirt and misled the powers who could hire him.

He was someone I had a crush on a long time, and years later at *A Course in Miracles* lecture I ran into him and asked him why he'd done what he had. He said, "I guess I was just afraid of the intimacy." My gut said this was his usual white lie when he rejected guys, and I did not buy it at all. Yup, he was gorgeous, but not honest enough for me to really consider having as a partner someday, not that he was interested anyway.

BRIAN BLOOM

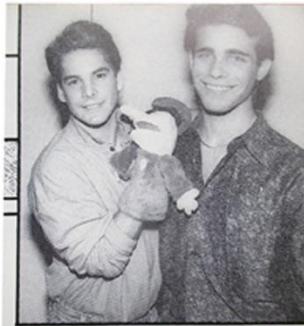
Though I was 25 in 1987 my character was still late teens. On one New York personal appearance, I met Brian Bloom, the impossibly gorgeous actor who played Dusty on *As the World Turns*. He looked older than me but was in reality not yet 18. He was the best-looking male on any soap opera ever, maybe even TV. Truth is I watched his show and he was my idol. He had black hair and green eyes, pale skin—was incredibly masculine and studly. His parents drove us from one NY venue to another and he and I sat in the back seat, exchanging playful barbs. All they knew about me was that I played a teen on a soap, they had no idea I had been a gay bartender, slept with many men including a Village Person, been seduced in Wisconsin by a bar boss and restaurant boss, assaulted by a photographer, propositioned by a bishop, romanced by a billionaire and had a Cuban shave my asshole. Apparently my adult humor and Brian's quick retorts bothered his parents because his father looked back and said, "That's

enough dirty talk, boys.”

I wanted to touch Brian. I wanted to kiss Brian. I wanted to be Brian. He was the soap opera star I wanted to be. He was better looking than me, taller, more macho, hairier, and a better actor. He was perfect.



I masturbated to his hairy chest in his spread a few years later in *Playgirl* and watched him on other TV shows like *2000 Malibu Road* and *Oz*. And then I



Brian Bloom greeted *Young & Restless* star Thom Bierdz during a charity event for Toys



slipped into the fantasy that he and I had fallen deeply in love. Why not let my heart have that ride? When I let my heart expand with that purity and sweetness, it filled me with healing endorphins like a fairy tale romance.

In truth though, as an adult, never had I ever put the make on anyone underage and would not. It was altogether not a sexual yearning I had for Brian; it was really a beautiful innocent joy and love for how perfect a male can be, probably similar to a nerdy girl falling in love with the captain of the football team, or a teen idol, or an unobtainable movie star like Brad Pitt. Brian never gave me any indication that he was gay or bi or attracted to me, but when I die and

carry my memories on to another dimension, he is in the category of *Men I Have Loved*.

Actor Ken Wahl had similar pale-skin-black-hair stud looks. Having a bit part in a movie he was in titled *The Gladiator*, I almost fainted in his presence. Damn. What a hunk of masculinity. Though I was a soap opera star, I still felt like a skinny nerdy boy in college swooning over Hollywood's perfect 10s.

SOAP OPERA FRENZY

But it was me, not Ken Wahl or Brian Bloom, onstage in a Toronto shopping mall getting screams from 7,000 girls who later lined up for photos. Because the soap opera camera added a few pounds, I looked better on TV, and fans would often say, "You look bigger on TV." That meant I was smaller in person, and deflated my ego, because I wanted to be bigger, blah, blah, blah. One night, after I left thousands of excited fans, I went back to my lonely hotel room, and found a sink with mirrors on three walls around it. I stripped off my clothes, climbed on the sink and studied my naked face and body intensely—from all angles. It was like I was making peace with what I was, literally getting comfortable in my own skin. I found some lotion by my feet and started lubing up my cock, jacking off, looking into my eyes. As I pressed my chest and butt and balls and feet and hands and eyes against the mirrors, I was coming. But it was more than coming—it was like a coming of age—like a permission to be the idol they saw.

Some idolized me, which I accepted and appreciated, playing the part, though not understanding it. Nevertheless, my TVQ was steadily rising, and I was careful to stay out of gay bars, so I wouldn't be fired for breaking the moral clause in my soap contract.

Some friends mentioned there was a big gay party in Hollywood and I

wanted to go and maybe find a husband, but trying not to be recognized, I disguised myself by hiding behind a mustache and beard...of magic marker over a little stubble! Looking back, I am so embarrassed because no one bought my disguise and I overheard some sexy men say, "Why does that guy have magic marker on his face?"

It may appear that I had been around the block sexually, but my sex drive was as potent as my creative drive, and I certainly never did everything I sexually fantasized. True that recently I'd had a one-nighter with a tall actor who played *Ulysses* in a foreign movie, but I had never gone to a big White Party, where super studs danced in their underwear and most did drugs and had sex, exchanging partners and participating in orgies. I had all those orgy fantasies, but I stayed away from those parties because:

It seemed irresponsible and I did not want that to hurt my career.

I hated loud music.

I never did drugs.

I hated crowds.

I didn't want to catch a disease for a few minutes of stranger sex.

I did not want to hurt the feelings of the one person in the orgy whom I was not attracted to.

It was the late 1980s. Hollywood was still homophobic, and the USA was still in an uproar over HIV+ Rock Hudson kissing Linda Evans on *Dynasty* back in 1984. One day in a *Y&R* scene, I was on the set as actor Terry Lester, a closeted gay actor, kissed Melody Thomas Scott, an actress and wife of one of the producers. But the cameras did not pick up that Terry was kissing the back of his hand, and his fingers were over Melody's mouth. It was so bizarre that I never forgot it, and when Terry died some years later I thought back and wondered if he was

HIV positive then and the show (with her husband as the producer) was trying to protect Melody? By 1988, I had been on the soap two years. A few of my cast mates knew I was gay and privately supported me, but I did not come out publicly. Strangely similar to the *Dynasty* scandal, my soap character's love story was with the main producer's daughter and there seemed to be backstage paranoia about it. For some reason, my character had a scene where he needed to get his blood drawn. I had not yet been tested for AIDS, and I was panicking, because the flaming wardrobe guy told me they were using a real nurse and needle to draw my real blood.

I was broken up with Danny the *Y&R* florist at this time, and if he did already know he was HIV+, the show may also have known, and they may have been secretly testing me for it, to protect their daughter who was required to kiss me. My memory was fuzzy on that, and it may be my paranoia that they were paranoid, but it seemed very strange that a scene was written for me to have blood drawn. I felt trapped, cornered, dirty, shamed, betrayed. I could lose my fame, income and never work again as an actor in an industry afraid of AIDS and HIV. My one and only dream to be a movie-star could be coldly stomped out for prejudice against a disease I might have contracted during sex with guys I hardly knew! I instantly regretted ever having sex and realized if I turned up positive, I'd have to be in denial to survive and ignore the results, or I'd dwell on it and shrivel away in scabs, shunned.

That very day, I pulled Lauralee Bell into my dressing room and sweating profusely confessed that I was gay. She probably already knew and asked me why I was telling her that day. It was probably obvious I was scared to test positive for AIDS, but I didn't explain.

* 11: **MY BROTHERS MOVE TO HOLLYWOOD**

BROTHER GREGG MOVES TO HOLLYWOOD TO BE A STAR

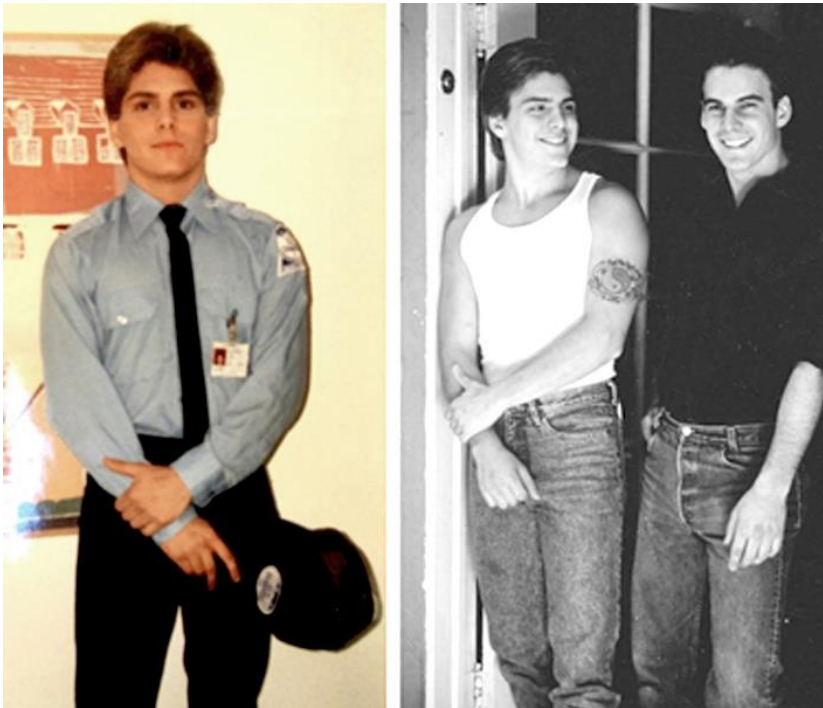


My brother, Gregg, had moved in with me a few months earlier at the end of 1987, having graduated from a Wisconsin college with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and a minor in Psychology. After having DJ-ed the college radio show and hosting a fraternity version of *Family Feud*, Gregg wanted to become a Hollywood actor. The least I could do was introduce him to photographers, agents, managers, and publicists. I got him work as an assistant to Bobby-Jo's new husband, a casual PR guy, who sued me for not showing up at a personal appearance. I got the dates mixed up. My fault. I so regret losing touch with Bobby-Jo at that point. She was so much fun to be with, but I was mad I was sued, even rightfully so, and I stopped hanging out with her.

To help Gregg I got him on *The New Hollywood Squares* with me (it was a fun game show experience, and I also enjoyed being a celebrity guest previously on *Win, Lose or Draw* hosted by Vicki Lawrence. Even back then painting was important to me; both shows revealed

canvases of mine). Everybody loved Gregg, but I was irritated that he offered no help around the house. Still, I gave him my spare bedroom.

Gregg was not thrilled to share that room with our youngest brother, Troy, 18. But there simply was no other place for Troy because my mother couldn't handle him and no mental hospitals in Kenosha would continue to see him. For a while Dad took Troy, but couldn't handle him either. Since the age of 15, Troy had gotten into increasing trouble with the law for everything from kicking in school doors to stealing cars. That February of 1989, soon after arriving to my home in Los Angeles, Troy decided to join the army, but the military didn't want him because of his criminal record. In spite of his past delinquencies, I managed to get him a CBS security job.



1989. Troy. Troy and me.

Troy proudly put on the uniform, asked to borrow Gregg's Polo cologne, then posed for a picture we would send Mom as proof of his

transformation. But Troy never reported for duty. I didn't know why. I assumed he was lazy and irresponsible, but later I would surmise that paranoia inhibited him. Unlike Gregg who was a magnet for new friends and social invites, Troy just lie around my house all day, so I demanded he at least do yard work.

I was too busy at CBS to do all the fix-ups an old house required, and my new lover, Rod, was a busy salesman.

Dark-haired Rod did not seem trustworthy to my brothers, but I'd fallen head-over-heels in love the instant we'd met in a West Hollywood grocery store. It is possible that he knew I was on TV before I told him, because I later discovered his ex had also been on a TV series. (I just FB messaged the famous ex and asked if I could mention him as Rod's ex, but he prefers not, so I will not).

Rod asked to move into my home immediately, and eager for us to experience great love, I let him. I learned years later that he didn't have a place to live because another of his ex's was throwing him out for cheating. He decided very early in his troubled upbringing to only look at people's mouths, and not their eyes, when they spoke. That way he believed he could tell if they were lying. I was passionate about Rod. He was a genius; a certified Mensa member who could write music with a speed and talent I thought impossible. Sweat would pour from his forehead as he sat frozen on a bench for hours, mastering various instrument sounds on his synthesizer. My brothers and I were in awe of his talents.

I encouraged Troy to play music and even bought him an acoustic guitar. He fiddled with it for a few weeks, and because of it, was actually starting to smile and relax. He hummed a few lyrics of Mom's classic Neil Diamond songs when he helped me build furniture. With my friend Bruce's help, we made Adirondack chairs for the back yard. Nothing made Troy laugh like Bruce acting silly or girly. But when Bruce was not around, I was surprised to discover Troy still had a healthy sense of humor—dry, like mine.

I hoped Troy would take an interest, and with training, maybe find a career in the arts. But he wasn't interested. Rod shared tales of his many travels with Troy, hoping to excite Troy with a potential career in some aspect of the travel industry. To no avail.

Rod had traveled the Amazon and was familiar with rhesus monkeys. We ordered one from Monkeys Unlimited in Cincinnati, Ohio. Fifteen-hundred-dollars seemed like a steal for a primate who could have the intelligence of a four-year-old child. Rod went to the Vegas airport (was illegal in California) with me to pick up Abu, and he bonded more quickly with the terrified pet. To my chagrin, I learned some rhesus monkeys only bond with one person. Unfortunately for me, Abu chose Rod.

Having four men and a monkey living under the same roof was often chaotic, often noisy, but just as often silent. Gregg was usually gone—dating or networking or both. Troy preferred to watch TV in his room. Rod and I loved to challenge our word knowledge by long games of *Scrabble*.

Diapered Abu would sit on Rod's shoulder preening his hair as Rod spent minutes staring at his wooden letter pieces, trying to come up with seven-letter words. I was incensed that Rod could beat me so easily, and I accused him of needing to win everything. Rod argued that I was the one who needed to win everything. I regretted telling him about my grade school dairy questionnaire where, to appear perfect, I lied, saying every day I ate everything on the list: bacon, sausage, ham, hamburger, pancakes, waffles, grits, oatmeal, hash browns, eggs, toast, cereal, tomatoes, apple sauce, cheese, milk, etc. EVERY day I checked EVERY box as if the teacher would possibly believe my skinny, shy self had eaten all that earlier for breakfast.

Rod said, "The rest of the kids hated you for having to outscore them on a stupid dairy test. It was a subconscious effort of yours to get them to keep their distance. Then they couldn't figure out your secret of being gay. Because that was not perfect. You were the lonely

schoolboy who lied about his breakfast to impress people. Isn't it weird, or ironic, that you grew up to be a perfect-looking soap opera hunk still lying to impress his fans in shopping malls?"

"I don't lie."

"Thom, I've been there at the personal appearances when the girls ask, 'Do you have a girlfriend?'"

"I say NO. That's not a lie. I do not have a GIRLfriend. I was throwing them off. You know that no casting director will cast an openly gay actor. There are no gay songs on the radio. No gay shows on TV. You know what my publicist said..."

Soap Opera Digest had contacted my publicist after a jealous old friend from Your Place bar in Milwaukee attempted to "out" me, and potentially get me fired from *The Young and the Restless*, by sending the magazine my old pay stubs and a sweet photo of me and cowboy Gary with our arms around each other. Luckily, the magazine, with a reputation of integrity, was happy to disregard them.

Rod asked, "At the malls, didn't you tell them you had a girlfriend?"

"No, that would be lying. I told them I was single, and they cheered that."

"But that was a lie."

If I'd felt more secure about myself, and more secure about my relationship with Rod, I could have fought back. I could have reminded him how he lied every day at his job selling memberships for a heterosexual dating service. Rod regularly told prospective clients he was straight, and that he'd met his wife through the service. He actually DID have a wife—he married a Canadian for money to give her a green card.

Wasn't that a lie, too?

Was our whole relationship, between daily great sex, made up of lies?

I was certainly lying as much as he was. When *Soap Opera Digest* did its first cover story on me, I avoided pronouns when asked about a love relationship. It was hard in the beginning to suggest a lie by avoidance, but it got easier. My managers and agents also advised me to “be discreet.”



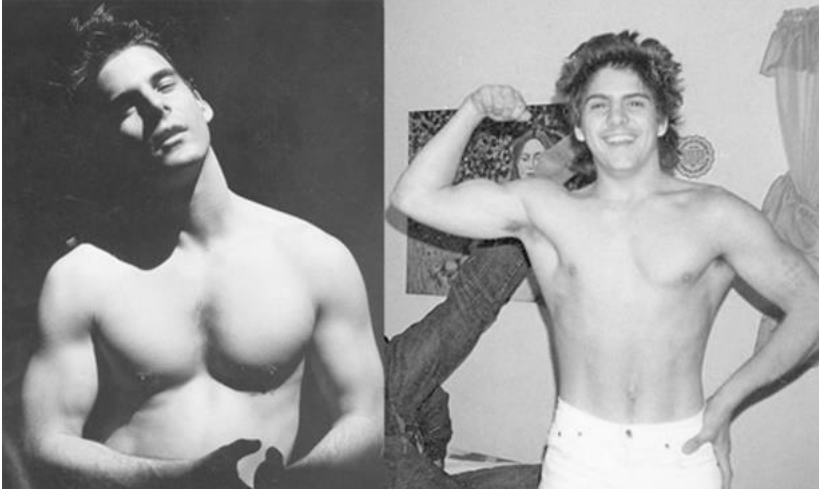
WOW mag's Steve Korte interviewing me in my CBS dressing room.

When I took Troy to the set, he wanted me to be discreet too. He was even more embarrassed about my sexuality than I was. Gregg was also embarrassed, but not too ashamed to accept my free room and acting connections.

At my house, however, with the help of Bruce's quick wit and cartoon gestures, my being gay was something my brothers and I joked about. No offense taken. I wanted us to talk about it, so we could get past it.

My wannabe-actor brothers and I lifted weights in my garage. Since it was too small for my pick-up truck, we transformed it into a gym with a mirror and a Solo-Flex machine. Even though Troy was the youngest, he had the most muscular definition. Gregg didn't seem to care what

we thought about his body; he was only interested in what the ladies thought. The ladies loved his slighter frame with muscular legs from his sports-play. But I was jealous of Troy's physique. He looked more like a soap opera hunk than I did.



Me posing for photo by Barry King. Troy flexing bicep.

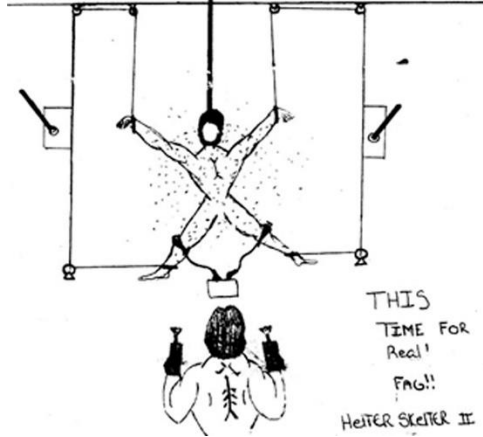
But I didn't kick Troy out because I was jealous of him. I eventually kicked him out after he disobeyed me too many times. Troy's final disrespectful act was to urinate on my front porch. Gregg was using the house's only bathroom, and if Troy couldn't have waited he could've peed in the bushes. Instead he chose my front door, and I did not find it sexy or have a sense of humor about that. So, I locked him out.

That night Gregg told our mother what happened. She swiftly flew from Wisconsin to Los Angeles to rescue and take Troy back home. At the last minute, I offered to get Troy his own apartment in Hollywood, but she insisted on taking him with her. Surprisingly that night, after being apart from her for six months, Troy treated her with respect.

They acted loving and appreciative with each other. No one, least of all me, knew the full extent of their dramatic past, or their future. I still did not understand he was a real threat.

Out of sight, out of mind.

I was pleased to not have to put any more energy into helping Troy, and Gregg was grateful to have his own room.



Troy had only been back in Kenosha for a week before he sent me a diagram of his intended revenge on me. Is it telling there is a blank space where a penis would be – did Troy find it too naughty to draw a penis? It was a sketch of a man hung from ceiling rafters and hooked up to electrical cables. I dismissed it as an empty threat—another ploy for attention.

But apparently it was more than that. My mother knew it was. That’s why she kept her car keys hidden from Troy once back in Wisconsin.

Infuriated that he could not use her car, he grabbed a butcher knife from the Mom’s kitchen counter and stated he “would kill everybody and himself”—then slashed his wrist. He was still bleeding as the police department arrived. Eventually they got him to trade the knife for a pack of cigarettes.



Troy confessed to ingesting a gram of cocaine the previous day. After

being examined at the psychiatric hospital, which would not admit Troy because of his history of aggressive behavior, it was determined he had a “conduct disorder or antisocial personality.”

The doctor wrote, “I believe this young man requires relatively long-term, highly-structured treatment. I believe that if Troy is not treated at this time, he will soon be untreatable and end up in and out of jail and the court system for various crimes for most of the remainder of his life.”

While it was once again my mom’s turn to deal with Troy, I could avoid him—but his anger did perplex my psyche. During this time, I was asked to use my celebrity as part of a telethon for mentally challenged children. Relating them to Troy, I referred to the kids as “troubled,” and was corrected on-air that those words were not politically correct. I couldn’t stop thinking about Troy and, succumbing to tears, shared on camera that he had just attempted suicide.



For someone like me, who thought he knew everything, who at least seemed to find “success,” it was frustrating not knowing how to fix my little brother. The fact that I did seem to fix him, for a couple months, and that I stopped fixing him because of my Italian temper and kicked him out, increased my frustration.

MORE ON ROD

Rod was definitely one of my great loves. Maybe part of the attraction was how smart and talented he was; quite a puzzle for me to grasp. As he shopped at the West Hollywood supermarket in 1988, he'd caught my attention. That led to polite conversation and exchanging numbers. Later that night we took take-out food to see the view from Mullholland Drive—and had mutual oral sex on the mountainside, slightly hidden in brush.

His talents were endless. He took a dance gig in Florida, so I flew to Daytona Beach and stayed at his hotel a few weeks as he trained. This was intense attraction, incredible sex—and very romantic. At night we sat on the Florida beach and made love, again, mainly oral, rarely did I do more. But wow—we made LOVE. It was very unusual for me to touch a body out of love, not for physical lust. Rod and I could have been partners for life if I knew now what I didn't know then. He had a roving eye, and I was impossibly jealous and accusatory, and demanded he only be attracted to me. If I had been secure and mature enough then to allow an open relationship, we could have spent decades together. The sex and love were that strong.

Rod, however, had not dealt with his own issues. He made a documentary about his murdering psychopath relative and told me that his father was also apparently a sociopath. Rod was as distant emotionally at times as I was, which is why we could have worked and understood each other and matured together. He denied having any issue, and though recently his gay brother asked me to have Rod apologize for excessively and hurtfully raping him when they were kids, Rod flatly denied that ever happened, just as he denied ever cheating on me despite several of my friends witnessing.

SLEAZY MANAGERS

Although my brother, Gregg, and I did not always see eye to eye, we had the same sense of humor and could joke on what goofs we were.

After Gregg moved to Hollywood, I introduced him to agents and photographers, leading to a few auditions for him. However, he did not book any call backs and surrendered his dream of being a successful actor. His goal was never to be a movie star like mine was; his goal was to be rich, like when we played the *Prize Property* board game as kids. Since Gregg could not make riches as an actor, yet saw the money in the industry, he quickly got a job as an assistant to a manager, and wanted to work his way up to be a wealthy manager, like his boss, J. M. B.

It is fascinating to me that J. M. B. was one of the most notorious and unethical gay managers in the business who preyed on young actors and yet my homo ass never crossed his path, but my straight brother's did.

No doubt Gregg was hired because he was a very handsome man, but Gregg was also quite resourceful and good at learning games and could meet almost any challenge put forth. Gregg confided to me the enormous sums of cash—up to \$25,000! —that J. M. B. paid to very well-known straight actors to have sex with him. Apparently, J. M. B. had a ferocious appetite, and had sex appointments lined up with the most beautiful men just setting foot in Hollywood, regardless that these men were under the impression the meetings were about acting careers, not sex. Gregg relayed the many tricks J. M. B. implemented in trapping and seducing these innocents and was disconcerted that his boss was repeatedly coming on to him, offering him increasing amounts of cash. Not long after, however, Gregg paid cash for a brand-new car, but he seemed to be at odds with it. His relationship with his boss soon soured, and he was then let go.

My manager, Tim Wood, was very free sexually, with jokes and stories, even about Rob Lowe and the sex tape with an underage girl which caused scandal in 1988, but Tim was never predatory like J. M. B.. Tim had had a great deal of sex, even though he was in an open relationship with his business partner, Chet. Tim was even bisexual at some periods and kidded that he could still be with women except

their soprano voices bugged him. Sadly, Tim and Chet were HIV+ and both dying of AIDS.

Although cowboy Gary and I would remain HIV negative we knew many men from Milwaukee who had AIDS or were positive, like Scott who had just died, and some of my Hollywood friends were infected as well. Comedian Jim J. Bullock (*Too Close for Comfort*, *Hollywood Squares*, *Alf*) was a good friend who threw amazing dinner parties in his Hollywood Hills home, and he was open about his HIV+ status with friends, but at that time not the public.



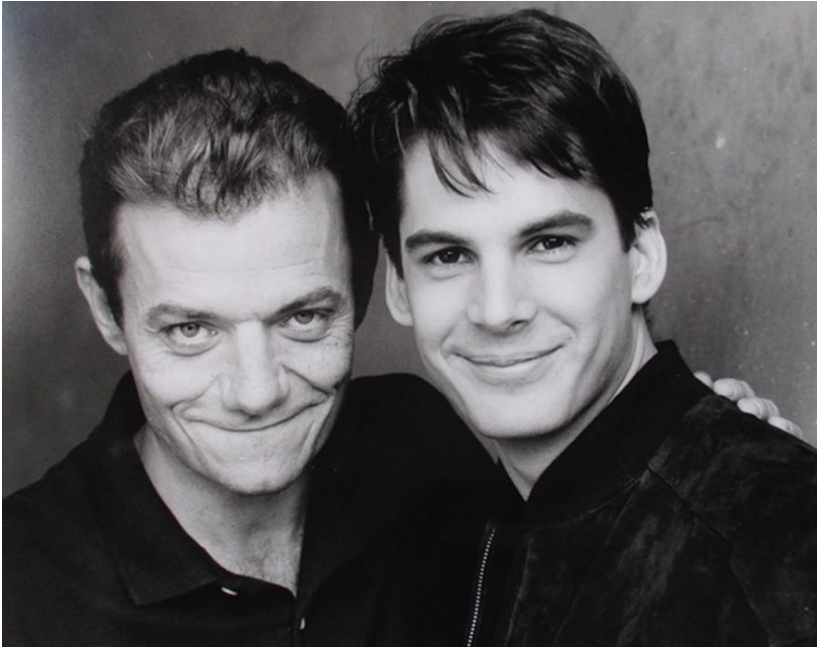
Bruce taking a photo of me and Jim Bullock making faces.

YOUNG, GAY & RESTLESS



Scott on *Y&R* set before he moved back to Iowa, succumbing to AIDS.

Another comedian, Steve Moore, who looked like Dr. Smith on *Lost In Space*, often went to the gym with me and painted with me.



HIV+ friend Steve Moore and I. Photo by Barry King.

Steve was the first brave comic to share his HIV+ status in his stand-up, threatening that if the audience didn't laugh at his jokes, he'd slice a vein and take out the front row. Steve also shared a deep interest in the afterlife and we had several séances together. Even though I believed very strongly in life after death, and knew Tim was dying, I refused to go see Tim in the hospital room in his last days.

I avoided seeing Tim die because I did not want to see him emaciated and full of scabs, I did not want to believe it, and I did not have a clue how to handle it; what to say to him; what to do.

Several months after Tim died, Steve and I had a sleep-over in my living room, and we synchronized our intents and tried to reach Tim's spirit. We both believed we human beings could in fact interact with unworldly entities. Minutes later, we did feel an unexplainable exhilaration fly through us, giving us both goose bumps, and heightened our belief in the after-life.

Another successful Ouija Board night was with Jason Gould. Jason and I met through an agent, had dinner, and at Jason's West Hollywood home afterwards, he and I tried to contact spirits. That night I received nothing pertinent to me, but he felt we had contacted his deceased grandfather; Barbara Streisand's father.

Although my belief in God and Jesus would change over decades as I researched spirituality and religions, my belief in life after death never vacillated.

ENDING MY *YOUNG AND RESTLESS* CONTRACT

The biggest longtime *Y&R* stars had the biggest dressing rooms, some with several rooms, and furniture they'd ordered, but I was fine to settle for small ones and usually was assigned a new one each day. I masturbated in my dressing room a few times, especially when Steve Ford (President Ford's son), who played Andy, was on a TV live feed doing his scenes on the stages. Other than that, I don't think I had sex in a dressing room, besides once with a macho extra who was dressed as a cop.

One of the main male stars of the show was rumored to be fucking big-busted blondes in his dressing room, even though he was married. Many years later, when I was assigned his dressing room for a day, I found he had a very visible full bar in an armoire. This shocked me. Back in my early *Y&R* days, I figured one drink could get you fired—how I wish I'd known some of the big stars had an upfront drink before scenes! I would have been a better, more relaxed actor.

My goal had been to be a movie star, not a soap star, and I had not wanted to extend my three-year contract. Oddly, around my last date of shooting in April of 1989, Bill Bell, the producer, called my dressing room, and said that my acting was not good and that I no longer

looked like I had when they'd hired me. I still can't figure out why he made that call because I was leaving anyway.

As far as my look being different, he was right. I tried very hard to gain weight and liked a fleshier face but apparently it did not photograph as chiseled as when I was skinny.

* 12: TROY KILLS

1988: Dean Carbian, ACSW Clinical Coordinator, Community, Support Program: *“Troy...described how he would kill Thom slowly over about four days, torturing him. He stated he would hang him from his hands, burn him with cigarettes, pound nails into his kneecaps, use a car battery to give him electrical shocks...”*

I would later learn that when Troy was 12-years-old he wrote an essay on assassinating the president of the United States. The thought of killing had been in his head constantly after that. In his own words: *“For the publicity or in a manner of gaining manhood.”* Troy’s poetry:

EVIL IN SEASON

*Evil in season
Taste the blood
Churn the knife
Start the flood
Kill the pigs
Slaughter them all
Stack them up
Stack them tall
A quest for me?
We soon shall see.*

From Troy’s Diary: *“THY SHALL NOT COVENITE THY NEIGHBORS WIFE I have had evil thoughts and have masterbated to these thought, and thoughts of these womans: Missy (greggs girlfriend), Stephanie Kramer (TV STAR), lisa Graff (sisters friend), Sheron (sisters friend) Bev, Daught (Jenny) and Bevs sister. Julie Szarafinski (school mate), nurses, porno phone sex (I called a mumeris amount of times) Cheril Lad, Kate Jackson, Fahara Fawcite, (TV STARS)... woman I have seen on the streets, Vanessa (classmate), CANDY (ex-girlfriend), Lonie Anderson (TV STAR), Eva Torrez, posters of woman...Tracy Heison, Belinda*

Carliel, Just about every woman I saw."

Karen K. Cesenhofer, MSW, Director, Community Support Program:
"Troy expressed a great deal of anger toward his mother. He stated he thinks constantly of killing people. He described his thoughts of walking down the street, shooting a stranger and walking on like nothing's happened. He stated he would like to experience the excitement of killing someone. Troy also reported that he thinks about killing his family, but he cannot do that until he decides whether to kill his mother first or last. He described at length the pros and cons of having his mother watch the rest of the family die or for her to know she would be killed without being able to help the family. ...I encouraged Dr. Carbian to notify the family of what appears to be a potentially dangerous and serious threat to the family in general, but Mrs. Bierdz and brother, Thom, in particular."

Troy and Mom in a happier moment.



On July 14, 1989, Troy beat our mother to death with a baseball bat in her Kenosha, Wisconsin kitchen.

Troy was still on the loose the next morning. The police called, urging me to leave my house immediately. The night of my mother's murder, her car was

seen on the highway speeding out of Kenosha. The driver, Troy, picked up a hitchhiker, and then took off again, dumping the contents of Mom's purse out the window.

My mother's credit card was traced to a Kmart near Chicago, where Troy bought spray paint, probably to disguise our mother's car. We would later learn that Troy and the hitchhiker also switched license plates with another car in the store's parking lot.

A couple of hours further south in Illinois, Troy stopped at a phone booth and called 911. He said, "This is THOM Bierdz, the soap opera star, and I just killed my mother and raped my little brother Troy."

Troy's threats and violence had escalated for years, and I never took any of them seriously, but this manipulative behavior was something I'd never before seen from him. His attempt to frame me proved he was determined to hurt me in any way possible. When my sister told me about Troy's call, I was stunned by his audacity, and his naivety, in thinking people would believe him.

Growing up, I rarely touched Troy. I certainly never touched him in a sexual way, and I wondered if his charge might reveal his own repressed homosexual feelings—of which I had absolutely no evidence.

Rod and I took cover at several friends' homes, including that of Jeanne Cooper. Jeanne was maternal to me both on-screen and off, and she had met Troy a couple of times when I'd taken him to the CBS set. She couldn't believe he killed Mom, who many times had relaxed between scenes in Jeanne's dressing room with me.

I didn't want to endanger any of our friends by staying in one place too long, so Rod and I kept moving. Our next stop was the home of comedian Jim J. Bullock, where my best friend Bruce was renting a room.

From there I called Hope, anxious for news of Troy's whereabouts. He was on the lam.



He was arrested a week later hiding out in Texas.

Troy was the first person to be sentenced under Wisconsin's new "Life Meaning Life" statute, and he would not be eligible for parole until he was 69-years-old. Unless Troy escaped, he would probably die in prison. He was already dead to me as a brother and human being.

I felt that our mother's soul lived on without a body—and that Troy's body lived on without a soul.

In my eyes, my mother was always an angel—so devoted, loving, kind, honest, sincere, appreciative, encouraging, welcoming, and protective. I believed then she had become an angel in spirit, maybe even with wings as far as I knew. I did NOT know, and I prayed desperately hard, asking her to come to me in spirit. I needed to know she was okay, and part of me wanted to apologize for being so self-centered and not giving to her all she had given to me. Day after day, month after month, I prayed to hear from her—but did not.

Rod and I saw the best in each other and the worst in each other. My faults and challenges were raw and obvious especially in dealing with Troy killing Mom. Eventually, in 1990, Rod and I broke up over the "Q" in a *Scrabble* game. He exchanged it with one letter left in the bag and I was furious and insisted that was against the rules. He was right, as he always was. A player can sneak the "Q" back in the bag if there's only one letter in it and stick the opponent with it. Of course, we had deeper issues. A good friend told me he was cheating on me continually, which he denied, and we had another issue regarding the monkey, which I discuss in detail in my previous memoir, *Forgiving Troy*. In any event, I insisted Rod leave, and he left, taking the monkey.

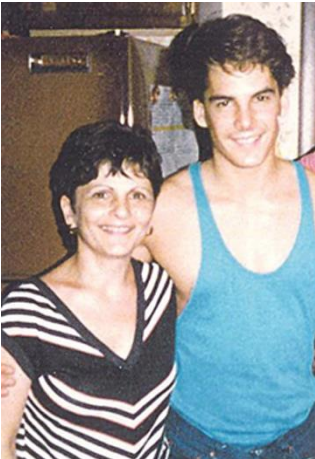
Some men change you forever. Rod did that to me. Despite the trust issues which he and I both had, here was a man I could see as a complete partner. He excited my mind, my body, my heart, my soul, my career interests—everything. Maybe subconsciously I also liked that he was not devoted entirely to me because by then I had a pattern of feeding off the adrenalin of pursuing unrealistic dreams. He was an untamed unavailable bad boy with secrets—maybe I

gravitated to that challenge because my quest on Earth was to solve puzzles, or maybe because he echoed my unanswered need for my father in my formative years and when he divorced mom, leaving us?

Bruce commented about that time, “Thom doesn’t like guys who are nice to him.” He was talking to a man, my type, who had a crush on me, but in whom I was not interested. It was a strange statement to hear, because I felt I absolutely liked nice guys. In fact, I would have said I only liked nice guys. But who could discount the opinion of a best friend?

For years and years, I wondered if Rod and I could find each other and make it work. Every few years we talked on the phone. I always thought of Rod when I heard Air Supply—his favorite band. Almost 30 years later, it still hurts to hear the lyrics to “Lost in Love (You Know You Can’t Fool Me).”

SEX FANTASIES ABOUT MY DEAD MOTHER



It was common for teen boys to have sexual fantasies about their mother, or their father, and being gay, I never had sexual thoughts about my mother—until she died. As her murder sunk in week after week, month after month, year after year, for some reason I had a nagging urge to make love to her. I could not stop thinking about fucking, in missionary position, her healthy body—the way it was before she was killed. I felt like I was “supposed to.”

This troubled me immensely, as I felt it so disrespected her, and being such a believer in the afterlife, felt horribly guilty that her dead mind may have been able to read my “naughty” thoughts. I told no one

about this and though I resisted this fantasy in masturbation, it only grew until I could not resist it any longer. One afternoon I allowed myself to picture my mother as I hugged pillows and fucked a Fleshlight vagina. My brain hated this, but my body was into it. I was like a teen boy desperately trying to please my mother, to fill her where she needed to be filled? Shockingly, the minute I ejaculated, the need for this fantasy left me, as I had fulfilled some aching part of my confused soul.

I shared this with my father. As a psychotherapist he understood the crossed wires of trauma and sex and admitted that he and his wife had passionate sex the night police told him Troy killed mom and could be on his way to kill him.

Strange how I was only attracted to men, but was compelled to make love to my dead mother.

Years before this, a lady friend of mine, a gorgeous country singer, and I were visiting on a secluded beach. We both stripped completely naked and ran into the water and splashed around, having a very freeing experience. She had been raped, and this was a healing experience for her to trust a naked man, and I was inhibited around women about sex, except Bobby-Jo who seemed like one of the guys. In any event, I never looked at my lady friend's naked body and never had a sexual thought about her.

* 13: **LOVE & THE PENIS ENLARGEMENT**

BIG DOG

In 1990, when I was 28, Steve, Bruce and Jim Bullock and I went to a Hollywood hotspot, Butterfields, off Sunset Boulevard, a garden area made of connected patios under high trees. Across the garden was a table of 10 men, two of whom I found very handsome. I stared flirtatiously from a distance, then Steve and I walked nearer to them. The taller dark-haired guy with the mustache was apparently a producer. The shorter, muscular blond with an unbelievable smile worked landscaping on golf courses. And wow—I couldn't take my eyes off him. My penis decided on the blond, whereas perhaps my brain would have chosen a producer to help my career, but I was never a gold digger or networker.

I'd like to say 35-year-old Gary Erxle's honesty and simplicity were what attracted me to him, but in reality, his muscles were what I wanted wrapped around me on nights that I hated myself for being weak and confused. The same muscles I wanted to have sex with to distract myself from my haunted memories. He was so honest, down-to-earth, and eager to please that my friends and I nicknamed him "Big Dog." He was proud of the name and joked about being spawned from "trailer-trash." Golf course management was his career and one major interest, which started when he was a teenager collecting golf balls for a nickel each at a country club. He was as simple as Rod was complicated. I needed simple.

We often hiked and rode bikes. One time when we were riding bikes on the wide brick walking path of Laguna Beach, a short female cop blew her whistle, ordered us off bikes and demanded our IDs. Apparently, we were in a no-bike zone. Thinking I'd outsmart her and escape a fine, I told her we did not have IDs. But she did not let us go

with a warning as I'd hoped; instead she yelled to her male cop partner for back-up. They intimidated us into handing over our driver's licenses which were in our back pocket wallets.

As the male cop reported our names over his police radio, the female blocked us into a corner and was stoic to my argument of being ignorant to the bike

law. Five minutes later, a cop car with lights flashing divided the tourist crowd and I was handcuffed and thrown into the back seat. Gary was as



shocked as I was, and I pressed my face against the window and called out for his help as the car drove me away to jail.

Biking on a beach walkway did not usually warrant an actual arrest, right?! As I reeled in anxiety in the backseat, suddenly it dawned on me. My eyes widened, and I blurted out, "This is a mistake! When my brother killed our mom, he called 911 and said I did it, but no one believed him. I did not kill anyone!! You guys think I killed my mom!"

My pleading eyes were met by baffled expressions of the front seat cops, growing more suspicious when I added, "I am on a soap opera. Troy was jealous of my fame or something and tried to frame me. I am Phillip Chancellor III."

The cops did not respond to me. It was a grueling long car ride where my mumbling conspiracy theories were met with silence. It wasn't until I was thrown in a holding cell that I was informed the reason: not paying my Big Bear ticket for turning right on red six years before. I recalled the Big Bear judge in the Polaroid he sent in response to me mailing my signed head shot instead of a payment. He finally got me.

My ticket had jumped to \$600. Fortunately, my one allowed phone call went to Big Dog who bailed me out until I could get to an ATM.

Everyone in my family loved Big Dog, and so did all my friends, even my exes. Rod liked the idea of Big Dog very much. When I occasionally talked to Rod on the phone, I couldn't deny the romantic spark still existed, but I refused to ever again be in a relationship without trust. Unlike Rod, Big Dog couldn't deceive me if he tried. Unfortunately, Big Dog couldn't even spell "deceive," so I lost the best *Scrabble* opponent I ever had when Rod left.

COURT RECORDS

I didn't have time for board games anyway. On a quest to figure out why Troy killed Mom, I had retained 400 pages of court documents, and was constantly researching the events in my mother's secretive life—reliving them—hearing them—feeling them—seeing her disappointed face—imagining her terrified face—day after day—week after week.



I read at outdoor cafes but couldn't bear waitresses looking into my eyes and spying the knots forming in my brain, as I struggled to respond to their simple questions and pleasantries. Most patrons at

these eateries were smiling or relaxing, but I was gravely serious.

For a while, after Tim Wood died, I was managed by Billy Sammeth, an A-list manager who took notice of me on *The New Hollywood Squares* when I received almost as much applause as his client, Joan Rivers. Billy was also managing Cher and Olivia Newton-John. However, his female stars were understandably in need of his constant attention and he no longer had enough time for me. It was a huge blow when he stopped managing me and I was severely deflated.

I had lost my confidence and regressed into shy Tommy Bierdz of Kenosha again, avoiding public places as often as I could. Hating myself for being awkward and unable to maintain eye contact with friends in restaurants, I started avoiding meeting friends anywhere in public. Acquaintances could easily think the tightness in my lips meant I disliked them, when it was really only my nerves dragging my smile down. I dreaded hurting anyone's—everyone's—feelings with my unintentional, uncontrollable “rudeness.”

I doubted fans' praise since I had not worked as an actor for a while. I no longer believed I was attractive and had cosmetic surgeries to make myself feel better. Pinning my ears back made me look less like a skinny kid. I had silicone injected into my jaw, and lipo of my cheeks, to square and widen my face, to look more like Gregg or Troy. Veneers gave me the Chiclet smile other soap stars had. Lipo of my stomach meant I didn't have to do sit-ups. I thought I looked more “manly,” but my friends could hardly see a difference. Big Dog didn't understand why I'd done it in the first place, but supported me blindly, as he always did.

PENIS ENLARGEMENT

I asked for the fat removed from my stomach to be added to my penis.



That was 26 years ago, and penis enlargement surgery was very experimental. Who didn't want an extra inch or two? There must have been a way to do that, right? Years before I had tried the penis pump, which did add an inch—but only for about three minutes until the blood drained back into the body. I also bought small weights which hung from a rubber rope tied around the flaccid penis head. They told me it was similar to what some tribes in Africa did. It was awkward and clumsy, and I did not notice any results.

I was a short guy with big balls and a slightly curved six-inch penis, said to be the average size, but after surgery where the doc added some stomach fat to my rod base which jutted it out more, and straightened it, I had a thick seven-inch penis. There were some fat lumps around the base, but easily hidden with my lush pubic bush, and also possibly explained away as veins. No one has ever asked me if I had work there.

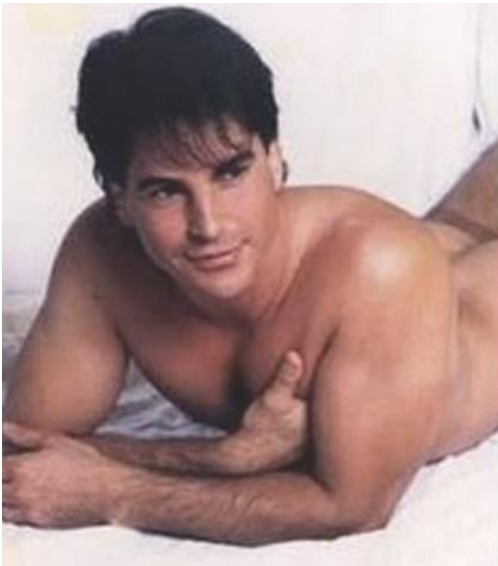
Except Pike the cop. Years after the surgery, after Gary and I broke up, I ran into Pike in West Hollywood and I was open to a rekindling of our hot man sex that we'd had over a decade prior. As we undressed and got reacquainted feeling each other up, he grabbed my erection and

looked puzzled.

“Nice dick,” he said, “YOURS?”

(Cue the *Y&R* theme song... as the piano keys gently resonate intrigue and suspense to a never-before-on-daytime-TV penis-enlargement storyline...)

I was humiliated, froze and didn't say a thing. He seemed to be promiscuous so I doubt he remembered anyone's penis size, but yes, that was MY penis. It was not fake or plastic or silicone, it was my flesh, veins, and fat, albeit a bit redistributed. He was an ass man anyway, and I tried to jump on him and fuck him, but he resisted. I let him fuck me instead because I already knew it was the only thing he was into. As I laid face down on his bed, it turned me on to have such a macho cop holding me and pumping away, sweating, his chest hairs scraping my back, but anal sex for me still hurt as it was something I only did once every five or 10 years. Pike, however, was not as appreciative of my physique and said, about my chest and body, “Why did you get so soft? Your body used to be hard.”



He said it as an admonishment. It really wasn't a question he wanted answered, because I had the answer, "I hate people thinking I am skinny, so I deliberately put on pounds."

That was the last time I had sex with Pike.

When a sex partner was that honest, I did not mind. I welcomed people speaking their truth anywhere. I'd much rather be told the truth as to why someone was not attracted to me than to wonder or guess or pine away hoping they were. I had not always been so honest telling sex partners that I was turned off by something because I did not want to hurt their feelings. I respected Pike a great deal for his honesty.

As I write this book, and am embarrassed that I dismissed so many boyfriends, I am proud that I was honest with them, except for possibly withholding a crude remark like Pike made for fear of hurting their feelings, but I never lied to or cheated on any man. That being said, at that time I had matured from a jealous 20-year-old to an experienced, wiser 30-something, and there were two noticeable differences.

One was directly related to losing my wonderful mom at my brother Troy's hands. No one had loved me as unconditionally as she had, and I realized what a gift that was. Never again did I enter a relationship asking for or expecting monogamy, because monogamy was conditional, although it usually happened because my partners wanted that. Big Dog was the first that I made it clear to that I would not limit him in any way. I did love him unconditionally, and that meant he was free to do anything he wanted at any time without my approval, and I would still love him. It did not guarantee that I would stay with him in the same designated relationship though, but I guessed that I would. But to me, at 30, my deal breaker was dishonestly. I would leave a man if he was in any way dishonest or withholding words from me. I imagined that if he chose to have sex with another and explained this to me as it went along, I would be

okay with that. The truth was none of my lovers took me up on that. Nor did they want to offer me the same freedom.

Big Dog was a perfect mate, and so very sexy. I loved the way he looked and knew he would age well, because his dad was attractive. His dad was a simple man who decades ago molested his daughters, and everyone in the family knew, and no one had ever talked about it with the dad, probably because he had matured into a very nonthreatening, if not, feeble man. I just mention the sexual improprieties here as it is consistent with the theme of this book, and the man has since passed on. It was interesting to me that while I was furious learning he had molested his kids, and even passively aggressively belittled him because of that, his grown kids simply ignored it or forgot it.

By 1994, Big Dog and I were together four years, and I had grown immensely on many fronts. He supported me during an emotional time as I flew to Wisconsin to deal with Troy in prison. The impetus for this was a phone call. Cowboy Gary called me from Wisconsin with a life-changing message.

* 14: **FORGIVING TROY**

1994 PSYCHIC MESSAGE

Cowboy Gary and I talked at least once a year to share what was new in our lives. We discussed how I was settling into a routine life with Big Dog at his condo in Valley Village, half-an-hour north of Hollywood.

Gary phoned to tell me when he quit bartending and bought a quiet ranch above Green Bay in Door County wilderness. He lived there with a hot Wisconsin cowboy of his own named Scott. During the summer they ran a restaurant in the high-tourist area. The only time they really had to see people was during the warm months of the year when their restaurant was open. Other than that, they had their horses and dogs to keep them busy, and lots of wood to chop.

The last time Gary called he was concerned because he'd had a vision of his German Shepherd getting hit by a truck. When he phoned in January of 1994, I was afraid he'd tell me this premonition had come true. But it was another premonition he was calling about—a more frightening premonition—and it was for me.

Gary was weeping over the phone, which was very out of character for someone so masculine. He was embarrassed but couldn't stop himself.

"I've got to talk to you, TJ," he wailed, "I've got a message for you."

"A message?"

"I'm not sure who it's from...I think it's your mother's soul, but it could be a part of your brother's soul—or some weird combination. I'm in pain, real pain."

"I can hear that in your voice. Pain where?"

"I've never felt anything like it," Gary continued laboriously. "It's excruciating... I'm on the floor, curled over. I can't stand it." He wept for almost a full minute. "It's horrible! You can't imagine—it's not human—"

"Shit, Gary, I'm sorry..."

"I'm supposed to feel...this...pain...to...show you...to convince...you of...their pain."

"Whose pain?"

"Theirs, I think. I don't know, hers or his or a combination, like I said, but it's all wrong. It's so fucked up," he groaned louder.

I listened to Gary vomit. Finally, he returned.

"Teej, I'm supposed to tell you that your mother loves you very much. 'Her four'...She keeps saying 'she loves her four.'"

"I know she loves us kids," I breathed into the phone, emotional. I felt my mother near. Goosebumps layered my arms.

"You have to save him!" Gary demanded.

"Who?"

"Oh, Teej, man, Troy's soul is...damn it...dying."

"Troy's soul? In prison?"

"Yes. Yes. Troy is in trouble. She wants you to go to him."

"No way."

"You're the only one who can save him," he said. "She keeps saying that. His soul. It's urgent. These five years have devastated him, I guess. You have to go to him now."

I didn't say anything for quite a while as Gary repeated his words over and over. Gary did not know I'd been pleading to my mother in prayer, begging her to speak to me. Reflecting on my selfish relationship with her, I wanted to make it up to her and had been asking her if there was anything I could do for her. I had been calling on her spirit for almost five years with no answer.

"I need some time to think about this," I told Gary, coldly.

"She keeps saying you have to go now. If you could feel this pain—"

"Why me?"

"She says you're the only one. Do it for her, she's begging you." After a long beat, Gary calmed himself. "The message is complete," he sighed, grateful.

"Gary, Troy severed any connection to me, to our whole family, when he killed her. As far as I'm concerned, he is dead and that's great."

"His soul is dying."

"Souls don't die," I argued.

"I never thought about that, about souls dying. I honestly hadn't," Gary said. "But she said it, they said it kind of together."

"When something dies it transforms itself, even science proves that. So, an energy—Troy's...whatever it is...cannot stop. Right?"

"That's not what the message says," Gary reiterated, "Don't underestimate what just happened. I didn't ask for this. It was huge, man. The biggest thing that's ever happened to me in my life. This was a message from some very strange place."

"I believe you. I know you."

That night, in between nightmares of being murdered by Troy, I lay awake tossing. No one in the family had maintained contact with Troy

in the past four and a half years, and they expected to keep it that way. I mean, what was Troy really like now—in 1994? Why did Mom want me to go to him? It didn't make any sense.

The next morning, while Big Dog nervously paced, I phoned the Columbia Correctional Prison and talked to admittance to check out the situation. The person on the phone said he had to send an officer to Troy, who was housed in the psychiatric unit, to get his permission to see me. On TV shows I had seen visitors face prisoners with thick glass between them. That thought comforted me slightly, but still I wondered what does Troy have to lose by using his black belt skills to break through the glass and attack me? He was already sentenced to life in prison. He had made it clear he hated me and could now deliver on his threat to rip out my heart in six seconds and hold it in front of my face until I died.

Was it because he and I looked more alike than any others in the family? Was he still jealous of my past success? Was he even more threatened by my homosexuality?

If Troy finally decided to act on his threats, I would be dead unless the guards took less than six seconds to draw their guns and fire.

Big Dog pleaded with me not to go. As much as I loved him, I was very independent and not about to listen to him. Our relationship was a case of opposites attracting, and I didn't include him in on much of my life because he simply wouldn't understand it.

When I told Gregg, who was at this point married and sharing a mansion with his rich and uptight wife, about the message, he didn't believe it.

I received the prison's clearance to visit. I also received Troy's indirect permission through Mike Grove, one of the prison's psychiatric counselors. For my safety, I requested Mike be present when I saw Troy.

Ignoring Big Dog's anxious concern, I reserved a flight for January 16. My return flight would be 24 hours later. I decided that was plenty of time to land in Milwaukee, rent a car, drive to the middle of Wisconsin, and see Troy.

EXCAVATING TROY

January 16, 1994. The temperature was unimaginably cold when I landed at Mitchell Field Airport. I got a Taurus rent-a-car and zigzagged small, icy highways northwest for three hours. I passed many deserted barns and got lost for 15 minutes in the state's biggest tourist site, the Wisconsin Dells. January was out-of-season, and the below-zero temperatures kept everybody indoors, except for a few gambling-addicts heading for the nearby Ho-Chunk Indian Casino.

Portage had less than 10,000 residents, including the thousands of people either working for or incarcerated at the maximum-security Columbia Correctional Prison. This city named for "carrying baggage" seemed a fitting place to house the most dangerous criminals in Wisconsin; men obviously carrying heavy emotional baggage. My old bar customer serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer, arrested in 1991, was one of them.

I parked in the lot of the colossal penal colony, noticing the guards on lookout posts with machine guns. As I walked past the electrical fences, a buzzer sounded, and the prison doors opened electronically.

In the brick foyer, a ceiling camera inspected me as I stomped the snow off my shoes. After what seemed like an eternity, another electric buzzer sounded and allowed me through a second set of security doors into admittance.

The guard stamped my hand and led me through a black-lit security

room with double electric doors. The guard returned to admittance, the double electric doors closing behind him. Across from me, the doors to the visiting room slowly opened. Cautiously, I stepped into the enormous room and looked around. No one was there.

As I waited, I studied the visiting area more closely. The room contained 40 small, open clusters of tables and chairs. Nothing separated the chairs from each other—no partitions—no glass—no protection.

I turned around thinking, “Hey! No! You can’t let him in the same room with me! He’ll kill me!”

Preoccupied with her headset, a female guard led me through the large room. We passed a microwave squeezed between vending machines humming with enough electricity to keep food refrigerated. This irritating high-pitched buzzing amplified the cold institutional sterility. Farther along the wall, a glass case displayed watercolor landscapes and knitted Green Bay Packer-themed clothing made by inmates. A playpen with children’s toys was set against another wall, and behind that area were windows overlooking the bleak, snowy exercise yard.

The guard said, “You’re assigned to Table 36.”

My mouth went dry. I sat on the blue upholstered wooden chair. My chair arm touched the arm of the next chair—the chair where Troy would sit.

The guard walked back across the room to her desk, then buzzed in Troy, looking much older than 23. He crept into the room, wearing a worn green cotton uniform. His hair was matted to his head. Part of his face was visible through a two-inch section where his beard was shaved, or the whiskers had been pulled out. I could smell his stench from across the room. As he came nearer, I saw his eyes were dark and hollow. His smile exposed brown and yellow teeth.

Troy said, “J.I.A. folder a hutch. To be cardboard—if eyes laughing. I’m taller than you.”

I didn’t know how to react to that.

An attractive, longhaired man with a longer beard, slight belly, and bifocals entered and introduced himself as Mike, the prison counselor. Though I was comforted by his presence, I quickly realized he was not likely to offer me any additional physical protection. Instead of Troy killing just me in six seconds, he could now kill both of us in twelve.

Troy didn’t know where to sit. He babbled on, looking terrified. “Face is on the right side. Faces are on the right side—keep the sounds on the right to look at.” He spoke gibberish to the floor, rolled an invisible cigarette, put it to his mouth, then realized it didn’t exist.

“You’re not going to kill me, are you?” I asked. The guard at the desk wasn’t even looking at us.

Mike sat with pen and paper, passively watching Troy and me. He adjusted his glasses and said, “Troy, your brother flew here from California.”

Troy’s grin showed yellow teeth, but he didn’t seem to hear. He fidgeted in his green cotton shirt and scanned the room in a paranoid manner. His matted hair smelled stale and stuck to the shaved section of his face. His eyes stared at me, but there was nothing in them.

Troy spoke gibberish and looked around. The only word I could make out was “TV.”

Mike explained, “I think he thinks he’s on TV.”

Troy didn’t know where to sit. Mike indicated a chair. Troy sat, looking terrified, and babbled on.

“What is it like in here?” I asked.

He looked at me, shaken. I breathed, relieved, realizing that my brother was too pitiful to be dangerous.

“Do you know who this is?” Mike asked.

“Tommy,” Troy said.

“You’ve never been in this room before?” I asked. “No visitors in four and a half years?”

Mike checked his paper, “This is his first time here.” Troy looked lost.

“It’s the visiting area,” I explained. “Mom asked me to come.”

He nervously looked at the visitor entrance. In his distorted state, perhaps he expected our mother to be there.

Mike said, “I’ll be Troy’s counselor.”

“Who,” I asked, “...has been counseling him before?”

“There is only one counselor assigned per unit. About 60 inmates. But there really was no reason to counsel Troy before this since he kept to himself.”

“So, nobody’s even talked to him for five years?”

Mike explained, “The report says he didn’t need any contact. He usually just lies on the floor and stares at the ceiling.”

Troy mumbled, “At—the ceiling changes when I look there—changes into screaming bugs.”

Mike said, “He earns several dollars a month for not causing trouble like the other ones do, don’t you, Troy? Which goes to tobacco—you can tell from his teeth and fingers. His warden told me Troy did not choose to leave his cell unless he was forced to.”

“Is he worried about gangs or something?” I asked.

Mike explained, "The gangs stay away from the inmates in the psychiatric unit."

"Troy," I said, "Can I get you something to drink?"

Mike pointed to the vending machines, "Soda pop, coffee."

"Troy, can I get you something?"

I was stunned and saddened to see that Troy seemed to have no idea what my question meant. Or maybe he understood me but didn't know if he was allowed something from a vending machine. I had no idea Troy had been so neglected. My eyes welled up as I edged over to the vending machines.

I bought a hot chocolate, brought it to Troy, then nervously spilled some and scalded his arm. Troy didn't react at all. He didn't even seem to feel the blistering liquid. How was that possible?

"Hot chocolate," I explained, "...for you."

Troy looked amazed and glanced to Mike for approval.

I asked Mike what medication Troy was on. He told me that Troy was not on anything. Later I discovered they had not even officially diagnosed him. They were confused from the court records as to how to classify Troy. They might never have treated him, I imagined, as long as he had lain in his cage and hadn't done anything disruptive. I was also told that a family member had to request that an inmate receive medication.

It was becoming evident why Gary's message was phrased the way it was: "Your mother says you're the only one who can save him." Not only was I the only one who would pay attention to paranormal contact and feel that I owed her enough to follow up on it, but I was also the only one in the family who could identify with such an outsider.

I asked for Troy to be put on medication. Mike agreed to speak to the doctor, then went to the guard desk.

“How fast does this pill work?” I asked.

“In some cases, there could be a noticeable change in 24 hours.”

After Mike left, I sat with Troy. I wanted to ask him about the murder, but he wasn't in his right mind.

The next day, in the visiting area, Troy and I were assigned to Table 14, near the vending machines. Right behind us was the window covered with icicles. Troy was one of four prisoners being visited; the three others were scattered at faraway tables. Although the medication seemed to have improved his competency significantly, he was the only prisoner not competent enough to have worn a T-shirt under his green uniform. He shivered. I stared at the goosebumps on his arms and the many cigarette burn marks under self-carved tattoos on his biceps. I could only imagine how alone and tortured he was, and had been, through various stages of his life. I wanted him to trust me, and not see me as an outsider.

“Remember *The Twilight Zone*?” I asked.

“People and aliens,” he said.

“In some of them,” I said. “You know, maybe it's because I used to watch *The Twilight Zone*, and maybe they had an episode that spooked me, as some of them can do, but I believed way back then that I was the only living human being. That everybody else, except Mom, were robots waiting for me to let my guard down, and that they'd 'get me' when I did. Like it was a huge conspiracy to get me.”

“They could've gotten your eyes out when you were sleeping.”

I patted his back, “I never thought about that.”

“People get killed. Robots.”

“I don’t think that’s really true. Do you really think there are robots killing people?”

His silence and anxious glances around the room told me he did think that.

That night at the Portage Motor Inn, a long rectangle of a building overlooking the highway, I ignored the blinking phone message light. I was overwhelmed with new emotions and didn’t want to deal with any messages.

I walked to the window and opened the drapes. Outside, unlike Los Angeles where there are thousands of buildings, there was only a single highway. Lonely lights moved to and fro between patches of evergreens. I studied the sporadic smears of traffic lights. The phone rang. Ignoring it, I walked into the bathroom.

I sat on the edge of the cold porcelain bathtub, examining it. How many baths had I taken in my life? They were a meditative attempt of mine to break up the day. What would I do without a bathtub? I couldn’t imagine being denied that. What else did I take for granted that Troy had to live without now, and for the rest of his life? My brother, only 23, would never again know the comfort of being submerged entirely in heated water, unless as a very old man he was freed.

I turned on the hot water and stuck my hand under the scalding stream. Troy somehow didn’t mind scalding liquid. *How was that possible?* The water was killing me. My hand was bright red, but I kept it there, imagining what it was like to be him. *What was it like to have shut off your feelings of physical pain?* I began to admire Troy for the first time; he certainly had determination to have built up a pain threshold to the extent that he had. Could Troy also shut off all his other feelings?



*Australian DNA Magazine with 1995 still from Warren Hohmann's
Forgiving Troy documentary.*

That night, I gambled at Ho-Chunk slot machines, but it was Troy, not triple 7s, I saw in front of me. Occasionally, *Y&R* fans recognized me and came over to introduce themselves, or say they missed my character Phillip, dead now for almost five years. Drinking heavily, I tried to be cordial and appreciative to these fans, and wiping the tears from my face, I didn't explain my emotions were a family matter. Driving back to the hotel, I realized they probably saw me as a drunken soap opera has-been, crying because the slot machine was taking my money.

Gambling was intrinsic to my character. I was a short skinny gay kid who flew to Hollywood alone and chanced going home with countless strangers and against all odds won soap opera stardom. I believed in the impossible—and rarely refused a lotto ticket or passed a casino without trying my luck. In fact, a few years before *Big Dog* and I had flown to visit his mother in her Michigan trailer home. Mid-week we took her to Bingo and as the black-out game started I KNEW I was

going to win the \$500 prize. It wasn't a voice that told me—I just KNEW the future. In all my gambling excursions I had never before experienced a definite psychic prophesy such as this. However, it did not bring me joy, rather it filled me with stage fright because I knew I would soon be expected to publicly speak in the huge hall; to proclaim my victory in at least one word—a word that would break the dreams of all the others. As I dabbled at high speed, my mind was spinning faster, and I kept practicing in my head exactly how I would vocalize the word, “Bingo!”

When my last box was dabbled, my heart raced, and my voice cracked, “Bingo!” Big Dog and his mom were thrilled but I picked up jealousy from the rest of the players, especially considering Big Dog's mom had already told everyone I was a Hollywood star.

Quietly claiming the \$500, I handed half of it to Big Dog's mom, thanking her for the night. She and Big Dog glowed.

* 15: **MELROSE PLACE, MURDER SHE WROTE, MATLOCK**

On the flight home from Troy's prison, I was shaking and realized it was way out of my comfort zone trying to heal someone so broken. My own 32-year-old shell was cracking, and new birth was required from me as well as Troy, 24. Troy's spiritual growth brought us both epiphanies, and in 1994, after reuniting with Troy five years after he killed mom, my energy was so empowered that I became more outgoing and got parts on *Melrose Place*, *Murder She Wrote*, and *Matlock*.

To film *Matlock*, they flew us to Wilmington, North Carolina for a week. It was a beautiful area, always nice to stay at a hotel, and I brought my Fleshlight to keep me company. The sex toy looks like a large flashlight and inside is a soft synthetic vaginal simile to penetrate, not too embarrassing for friends to see, but always made me blush when the airport security people grabbed it and investigated it, especially when sperm was still inside. Oops.

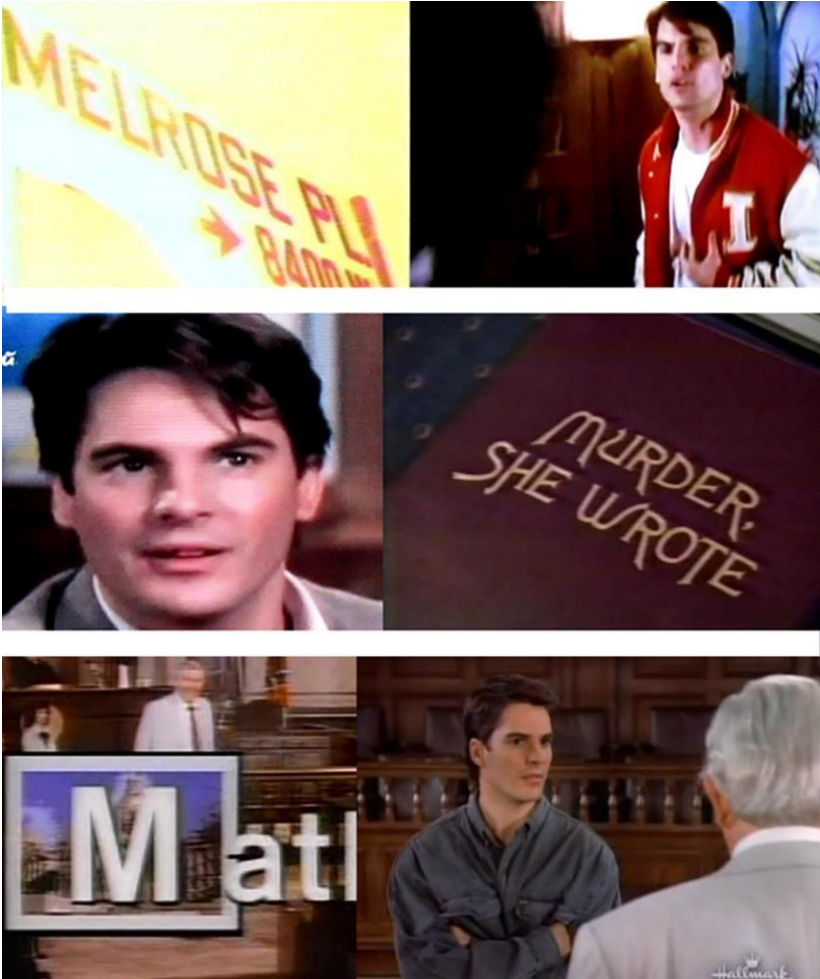
Back in Hollywood, it was a thrill to meet Heather Locklear and the crew in shooting a guest star role on *Melrose Place*. I played Hank, an abusive boyfriend to a teen model, and being such a hellion, my character pushed pregnant Jo (played by Daphne Zuniga) down the stairs.



With actress Cassidy Rae and Daphne Zuniga on *Melrose Place*.

YOUNG, GAY & RESTLESS

They liked me so much that my new manager, Paul Cohen, a Jewish guy with an English accent, said he had to tell me something that I had to keep a secret. He whispered, "They're going to make you a regular on *Melrose Place*!!"



Wow, I thought! This is fantastic!! *Melrose Place* was a huge hit! And although I did one more episode they never did make me a regular, so, ouch. However, I was eternally grateful that in one scene I got to faux fight sexy Grant Show and we were choreographed to roll over a billiards table fight-hugging each other. He probably thought we were

wrestling, but I took it as foreplay, and later continued the fantasy with my eyes closed as I whacked off in my dressing room.



First two pics from *Murder She Wrote*, "Wheel Of Death," 1994.

Last pic from *Murder She Wrote*, "A Quaking In Aspen," 1995.

Playing the murderer on *Murder She Wrote*, I had the pleasure of alone screen time with Angela Lansbury as she watched yet another actor get emotional as they confessed to what Jessica Fletcher had already figured out. She was a very lovely lady and the whole set was relaxed, which I give her credit for. Right before my emotional scene, to get ready and produce tears, I told her that my brother killed my mom. Then we heard, "Action," and I did my lines as a method actor

substituting the real events of Troy and Mom, which brought me tears. She did not say anything personal afterwards, as she was called away, and I have no idea if she knew I was telling the truth or inventing character background, but she liked me well enough to use me again in another episode the next year.

My manager was responsible for getting me cast on *Murder She Wrote*. Unbeknownst to me, he sent my acting reel to the casting office, where they cast the show without auditions.

VANDERPUMP

At that time Paul was also a friend of Lisa Vanderpump who would later gain international fame on *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*. One night he asked me to join him for a few drinks at his rich friends' palatial Beverly Hills estate.

This was a great opportunity for me to get to know and befriend some very nice wealthy people but I only brought to the table my insecurity and poverty consciousness. Entering the foyer of the lavish neoclassical mansion, I shrunk like *Alice In Wonderland*. True that most of the world would find my part-time history in being a TV star very impressive, but true also I was raised lower to middle-class in a small Wisconsin town, and that core of me was instantly uncomfortable in such opulence.

Extroverted and comical Lisa was one of the most beautiful young housewives I had ever seen. She and I were roughly the same age, in our early 30s, and could have had much in common to talk about, but I saw us as opposites: she rich, me struggling with credit card debt. She straight, me gay. She extroverted, me shy. She, having a great time and comfortable in her skin making jokes in her mansion, me avoiding eyes.

Paul brought wine and poured us all a glass. I snuck my cabernet to the library where I found their young daughter, Pandora, playing alone. I preferred the company of kids to bigwigs because kids were so self-centered they did not look at you and did not examine you. They pretty much only thought of themselves, like I did. So, I sat on a couch and talked to Pandora, gulping from my top-heavy glass of wine. I hated wine and really wanted three tequilas to turn me into friendly smiley Thom, but wine had to do. On the coffee table in front of me was a two-foot photo book of aerial views of Beverly Hills estates.

As I paged through the book excited to see these mansions, I was ignoring the one I was in. Hearing Lisa and husband Ken and their other guests laughing in the dining room, and thinking it was about me, my hand shook, and I spilled the goblet, soaking the entire book.

Pandora ran to get her mom and Lisa came in and sighed, "Oh no. That's Ken's favorite book."

"I am sorry," I said, but I did not offer to buy a new one because I could tell it cost over a hundred bucks, which I did not have. Besides, I assumed, the Vanderpumps had endless money.

Paul was beet red.

The next week, I was throwing out a pink antique wool floral rug, and Paul said he'd offer it to Lisa, thinking it would go great in their home. Paul said she liked it and he gave it to her, so I felt better that I made up for the ruined book.

At that time, it did not bother me that I'd ruined a chance to be friends with the Vanderpumps. I shied away from new people, especially those not in my comfort zone. It would only be when she became enormously successful that I remembered how likeable she was, and that we could have been friends, if I had not been so intimidated by her and her wealth.

GEFFEN

When I got paid for *Murder She Wrote*, I took Big Dog and Paul to The Ivy, a very trendy industry restaurant in Beverly Hills. As the waiter walked away, Paul whispered, “David Geffen is across the restaurant and keeps looking at you.” I explained how he and I knew each other 12 years prior. This made Big Dog very jealous. David smiled and I walked over to his table. We talked briefly, and he gave me his number. Big Dog was steaming.

The next day I called David hoping he would be interested in the *Forgiving Troy* events as a movie because, having experienced them firsthand, they were bigger than life and very cinematic. Before I could get out any words besides my name he asked me if I was single. I said no. He said okay and wished me a great day and hung up.

FALLING OUT OF LOVE

Not only had my recent spiritual journey to Troy brought me huge epiphanies, and new acting work, but I was also bored with the same boyfriend of four years and wanted to experiment with others.

Driving home from a Vegas trip where we saw Johnny Mathis sing love ballads, I told Big Dog that I wanted to be free to find true love again. This was my one Earth life as Thom Bierdz and my soul wanted expansion—my heart wanted to feel the new love in Mathis ballads.

Later suggesting to Big Dog that we have an open relationship, he went nuts, and nearly choked me on the stairs of his condo. Never had he shown any violence before, or after. I guess he just felt so helpless,

like a little kid losing, I don't know, a toy? A family? A friend? A husband? He was so much better built and stronger than me that he could have hurt me if he wanted, which he did not. When we heard my neck crack, he apologized and backed away. He was such a beautifully devoted man and had never considered that I would ask to change what we had. We WERE both happy. But happy was not enough for me.

I moved out, excited about falling in new love with a new partner. Sure, I missed Big Dog, even though it was my choice to separate. And I worried about how he was doing because he was the sweetest, most genuine man. I hoped he'd find another love interest soon, because I knew for me that it took one to get over one.

I stared at Geffen's number. Should I call him? I was single. But it didn't feel right. So, I did not.

* 16: 2016, MARY'S RAPE

2016

Walking my dogs David and Goliath up the curved treed streets of Lake Arrowhead, we saw Mary outside her hoarder cabin. Big Goliath went into his manic bark, anxious to see her, and little David wagged his tail so much his body shook like a can of spray paint. Although I knew she slept outside, her bed area was hidden under her stairs behind plastic drop cloths, so when she was not in view, I tried to pull the dogs past quickly, as not to disturb her privacy. Every day or two we'd see her watering her trees, and she always had treats in her pockets to give the dogs.

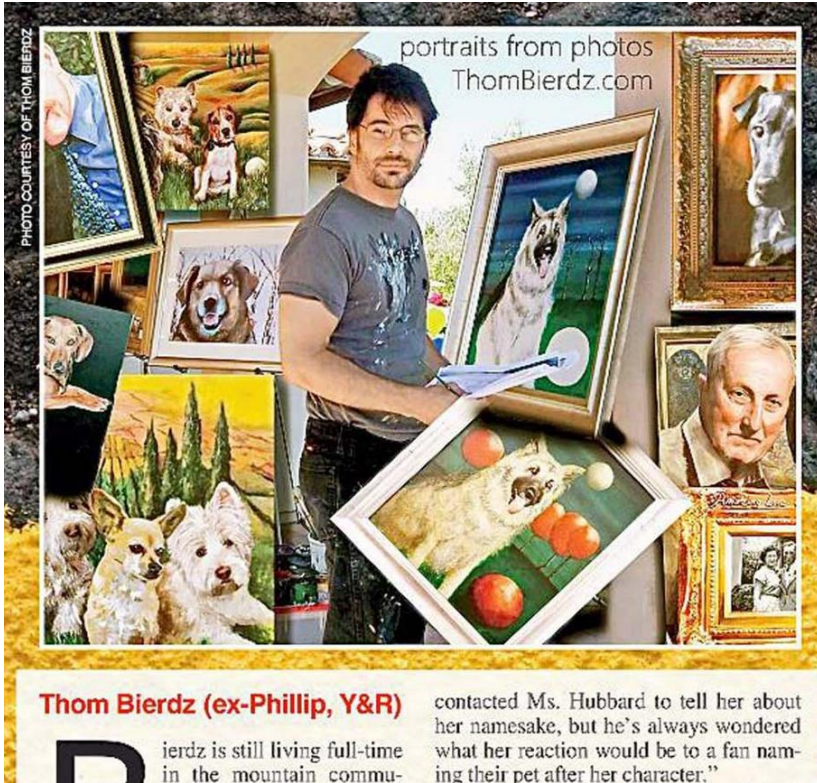
She usually wore jeans and a long sleeve mountain shirt, maybe flannel or denim. Whenever she'd see anyone, she'd take the scarf off her head and shake out her mane of long gray-white hair. She really was a stunning Earth mother, even at 77.

I was in jeans with a chain for a belt because I secured my rescue dog Goliath to my waist since he was vicious to other dogs. I wore the black T-shirt and sweatshirt I slept in.

"What painting are you working on today?" she asked me, feeding the dogs treats.

"Just finished up a dog portrait," I said. "Client wants me to add a little more blue to the background. Then I am writing a book on sex."

"Sex?"



“Yeah, I shared on FB that I was sexually assaulted, and people said so few men speak about being assaulted or raped. Were you ever raped?”

She looked away, then down, then answered in a whisper, “Yes.”

“Oh my god, I am so sorry. So many women have been raped. How old were you?”

“Fourteen. I was babysitting a few blocks away from our house in North Carolina. A marine facility was a few miles away. I put the baby in the high chair to feed her and a naked Marine had entered the back door of the house.”

“He was naked?!”

“And, uh, excited, you know, down there.”

“Was he white? Black?”

“White. He grabbed me and tore my clothes and raped me, then ran off.”

“Oh wow. He could have killed you or the kid?”

“I suppose so. When the mother came home, I was so shaken. We called the police and they caught him.”

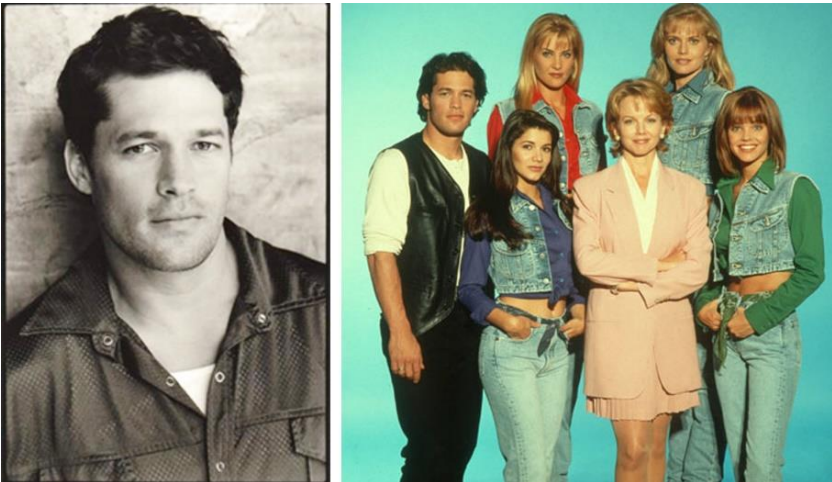
“They caught him?!”

“Yes, they said they did.”

* 17: **CHASING BEAUTY**

ROBIN'S HOODS

Late in 1994 I auditioned and won a guest star role in another TV series called *Robin's Hoods*, a twist on *Charlie's Angels* where an older character, Robin, hired beautiful young ex-cons to bust crime. I played a sympathetic man behind bars, like Troy was. They flew me to Vancouver and put me up in a swanky hotel for nine days. I ran into a great photographer friend, Barry King, who followed Cher wherever she toured, and we had fun hanging out and drooling over the TV series lead, played by smoldering heartthrob, David Gail. In my typical teenage boy adulation, I embarrassed myself by actually writing him a love letter with my phone number and hotel room number and leaving it in his dressing room. He never called, and probably was straight, but thankfully he was very friendly to me years later when I bumped into him at another audition. Obviously he was a nice guy but we didn't talk much because I was awestruck at his looks, besides having my typical high anxiety audition jitters.



David Gail, and cast of *Robin's Hoods*. Filmed in Canada.

RECKLESS SEX

Several months went by and I had no love interest, which was okay, but I did accept an invite to an artist party in downtown Los Angeles. Four of us friends went together—good thing—because parking was a challenge. Never had I been to downtown at night, and we discovered huge factories made over into endless connected loft studios.

Waiting in line to pee at the only bathroom in the party condo as Meatloaf's "I'd Do Anything For Love" blasted, a drunk guy was coming onto me, and whispered he wanted to give me a blowjob. It had been months since I had had sex, and this obviously was not going to lead to a relationship or love, but I had also never snuck in a BJ at a party. My erection was growing, as was his interest, and he tried to sneak into the bathroom with me, but too many people were watching so I refused. After I peed, I looked for my friends and saw them far across the room. BJ guy found me and led me out the loft door to a long metal corridor filled with people entering and exiting.

We disappeared by taking another hallway, and in this renovated factory with no lights, we kept turning when we could and trying new staircases to find a place where he could blow me. However, nowhere we went was a totally dark dead-end, so we kept backtracking and exploring new routes. After 15 minutes of searching, we stopped on metal stairs leading to only one door. Taking a chance they would not open it and see us, I pulled my pants down, sat on the steel corrugated step, and BJ guy did his thing. He was okay, not like it was worth all the trouble, and it took me a long time to come because public stairways were not my comfort zone.

By the time we got back to the party my friends were upset and had been looking for me for 40 minutes. It was a totally irresponsible thing to leave them and not let them know where I was. Never made that

mistake again; never tried to sneak away from a party to have sex.

I did sneak on the roof of Park LaBrea to have sex a couple times, though. I had an apartment on the 9th floor in one of the Hollywood's towers and in my Speedo would tiptoe up the indoor fire escape stairway daily and climb on the tarred roof, spread out a towel and lay naked in the sun about noon, CBS in view. Occasionally I'd bring a date up there to have sex. Sun warming my gay body translated to universal permission to be homosexual—a needed healing vibe to trump being raised condemned to Hell.

Once while I was parking my car outside an audition and trying to hypnotize away my anxiety with a heady mind game, a very handsome, tall, muscular model type was bizarrely friendly to me. Within a minute, he made me promise to fuck him and take his number. I had never met anyone so blatantly aggressive and was turned on. A day later I went to the swanky guesthouse he was renting in Laurel Canyon, which was pretty much a king size bed and huge bathroom with double tub and sauna and gym-size shower. It was great passionate hot sex—body to body—lust—but I knew nothing about him.

The second time I went over he was acting bizarrely, showing definite personality switches as he blasted his Billy Ray Cyrus "Achy Breaky Heart" CD. Suddenly, I realized he must be on drugs, so I tried to slowly and gently ease away from his intense neediness and pleading me to stay. I avoided him after that but was subjected to insane phone messages calling me every name in the book. What a great decision it was never to give him my address.

A couple months later, on another flight to Wisconsin, to visit Troy's prison, my flight was detained, and I was horny. Many of my friends had talked about how great airport bathroom sex was – just blowing or getting blown by a traveling stranger that they'd never see again. Certainly got erect thinking about it, but I did not cruise the bathrooms. Maybe if it was legal I might have, but I was still a straight-

A student and rarely did anything against the law.

On my next trip to see Troy his mental rehabilitation was coming along because I had previously stepped in and asked him to be medicated which brought stunning results. This was apparently why Mom's spirit contacted Gary to make me "save" Troy. Since an inmate is only allowed a few hours for a visit, after spending valuable and cherished time with Troy I had all day and night to busy myself until I'd see him again the next day.

After the nearby casino slot machines devoured my \$400 daily allowance via ATM machines, looking through a gay guide for bars, I discovered one in Appleton, Wisconsin, about 45 minutes north of the prison. Lucky for me the small bar was not crowded, and the bartender, also named Troy, was extremely good-looking. My height, ruggedly handsome, clean-shaven, dark blond hair, and obviously went to the gym by the size of his biceps. Small talk led to sex talk, and after close, we went to his place to fool around. His body was even better than I would have guessed, and we had great oral sex, mutual, and kissing. I would see him one other time the next year when I was in town, and after that, he found a partner and was unavailable.

On another trip to Reno, Nevada, to visit a Chinese friend, Janet, a group of us went to a disco after the casino ATM refused to give me more cash.

Janet was a virgin nearing 35, and thought herself to be lesbian, but was too shy to ever have sex. Years ago comedic friend Steve Moore, who was doing warm-up comedy for the audience of *Roseanne* and other shows, talked Janet into doing a *Jenny Jones* talk show episode on virgins. When Jenny decided to surprise Janet with her first kiss on air by a strange man, Janet was forever traumatized. She was sure she was not attracted to men at that point.

Even though I had been lifting weights since I was 15 I was never happy with my body, so I never took my shirt off in public, but after too many

drinks at the Reno disco, I flung my shirt off on the dance floor. Soon I was dancing with Mr. International Leather, a taller balding man with goatee and blue eyes. You know those people who are HORRIBLE dancers who think they're good? That was me, but regardless, an hour later Mr. International Leather was leading me into a house in an unidentifiable neighborhood, then into a basement.

Despite me working years ago in Club 219 where serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer frequented and being sexually assaulted several times by other men, I decided it would be a real turn-on to be tied up and blindfolded in the Reno basement of this leather-clad stranger. (Cue again daytime TV's favorite piano concerto theme song, but instead of the character Victor keeping stripper Nikki in his basement, we'll push the envelope further in this scene, showing erect penises and bondage apparatus...)

As I rubbed against him, he stripped off my clothes and pulled my arms back then snapped real metal handcuffs on me. As he pushed me to my knees, he blindfolded me with a shirt. He brushed his unzipped jeans against my face and I was going wild smelling his sweaty mansteak, which he soon Teriyaki-slapped in my face. That was hugely erotic, and being unable to see, the danger turned me on. After pleasuring him for 10 minutes, I swallowed his sperm, and then he reached low and started greasing my cock with lube. Because my normal five senses were now focused only on one—touch, for five minutes I was in sex heaven as he masturbated me. However, the second I started to fire cum to the ceiling, panic set in.

OMG. I have no idea where I am. I can't see anything. I can't hear anything. Why is he not moving? This man can kill me very easily. I can't hear him breathing. Did he leave? If he starts to beat me with a chainsaw or something, how do I get out of the cuffs? If I get out of this basement alive—please God—if there's a God—get me out of this basement alive—how would I even figure out where we are? I don't know Reno. I don't know this neighborhood. I don't know this stranger!!

Possible tabloid headlines flashed in my brain; “Gay Soap Has-Been Slain In Reno Dungeon,” “Phillip Chancellor Castrated And Bled to Death With Face Spermed,” “Brittle Gay Actor With Only Average Body Dances Shirtless, Dies A Sex Slave” ...

Just my luck; he was the sweetest guy who took off my blindfold, uncuffed me and handed me a towel. We dressed and then he drove me back to my car by Janet and the bar. Yup, that was a thrilling sex adventure, but the pleasure was not worth risking my life. I would never do that again.

1995 – KINKY SEX

Lumber stores always got me horny. At Anawalt Lumber on Highland Avenue in Hollywood, the handsome 25 year-old Asian in plumbing supplies definitely seemed interested in me. Uncharacteristically, I followed him to the public bathroom. Once inside, he dropped to his knees and started to blow me. When I started to reciprocate, the smell of his balls turned me off. Slight fecal odor. Not a turn on for me.

Here I was, almost 33, and I’d never had a three-way. If one cock felt good hugging the side of my face, would two be better? A male couple approached me online, and I was excited to finally participate in a ménage à trois. Unfortunately, I did not find out until I was in their Marina Del Ray apartment that these two had specific rules; they did not have sex together with a stranger, only apart, in separate rooms. *Damn, having two at once was the whole point of it.* But I was already in their apartment, so I played by their rules.

I had sex with the handsome, receding, red-haired, hairless bodybuilder in the living room while the dark-haired, average-build, hairy man waited in the bedroom. After the bodybuilder and I squirted on his stomach, I opened the door to the bedroom and walked in

there. Wasn't great. Was confusing and awkward. I liked different things about them, but had no real chemistry with either, so I just left regretting it.

Being about 5'9", I was most comfortable with guys my size, although my sexual wish-list extended to experimenting with giants and dwarves. A dwarf did give me his number in a bar once as I played pool. He was predominantly a crooked large head with a very tiny deformed body underneath and did not excite me like the well-proportioned hairy dwarves I'd seen in porn. So, I never had sex with a dwarf (yet) but was seriously turned on by many. I remain dwarf-curious.

As for giants, a huge guy, about 6'8" was cruising me online on a gay dating site, and I wrote that I would like to have sex with a giant. Later, I knocked on his West Hollywood apartment door, and bravely went in. I asked him if he played the bad guy in the James Bond films—the enormous giant with silver teeth. No, he hadn't, and he was deeply insulted. But hey, all giants looked alike to me.

In bed, I felt like a small boy climbing all over his humungous body, but it was totally empty forced sex. I really wasn't attracted to him. I regret it, and regret many sexual hook-ups, which were initiated on hook-up sites. You don't know if there will be a chemistry in person if you only chat online and see pictures, unlike bars where you feel the person-to-person vibes.

INCEST

Whether true or not, I felt that my father was not there when I needed him in my formative years, and that is when I feel I developed a father sex fantasy. Feeling like an outcast and not bonding with the males in my family, I also had sexual fantasies about my brothers, cousins,

uncles and grandfathers. Besides me playing *Prize Property* in a jock when I was a kid with Gregg, I never made an advance on a relative. But when my cute cousin George, 28, was visiting Hollywood a few years prior, I felt why not—how can it hurt? A few close friends were over at my apartment and we were just being silly. I was getting a hard-on, which I broadcasted by putting on sheer bicycle pants. My cute cousin thought my hard pole was a toy and not real, but as we wrestled in my bedroom, I wanted us to love each other in a sexual way, like really make love. Again, these were instinctive, subconscious yearnings, and only because we were related. George decided not to and left the room. Later, I apologized, and he said he would have if my breath wasn't so bad. Cracked me up. I had no idea my breath was bad and wondered if I had recently had garlic or if it often was bad.

In any event, I am glad he resisted my raging hormones because whereas I could lose or avoid most of my sexual conquests, if you have sex with your family, how can you ever get away from that? Although the idea is a masturbation fantasy, in real life, it seemed counterproductive because it totally could sour the history and future. Unless you were that rare case of the secret brother and sister falling in love and moving to a strange town and being together 60 years, rarely leaving the house, how could it end well? Even though I am embarrassed to bring this topic up I do so because it is not brought up by others, yet obviously a tremendous epidemic. Parents routinely molest their kids and incest is common among siblings as is assault and rape.

No matter how you look at it, our ancestors engaged in incest. If you believe in Adam and Eve, either Cane or Abel must have fucked Eve—or how else did they populate the Earth? If you believed in evolution, our closest relatives were the Bonobo monkeys, and they all had sex with each other, all the time. The bottom line, perhaps, for me, was thinking that humans had more to lose than to gain from having sex with family, so I would never recommend it. I can't imagine it ending without guilt and shame and regret and resentment, so I am relieved

I have not had sex with any relatives. I am content to have it as one of my many wild fantasies which I will never actually partake in. Fortunately, pornography has multiplied since the 1970s, and every fantasy is available for free on the web.

I am not talking so frankly about taboo sex subjects for titillation. I am not doing it for confession. I am doing it because no person should be shamed for their sexual feelings, and America has huge judgment and indictments of people who dare to experience what is not considered the norm, but, may very well be the norm, secretly.

Most men would not write this openly about taboo sex subjects because they would fear losing their job or reputation or family. I am such an extreme recluse that these are not concerns of mine.

Though I reveal myself here, I am careful not to bring attention to those who do not want it. My intention is not to embarrass, not even the celebrity who may have assaulted me. I say “may,” because some saw his behavior as assault and others did not.

CELEBRITY ASSAULTS ME

A very affable well-known celebrity was acquiring a painting of mine. I drove to his house off Crescent Heights in Laurel Canyon.

He loved the painting, and we rested it in his foyer.

“Nice place,” I said.

“Let me give you a tour,” he said, outlandishly, as was his style.

I followed him from room to room, impressed at the photos of him and other big stars. Some curved stairs led down to another room.

“This is where it all happens,” he joked.

Next to his bed, he grabbed me and forced his tongue in my mouth. He was not a small guy and was much stronger than me. He was trying to grope me, but I resisted and pushed him away.

That was it. Some say I was assaulted; some say he was just coming on to me.

When I later told my agent, he shrugged and said, “Yeah, that’s what he does.”

In as much as he had a pattern of forcing his tongue in unreceptive mouths, I had a pattern of pretending those things did not happen. Never did I mention it to him, shame him or scold him. Truth is, I just took it as a compliment. I was grossed out, but it’s not like I lost a tooth.

No big deal to me.

This celebrity was a man who would never be cast in a romantic lead. He was chasing beauty. I know what it’s like to chase beauty. I, too, am almost always chasing beauty – I just don’t force French-kissing it when I see it.

Whenever I ran into him at events I was genuinely happy to see him, as he was a very funny, likeable star. He never came onto me again. It was clear I was never interested.

* 18: **BOTH TROY & I: STARTING OVER AGAIN**

POETRY

My life was wonderful. My friends were loyal and kept me laughing, life offered so much potential, and my relationship with my family was great—especially with my schizophrenic brother Troy—who had gone from severe psychosis to adoringly naïve. He truly was born again, though more in a spiritual sense than a religious sense.

1995: I was torn apart by Troy's letters. And elated as well.

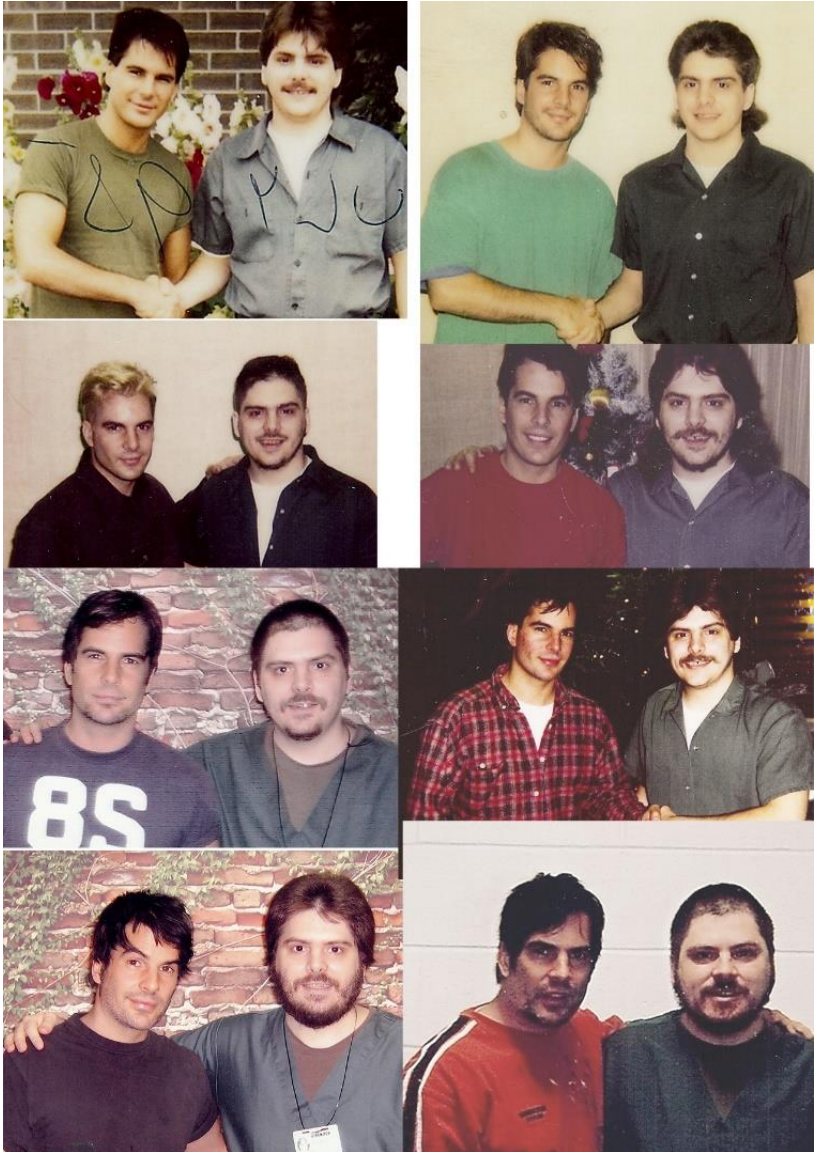
...mary mother of god. The priest thought i was robin hood, yes that's the truth. he told me if i killed some body i could be a priest in heaven. and that i could be married. because you know priests normally can't be married. did you know you have to pray a rosary in order to go to hell? im lazy and i like to watch the day go by.

i have blood on my teeth. stains. one time i read the Charlie Manson murders book. it had my name in the book it said and this is the truth that i was one of the gang and that i had to run the squads. or it was something close to that

hav i left you w / enuff feelings? are your fealing hurt when i make mistakes when i write to you? Are you sure we go to heaven when we both die? because il have alot of questions for you by then.

i think mabey i killed mom for gregg, i like gregg i like to have his attention our times together are like golden to me more than special. mom made heaven look good to me she said nothing but i though it was so good that it just didnt deserve mom. i wanted to spend time with mom to. we just couldn't spend any real time together, she didnt deserve to have boyfriends that would keep her apart from me

YOUNG, GAY & RESTLESS



Photos over the years of me visiting Troy in prison.

you do know im a parinoid schizophrenic dont you. now you know. i have schizophrenia. it means im afraid of people.

when we die, do we have wings or halows. do the angels have halows? or do they have wings? just a question. what do we look like in heaven

again i forgot. Write me and tell me please

i cant help but thinking if i would have only killed my self first? mom came to me as an angel in my room.

...dont you think brothers should be tourchered together? ...ill kill myself. i will go buy a gun rite now!! and if you die i will die to so we can be together rite away. - With the Last of My Love Because i Will go to Hell Unless their is love left - Your brother troy

\$6 AN HOUR

By 1995, at 33, I was running out of money, and certainly not selling enough art to make a living. An actress friend mentioned she just discovered a network marketing operation with stunning potential. If we got people to sign up under us, we'd make a commission off their sales, plus a commission off the people they signed up, and so on. She swore that every woman would buy our product: no-run pantyhose. Since I was a gambler at heart and saw the immense potential, I wanted in. If my math was correct, we could soon be making 39 million dollars a year.

For months, we dedicated ourselves full-time to this new business venture. We were two famous soap stars actually walking around shopping malls hoping to get recognized so we could get fans to sign up under us and sell these no-run pantyhose with us. Mall security found us suspicious and asked us to leave. Eventually we got a few people to sign up, but nobody bought those pantyhose. It was amusing and humbling.

I was still looking for ways to pay bills in 1996, when another adorable female friend offered to sell my soap memorabilia on eBay. After she sold these, I wondered what else fans might buy. Balancing on the thin

line between being resourceful and being desperate, I sold my underwear. My worn jockeys got about \$60 a pair until new eBay restrictions stepped in the way. I didn't sell enough underwear to pay the rent, so I began working for another friend at Swing Café, a West Hollywood coffee shop.

I took a job that paid the worst salary of my entire life. I made cappuccinos for \$6 an hour. It had been well over a decade since one of my customers at Your Place bar had tipped me a dollar a drink, warning me to not lose my humility. Here I was, a star briefly but no longer, making cappuccinos and hoping for twenty-five cent tips. Humility built character, or so the saying suggested.

Hoping to supplement my income, I was allowed to hang some of my paintings on the walls with price tags. Even though I priced them at only \$60, I only sold one.

Around West Hollywood grocery stores, I occasionally saw the best-looking man in the world; my height, thin waist, wide muscular shoulders, face like Cary Grant, short hair. I pretty much stalked him for months.

He ignored me at the West Hollywood laundromat.

He ignored me at Starbucks.

As I parked my car another day by a West Hollywood park, I saw him shirtless spreading out a towel to get sun. *That's him!* I said to myself, *"And he obviously thinks I am stalking him, and he's not interested in me, so I am just going to go over and say I won't stalk him anymore."*

DOUG

My intent was to be polite and leave him alone, but when I said hello

and explained I was not stalking him, he said he had never noticed me. As I stuttered a few more words, he seemed interested in my nonsensical blabber. His face was so even, symmetrical—and wow what a face! His golden-brown eyes showed him to be soft and accessible. Great cheekbones, small straight nose, small ears. Huge shoulders. Great arms. No chest hair though.

He was a 31-year-old waiter, Doug, with no interest in a boyfriend at that time, but I left him my number, just in case.

He called.

Like few people in Hollywood, Doug had absolutely no interest in the entertainment business, no hidden agenda, no drive to accomplish, and lived perfectly in the moment, happy as could be. He was as nice a guy as Big Dog and seemed as loyal. No pretense.

On our first date, a West Hollywood cop pulled his Jeep over. I sat in the passenger seat amused as the gay cop cruised him up and down, then studied his license and looked him square in the face, saying, “Brown eyes?” Doug nodded, not flirting back. The cop gave Doug a warning for a broken tail light and finally left us alone.

We had Chinese food (him: pork, me: tofu), then walked in a park. He told me he had a tennis tournament the next week, so I went to cheer him on.

Doug had joined the gay tennis league and every Wednesday I’d watch him play, usually winning. His being so in the moment helped me make peace with being a soap opera has-been working at a coffee shop. He helped me focus on what was really important: waking up each day with integrity, being healthy, and having fun. Sex was good, not great, because he was very pliable, but he was an adept follower and did not throw anything new and exciting my way. When I noticed hair growing on his chest, and told him body hair was my fetish, he still shaved it off every day because he preferred being hairless.

Within three months I asked him to move in with me and split the rent. We lived by Canters Deli on Fairfax, and often got take out.

My latest creative project was an art film where I told my mother's life story using hundreds of dolls I had bought at thrift stores. While editing this, Doug was happy to cook for large dinner parties of friends and neighbors (like Shannon Elizabeth and comedian Kevin McDonald) who watched my art film and gave me notes. Eventually the film was entered in several film festivals and in 1997, won Best Experimental Film at Phila Film and also Davis, California, netting the coveted Golden Calf award.

Inspired by me forgiving Troy, and my manuscript titled *Forgiving Troy*, Doug started to seek out his lost brother, who no one had heard about in decades. On a Christmas trip we took to see his family in New Jersey, Doug reunited with his brother.

That week, we also spent time with his mom, who was an eccentric, thin, white-haired woman practically plastered to the couch, where she lay and complained about her back pain. She chain-smoked in that spot, regardless that we nonsmokers had nowhere to escape the smoke but outside in zero degrees. Next to her couch pillow on a small stool were 10 matchbooks lined up, as if someone could possibly need 200 matches in one place.

Her refrigerator was packed with a dozen to-go coffees that she asked her husband to buy daily, and dated in marker, as old as a month, but she did not want to drink them or get rid of them. More shocking was the basement which had probably over a thousand rolls of toilet paper, 40 gallons of detergent and endless cleaning products.

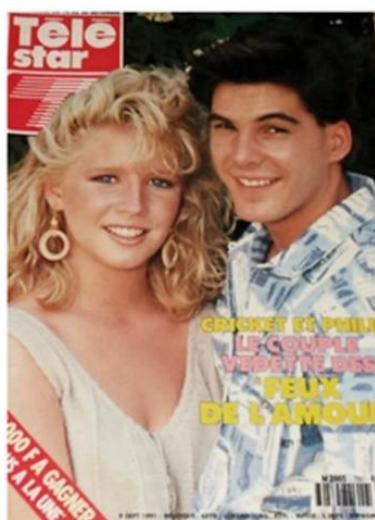
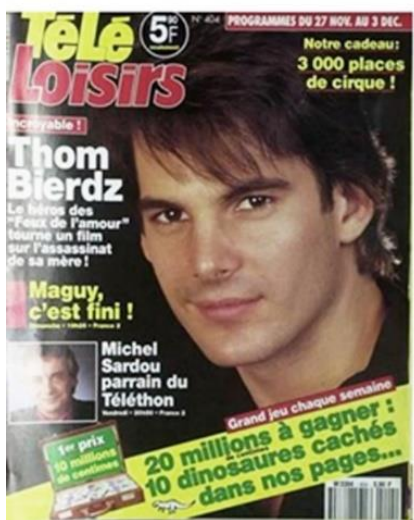
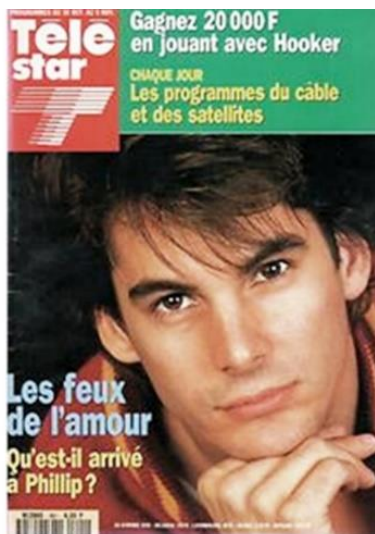
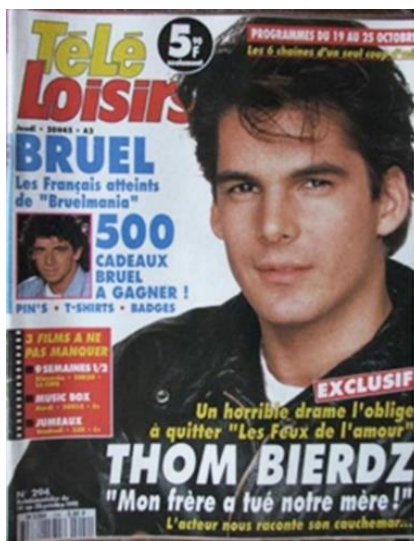
None of the family commented on how peculiar her hoarding was, and just seemed to work around her martyrdom as she smoked and watched the gameshow channel.

Doug's dad was a sweet elflike man who stood happily in the hallway, following her orders should she need anything. He was retired and

occasionally took long road trips to follow an alumni Nebraska football team.

The next Christmas, Doug and I went with two other gay couples to share a cabin in Yosemite. Almost every year I wanted to get away to nature in the mountains and imagined after I had great success as an actor someday that I'd retire to the mountains, some place very private and secluded under towering pines.

The following year, Doug and I took another trip, with one other gay couple, to Paris for two weeks. We were both by that time sexless couples, and none of us had sex during our romantic fortnight stay a block from the Eiffel Tower, but thoroughly enjoyed walking long routes each day to admire the historic Parisian architecture. However, it seemed I could not walk more than five blocks without needing a sugar rush, so we stopped wherever I could get dark chocolate bars with hazelnuts. Food was great everywhere in Paris, but our gay friends had a habit of stealing plates from restaurants as souvenirs, which infuriated me.



Once outside of a Parisian restaurant, I lost my cool explaining that I had been on the cover of the French *TV Guide* several times and it was unfair for my friends to have me be an accomplice of their theft. We could land up in a French prison! They insisted it was not theft, but souvenir-taking.

The Paris trip was really affordable, which was important as Doug and I were not making much. He liked game shows like his mom though,

and the next year tried out for the *\$10,000 Pyramid*, actually got on the show, and actually won \$10,000 with the help of Debra Jo Rupp of *That '70's Show*.

To celebrate, he took me and some friends to a Heart concert. I had no understanding why people crowded into vehicles, parked far away, walked to the Hollywood Bowl, paid a lot of money to hear obnoxiously loud music, and worse, no one sat in their seats because everyone in front of them stood, so one stood. Not a good follower nor spectator, I was never asked back to a concert. Nevertheless, Doug flocked to see Heart every year, squeezing his impressive physique into his tiny faded Heart T-shirt which he had bought as a teen.

* 19: **CATERING FOR STARS & POWER PLAYS**

CATERING FOR STARS

I tired of groveling for coffee house tips so eventually I jumped at the chance when offered \$15 an hour to bartend and / or be a waiter with a Hollywood catering company. On these nightly events I was to dress in my thrift shop tuxedo and show up at an address—sometimes a business, sometimes a private home. I bartended for many celebrities: Rob Reiner, Don Rickles, Barbara Sinatra. Most A-list personalities were at these parties.

Thank You

for being so nice

Most sincerely

Barbara and Don Rickles



Catering was humbling. At one VIP event in a Beverly Hills penthouse where the women were dripping with diamonds, a woman took an hors d'oeuvres from my tray and said, "TJ?"

"Hailey?" I said, recalling her as actor Mitchell Anderson's alcoholic roommate who had incredible drive to succeed in Hollywood. Apparently, she had. She had gotten sober and had married a very wealthy horse financier.

"So nice to see you," she said. "What are you up to?"

"Just passing around dim sum," I moaned.

Awkward. I felt like a failure.

At another mansion in Bel Air, I was hired as a waiter. The doorbell rang, and wearing my tux and best smile, I answered, holding a tray of champagne and white wine. I walked the producers of *The Young and the Restless*, Bill and Lee Bell, who apparently lived next door. I was humiliated because I'd quit their soap to become a movie-star, and instead had become a waiter.

Bill and Lee Bell were very warm as they took glasses of white wine. Jack Lemmon walked over to them. I was still a deer caught in the headlights, and Bill Bell generously introduced me to Jack Lemmon saying that I was one of their very good actors on the soap opera. Jack looked confused as I handed him a flute of champagne from my tray. Unfortunately, I could not just avoid them the rest of the night, since this was a very small dinner party. So, I just tucked my tail between my legs and was a good waiter.

An even more embarrassing catering event happened a few months later. I was given no information other than to be at Raleigh Studios at 7:00 PM. I hadn't been to that studio since I had filmed my first TV commercial for Dr. Pepper fifteen years earlier.

I walked into the movie soundstage to find other caterers stocking bars and hanging streamers. Glitter was pumped into the air from an automated fan above the dance floor where huge mirror balls spun. I approached the catering captain.

"What is this? Looks glamorous."

"Nothing more glamorous than daytime TV."

"Daytime TV?" I gulped.

"*Soap Opera Digest Awards.*"

I panicked, remembering that about eight years earlier I had been a presenter at these awards, and had given the statue to winner Anne Heche.

The captain said, "Follow me to your bartending station." She led me to the main bar where caterers were busy stocking glasses and liquor.

"I'm not sure if I'm feeling okay," I said.

"We're overstaffed, so if you want to go, let me know in a few minutes."

"Thanks. I need to go to the bathroom a sec."

Catching my breath, I walked down studio streets to find a restroom. I wondered if I should get out of there quickly before anybody I used to work with saw me. I couldn't face them, not after I'd blown off my farewell party, and left them holding a cake waiting for me. Besides doting Jeanne Cooper, I'd never contacted any of the people I had worked with, even shared dressing rooms with. I couldn't face the looks of sympathy, or pity, I would now receive from them. I'd believed I could run away and never face them again, like I had run away from almost everyone I knew in Kenosha, and Milwaukee.

I adjusted my bowtie in the mirror, cursing my luck. I couldn't believe it had happened. Still, with all my spiritual reading, I wondered if I hadn't on a very subconscious level willed this drama to take place.

I was shaking. My heart was pumping. I was asthmatic. I left the studio and walked back to my car to use my emergency inhaler in my glove compartment. I wondered what would happen if I went back into the studio and bartended? *Could I do that? Did I have the guts to look my fellow actors in the face? What would they think of me? What would I think of me?* I became curious enough to walk back to the studio. It's not like I could be beaten-up or murdered. I would just turn about a hundred shades of red.

I told the captain I felt better and was ready to bartend. I sipped tequila, but not enough to appear drunk.

Soon, the place was packed. I recognized dozens of daytime stars, and

they recognized me, too. Tricia Cast, my wife on *Y&R*, excitedly came behind my bar to hug me. Lauralee Bell who played Cricket came, too.

Waiter friends of mine, who passed hors d'oeuvres that night, told me they heard I was bartending in order to work the pity angle to attain publicity to get back on the show.

I denied this rumor to the reporter who wanted to interview me, after I'd made him his drink. I also said maybe I deserved this for not showing up at my goodbye party.

He said, "Nobody deserves this. Not even Tonya Harding. WHY are you doing this?"

As honest as ever, I mumbled, "Fifteen bucks an hour."

WILL AND GRACE, AND A MOVIE STAR'S ANNIVERSARY

Also, for \$15 an hour, I was the server at the dinner for the cast of the new show *Will and Grace* at writer Max Mutchnick's beautiful Beverly Canyon home. Debra Messing, who played Grace seemed to recognize me from the soap opera. Max was single, attractive and interested in me, but I asked if I could come back and see him—and bring my boyfriend Doug so we could visualize a house like his if I won the lotto or sold a script or two. That did not work out, and as the years passed, I cannot deny I was jealous of the incredible success of *Will and Grace*, knowing as a gay actor, I could have done well on that show.

A secret VIP event was arranged in a large, catered tented area of Malibu's elite The Colony district. Setting up my bar at the back of the dinner section, I was informed it was a 10th anniversary party for an A-list movie star and his actress wife. As A-list stars and politicians entered, I got increasingly anxious. I remembered a time from long

before when I was nervous to wait on a table of sexy straight motorcycle guys, but when they did not tip me, my anger marched me to catch them in the parking lot and demand a tip. One guy tried to slug me, but I nonetheless demanded a tip, and the others soon threw me some dollar bills and dragged the fighter away. I could have been beat up or killed, but the lesson I learned from that was that when I was furious, I was not nervous.

Trying to make myself furious at this celeb event so I'd appear calm, I began to mumble to myself mean things about the stars who walked in. They could not hear me, no one was at my bar yet, and doing so seemed to stop my shaky hands, even though I felt a little guilty throwing them the most despicable, hateful judgments from across the room. I had even surprised myself how vile and mean my secret words were, none of which I meant, but I figured if it evened the waters it was worth it. Who would know?

Fifteen minutes later, the tall male movie-star suddenly turned and glared at me, then stormed across the lawn. He braced his hands on my bar and met my eyes with hurt and anger. I had seen him approach so I had changed from venomous to smiley by then.

"What can I get you?" I asked.

His eyes searched my head and body, and without saying a word he marched away. Later I realized he may have seen my lips mumbling and thought I was secretly reporting to a tabloid or something.

Even later I was informed that the secret service had the entire place wired and were listening in on us the whole time. Maybe the A-lister had heard the horrible insults I was spewing at him and all the attending celebs. Damn, I felt so embarrassed. I had never expected anyone to hear me and I did not even mean what I'd said. It was an acting exercise.

When I catered parties at Alan Carr's expansive estate in Benedict Canyon, his house manager was a very chiseled blond named Ron E.

He was my height and very well built, as cute and bubbly as you might expect of someone in charge of parties for a reserved gay producer like Carr.

Many parties there I bartended and met the friendliest people like the incredibly beautiful Angie Dickenson. Each time I was there Ron made it obvious he wanted me. He was bold, but I always explained I had a boyfriend, Doug.

Hired to bartend at the Pacific Design Center one night, Jennifer Aniston came over. I asked what drink I could get her. As I made it and handed it to her, the stunning blonde seemed confused and said, "I know you from somewhere."

"Well, I know who you are!" I said, a fan of her *Friends* show then added, "I am not usually blond, just dyed my hair, but maybe you know me from playing on a soap opera? I used to be on *The Young and the Restless*?"

She dropped her drink, shattering it, but mumbled, "No, that's not it."

But her dropping her drink made me think maybe she did know me from that. No idea. Later her beau, Brad Pitt came to the bar, studied me and ordered two beers, for him and a buddy. He and Jen were both so sweet, and so polite and gave me great eye contact. I remained a huge fan.

BROTHER GREGG'S BAD MARRIAGE

Occasionally I'd get together with my brother, Gregg, and we would brainstorm on how to succeed in Hollywood, which was then offering neither of us success.

October to November 1999: the only constant in Gregg's and Patsy's

eight years as an on-again, off-again couple was their relationship getting worse. Married for five years, they had two small children and a nanny. These daily witnesses didn't do much to ease the tension. Patsy seemed insecure, jealous, and high-maintenance. Gregg was now resentful, uncommunicative; unsure he wanted to be married, and, having quit the agency when he wasn't promoted from being an assistant, unemployed.

After failing as an actor and an agent, Gregg tried screenwriting. He said his script was about seduction, comparing it to the movie, *Gods and Monsters*. I never saw this screenplay, and to my knowledge Gregg never finished it, instead he decided to become a literary manager. He started his own small firm with Patsy's financial support. He proudly showed me his tiny office in a rundown building in Hollywood. He loved that little space more than Patsy's million-dollar mansion where he lived. It gave him breathing room. It empowered him—as much as his own “space” paid for with his wife's money could.

Patsy naturally expected a return on her investment. She had done everything she could to please her younger man; a man she loved deeply, and empowered, giving him a monthly distribution of money, a “nest-egg” of \$27,000, a car, fancy gym membership, and fashionable clothes. She even had cosmetic surgery. Often. All she wanted was her husband's love and physical affection. Did her neediness make her unattractive?

That October the police were called to their house for the couple's worst fight. Gregg accused Patsy of physically assaulting him and twisting his genitals because he was not performing his husbandly duties. After this incident, Gregg moved out, or was thrown out of her house.

As Gregg's and Patsy's relationship was collapsing, my and Doug's relationship was going well. But pretty much sexless. However, the bond Doug and I shared was as strong as most heterosexual married couples, and we subconsciously felt ready for a shift from

honeymooners to parents. Incorrectly believing I'd overcome my allergies, I brought home to Doug our first "child," a German Shepherd pup called Bodhi. Naming the dog after the new-age bookstore, The Bodhi Tree, was my idea. Doug was not interested in The Bodhi Tree, but ironically, by being so connected to the present, he was the most spiritual person I knew.

MY FIRST PUSSY

In 1999, my dad was writing a novel and to do research he took me with him to Poland because he and his third wife were separated. It was a great 10-day vacation, except for his smoking in the car aggravating my asthma. We bonded as we examined thousand-year-old buildings and hoped someday to return to such a magic place with our partners.

Doug did not have a problem with me beating off to porn, so when I was in Warsaw, one night I took the rent-a-car to try to find a book store to get a porn mag or a souvenir video.

Though I did not understand any of the annoyingly long Polish words on the street signs, I did find neon letters spelling S-E-X, so I parked and charged in. It was an adult book store with a woman cashier who probably said something that meant welcome. The videos were not VHS like in the States and would not be able to be played at home, so I asked her if she had other options. She did not understand English but pointed me toward a door in the back. I opened the door curtain and walked on, hoping to find VHS tapes but I was in a small booth like the one in Milwaukee where almost 20 years prior Scott flicked his lighter burning a penis that stuck through a glory hole in the wall.

I sat down, stumped, but did not want a Polish dick to come through a hole in the wall. Well, not true, of course I wanted a Polish dick to

come through a hole in the wall. In fact, in every wall I had ever seen, truth is I wanted a Polish dick to come through a hole in it. My childhood bedroom walls, my school classroom walls, the walls at the roller rink and bowling alley and at grandma's holiday dinners and at malls and in my dressing room at CBS and in church and at cafes and the car wash and airports and 7-11 and Sizzler, sure, what would be better than a Polish dick coming through ANY wall? I cannot deny there was ever an instance when I would not want that. However, I would ignore a Polish dick coming through the wall of this Warsaw sex shop because Doug and I had not discussed that. So, if a stranger's penis entered I would have to leave.

Suddenly curtains opened in front of the glass wall and to the side of me. This small booth now had a complete stage in front. Then what appeared in front of me was even more disconcerting than a Polish sausage. A stocky, young blonde woman with short hair entered the stage in lingerie and pointed to the hole cut in the glass wall between us.

I am not putting my Polish / Italian dick in a hole in the wall for you to suck.

But she kept pointing. Our eyes met—my brow furled in confusion, and terror, and she made the international sign of money by rubbing her fingers together. *Oh, she wants money*, I thought, then I shook my head and said, "Naw, thank you."

Music with horns started and she began slowly dancing and stripping for me, so I felt obligated to push Polish currency through the hole to her. She liked that, and kept dancing, trying to seduce me with her eyes and breasts that she shimmied.

I made a decision at that point. I had never seen a naked woman in the flesh. Why not just see one now? What could it hurt? Not like she's my cousin. Which would be hotter. But, anyway... I'd never have to look at her again afterward. True when I was in high school I

accidentally shoved my finger in Cindy's ass, but I did it blindly; I never saw Cindy naked.

As this cherubic Polish woman stripped further to a G-string, she pointed again to the glass hole. Like a surgeon I studied her body and gave more money as if she was a *Ripley's Believe It Or Not* attraction. She took it, then whipped off her G-string. She seemed so proud of her hairy pussy, but if she was expecting me to be delighted, I was nothing but studious. She again made an international symbol—for jacking off—and pointed to me—as if it was okay for me to do that. I smiled politely and declined then moved my head forward to check out what a vagina looks like.

You know what? On a guy it could be kind of hot.

Over breakfast I told dad the story, and he laughed heartily.

When I returned to Los Angeles, I called Gregg to tell him about the naked lady, but he did not laugh along with me. He was too absorbed in his own drama with Patsy, and surprised me by considering moving back in with her, despite their past fights and escalating tensions. I advised him not to and insisted he walk away, to give them both space and breathing room.

FROM MY PREVIOUS MEMOIR, *FORGIVING TROY: GREGG'S DEMISE*,
January to May 2000

Gregg moved back in with Patsy, and they temporarily lived in separate bedrooms. He didn't dare call me in December or January, because he knew if he told me about their possible reconciliation that I'd lecture him on how disastrous they were as a couple. *If Patsy had threatened to kill him, as Gregg claimed, then why get back together with her?*

In February, Gregg finally phoned and said he and Patsy were officially splitting up. He asked me to help him move into a secured apartment building in the San Fernando Valley. I was thrilled that he was getting his own place, but only agreed to help if I didn't have to face any of Patsy's drama while we moved his things out of her house. Gregg assured me she would not be home.

But she was home, and, as I anticipated, she was overly emotional and weepy. I was furious at him for lying to manipulate me into doing what he wanted. The moment Gregg and I got back into his truck, I told him to drop me off at my apartment. I refused to help him move any further. It was raining, and his mattress was in an open-bed truck. He sadly looked at me and asked, "How am I going to get this into my apartment by myself?"

I didn't care.

We had no reason to talk in March, April or May. Hope and Aunt Mary were used to phone calls from Gregg every week, but he'd also stopped calling them. Patsy called and told us he had gotten a minimum-wage book-stocking position at Brentano's bookstore in the Beverly Center Mall. Apparently, Gregg was still living in his apartment, and saw his kids three times a week for the allotted two hours. Afterward, he'd sometimes stay for the elegant candle-lit dinners Patsy prepared. She'd gotten a new hairstyle and some more minor cosmetic surgery. She was going to therapy for her anger issues, and her compulsion to once again keep Gregg on a "tight leash" by trying to buy him back. She liked tight leashes. Her boxer dog wore an electronic collar that zapped him when he barked.

Hope begged me to go knock on Gregg's door and plead with him to return her calls. I phoned Gregg and, getting his answering machine, left a stern message, then I drove to his place.

It was a security building and I was refused entrance. The guard called Gregg's apartment, but Gregg didn't answer. The guard left a message

saying I was at the front gate. I waited a few minutes for Gregg to respond, then left.

The next night, Patsy called me, frantic. Gregg hadn't shown up for his scheduled Tuesday evening visitation with the kids. She wanted me to go to his building. I told her I wouldn't, because Doug and I were riveted to the latest TV phenomenon, *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?* I told Patsy I'd tried to see Gregg the previous night and was denied entry. Nevertheless, she begged, and I finally relented.

Again, I was refused entrance. I told the guard I was Gregg's brother and needed to see him, because Gregg had been reclusive too long, and we were beginning to worry. I insisted we call the manager on premises. A petite woman came out in her robe. I told her that Gregg's wife and sister were concerned for his safety and had asked me to check on him. The security guard phoned Gregg, but the phone line was busy. The manager guided me through the maze of brightly lit corridors and pointed to Gregg's door. We heard a continuous mechanical beep, similar to a phone off the hook. I knocked. If Gregg was in there, how could he put up with that annoying noise? Either he was not there, or he was unconscious inside the apartment.

"Gregg! It's me! Hope is mad at you!" I kicked the door but got no response.

The manager refused to use her key to enter and said the authorities would have to intercede from that point.

The police arrived a half-hour later. They made me wait at the end of the hall while they broke down Gregg's door. It was chain locked from the interior. The police kicked it open and disappeared inside. They must've hung up his phone because the beeping stopped. I froze, straining to hear some clue. I heard a few footsteps, then whispering, followed by a radio dispatcher.

I knew my brother was dead.

The cops avoided my eyes when they came back into the hallway. One cop went downstairs, and I asked the other why. He whispered to me, staring straight into my eyes, that Gregg had shot himself. They had called the coroner, and the other cop would lead them up to the body. It was unbelievable. Surreal. How could my sunny, charismatic brother kill himself? I asked the cop if he were sure it wasn't murder because Gregg and his wife had threatened each other. The cop told me the window in Gregg's apartment was locked from the inside. And with the door chain secured there was no way someone could have killed him and escaped.

I asked to see the body. The cop said it was against the rules. I said I needed to see it—that I had to see if he were really there or if this was some conspiracy. The cop told me not to tell anybody, but he would let me see the body as long as I didn't touch anything.

Gregg's apartment was beyond depressing—no furniture or lamps. The mattress had a blanket, but no sheets. There were no pictures at all, except for two framed photos of his children on the TV. A phone and an answering machine were on the floor. The police would discover many taped messages of Patsy screaming at Gregg. The message, from the night before, asking him to let me in, had been erased, so he must have been alive the preceding night.

Gregg's favorite books were in a paper bag. A few open cans of food sat on shuffled legal papers on the counter.

The old newspaper articles of Mom's murder jutted out of an envelope on the floor. He had highlighted facts and scribbled notes on these articles.

His suicide note was addressed to Hope. He did not explain why he was killing himself, only that he wished for Hope to check in with his kids and explain how much their daddy loved them. There was a small hall leading to a closet and a bathroom. Gregg was in the closet—probably to muffle the noise—wearing jogging clothes and a robe,

sitting with his legs spread. He was bloated, I was told, from having been dead for about 20 hours. A gun had fallen between his legs. His hands were not far from the gun. There was a little blood in the corner of his mouth, but I didn't see any other sign of injury. He was leaning back, his head between his Armani suits.

On the drive to Patsy's house to tell her in person Gregg was dead, I screamed my head off in the car. *What the fuck were you thinking, Gregg?! This makes NO SENSE!!*

Patsy fainted, but I was strong, not emotional. I was in shock.

During those next months I hardly left my apartment unless I had to cater or wait. Doug and our dogs brought me great comfort—especially Deen the Chihuahua, who would sleep in the small of my back. But they could do nothing to stop the terrifying scenes taking shape on my canvases.



With Gregg as kids. With baby Deen.

The nights when Doug was away working were the nights I understood for the first time why someone would kill himself. A feeling of utter desolation swept over me. I imagined it was what Gregg felt during his last weeks, and what Troy went through on a regular basis. It was as if

nothing mattered. As if there was nothing but darkness and cold, with no promise of warmth, no promise of light. It was as if there were no life, just a constant coldness, and for that reason I needed to constantly pet my dogs and hold their paws. On the few occasions when Doug or the dogs weren't around, the heaviness of this desolation hit me so quickly it took great effort for me to move at all, even to a mirror to see who I was, and what I was. In the darkness of night, I would force my tired, cold body out of bed and down the hall to the bathroom sink. I felt hollow. Catching a flicker of light from my neighbor's windows filled me with gratitude. It was as if I had been the only living being for centuries, and I had finally found another soul. All sounds became welcome miracles to my ears. I received a glimmer of hope there was life—outside—and, therefore, there might be life inside me, too.

Where had such dire blankness come from? This depression was not mine; it was Gregg's. Suicide was contagious. Some of Gregg's friends experienced their deepest depressions at the same time.

MORE A-LIST EVENTS

Doug enjoyed being a waiter at a popular Santa Monica café which received many celebrity patrons, and I was also seeing many more stars as a cater waiter or bartender in their homes. Some of these mansions, like Marvin Davis and wife Barbara, hired caterers for their parties even though they already had a staff of 60 to operate their property.

Handsome Tony Danza came immediately to my entrance bar before shaking hands with the other guests when he arrived at the palatial Davis estate. He wanted a huge drink to relax him—and I was the same

way at parties. Sylvester Stallone was so very sexy in person, and even as I tried to make eye-contact, he deliberately avoided it, probably used to gay waiters putting the make on him. Though I did try to make eye-contact with Stallone, Doug and I were still monogamous, so I refused pursuing the many sexy caterers I worked with—and there were several who'd asked me out.

Another of my favorite actors who seemed to require alcohol to handle parties was Bea Arthur. She asked for a tall water glass filled to the rim with straight gin, no ice. Everyone else thought she was sipping water.

As Salma Hayek was refusing the cookies on my tray that I was offering at another party, this time a super agent's home in Brentwood, I missed the infamous sex scene that would turn up the following day in the *Hollywood Reporter*. Apparently right in front of everyone, a wannabe actress blew a Hollywood agent, who later got fired for instigating sex at a company party. I was so into my work I probably offered him a cookie not seeing her sucking his knob. My dessert tray may have even been spermed for all I know.

While I did not dislike being a waiter or bartender, and getting to experience fantasy mansions, of course I dreamt I had one for myself. Maybe painting could make me rich? My art looked as good as the art in those rich people's homes. Wouldn't rich people buy MY art if they saw it? Putting on my best smile, I drove to Beverly Hills several days in a row, and walked up and down Rodeo Drive carrying several of my smaller paintings. Yup, though people cringed, I walked right up to rich people and tried to sell my art, but they scurried away, even fetching security on me. I drove home humiliated.

The rejection hurt, but as an actor I had gone to hundreds of auditions and only nailed a few parts, so I was used to rejection. For several weeks, I drove to different wealthy neighborhoods – Bel Air, Beverly Hills, Brentwood -- and I actually walked up to gates and doors offering a CD of my artwork, which had a bio of me and a few scenes

from the soap opera. I did not expect the only people to answer the doors to be Mexican maids, who smiled and took the CD. Guess what? As enterprising or ambitious or awkward as this was, no one ever contacted me for art.

Auditioning weekly for many popular TV series, but not getting callbacks, I was thrilled to finally win a small part in an erotic thriller for the Playboy channel, *Warm Texas Rain*. I played a drunk guy in a bar too aggressive with the ladies, but in reality, I just fantasized about fucking the star, handsome macho Steven Bauer.



* 20: **HEIGHTENED SENSITIVITY**

FARRAH

Those parties I catered were usually flocked to by stars. Farrah Fawcett was at the super agent's Brentwood one, and later, I would meet her in person via a mutual friend who liked us both as artists and thought we'd become friends.

I had expected a pretty young Farrah as she was in *Charlie's Angels*, but when her friend introduced her to me at the Grove Theater, I am embarrassed that I looked disappointed at her aged face, though I tried to hide it. Immediately my friend said, "Doesn't she look great?" but when I could not take the cue and lie successfully, he finally said, "Her body, look at these arms?" And luckily, I could move my petrified gaze to her arms and say in all honesty, "Yes, Wow. So tight."

As Farrah and I waited for others, and since everyone was staring at her, I followed her around a bend into a restaurant. I could tell she was nervous—and rightfully so: everybody noticed and stared at her. I had had some fame, but no one noticed me there. As Farrah tried to appear secure and small talk, my eyes did not know what to do with her face. So, I started to look at her like my movie star idol Monty Clift looked at women in his movies—he just jumped from her one eye to the other to her forehead to her cheeks to her chin and repeat.

So here I was, with Farrah, still arguably one of the most beautiful women in the world to many, feeling as insecure as she was. We continued our small talk as I ridiculously imitated Monty Clift eyes. Growing very self-conscious and wondering why I would not lock my eyes into hers as she wanted, and why my stare kept bouncing around her face, she excused herself to the restroom. A full 20 minutes later she returned, and took a popcorn from her friend, and we went in to see the movie. I felt like such an unappreciative ass and hated myself

for hurting her feelings, as I imagine I did.

As I did with another famous older actress, J. C.. When J. first opened her condominium door to me in my tux and bow tie, I smiled at her presence. She was still getting ready for her small dinner party and looked beautiful with a towel wrapped around her head, very similar to her famous TV character of decades past. She was much friendlier than her infamous alter ego and showed me her kitchen and told me where I could set up the bar.

Later, as I was passing hors d' oeuvres to the guests, one remarked that I looked like Tom Cruise. I smiled. J. said, "He is more handsome than Tom Cruise!"

I felt on the spot. It was an awkward moment because I knew by now that in Hollywood there are scripts on and off-screen and that I was indeed supposed to say something.

A large man next to her eventually tried to save the moment, "Young man. This is J. C., one of the most beautiful movie legends in history. When she gives you a compliment, it is polite to return it."

J. bat her enormous eye lashes and looked down, embarrassed, and I knew I was supposed to compliment her, but just then it occurred to me how wide her eyes were, and to me, in that moment, they looked too wide, and she did not look conventionally beautiful. But I did as I was told since everyone was staring at me and said, "I know, she's so beautiful." But my tight frowning lips and darting eyes showed that I did not mean it, or that I was being forced to speak. I felt so bad and therefore avoided J.'s kind eyes the remainder of the night.

I hated myself and reran that exchange and so many episodes like it in my head many times. Truth is I was a bad actor and could not lie well (the reason I was a good actor at times on TV was because using method exercises for hours I fooled myself into thinking my lines were reality). Also, I saw things differently than most people. Maybe more critically, as I was very critical of myself as well, never finding myself

handsome or sexy or dateable, although I knew I photographed well in certain angles.

In examining this series of awkward incidents / haunts, it occurred to me that in the same earnest manner in which I dedicated my life To Jesus when I took the name T.J. at 18 years-old, a decade later I made another plea. I prayed that I would be the most honest man in the world. This was actually a very sincere and repeated prayer of mine through my 30s, because I felt this was the best way to honor my deceased mother, the most honest person I knew, and to inspire mankind. Looking back, I see this personality trait as perhaps the catalyst for much of my neurosis/paranoia, as how does one stay honest in Hollywood? In a world of pretense and illusion? The Jim Carrey character in *Liar Liar* illustrated the degree of upset which boomerangs from a man who cannot lie.

As self-centered as I was, my core intention was to contribute greatly to the world. Somehow. I felt that was my life assignment. True that my honesty often attracted honesty from others, but just as often, it attracted awkward situations and hurt feelings. If I had prayed instead to be a flatterer or studied *How to Win Friends and Influence People* as my brother Gregg had, perhaps I would have made people smile or turned those awkward social moments into beneficial career opportunities. Only now can I see that being the most honest man in the world would serve few.

I also prayed a thousand times for me to help people by delivering messages to them from their beloved dead loved ones. Since I was a child I had felt that invisible presences existed and felt sensitive enough to be a medium, although I had not yet achieved that to any notable extent at that point.

MY PSYCHIC PREMONITION – SEPTEMBER, 2001

I didn't believe most of the psychics I had been to in Los Angeles and I didn't believe most the TV psychics either. They seemed to guess in a way that they couldn't be wrong.

I did not believe James Von Praagh until he told me exactly what I had asked to be voiced by him the day before our scheduled séance years ago, 1990, before he became world famous. I said to my dead mother the day prior, "Mom, if this guy's for real, tell him to mention the blue and green frosting you used to put on my birthday cakes." James kept missing as he read me, guessing wrong things, and I was embarrassed for him. He was sweating as seven other people had already been read and delighted by him, but I was the hard nut to crack. Sitting in my chair, arms crossed, legs crossed, I tried to hide the disappointment in my eyes. Finally, he said the exact words I asked to hear, and my body relaxed. A breath of relief escaped my tightened face. My eyes were misty. He breathed, knowing he had reached the spirit world for me. The people in the room leaned in to hear why my mood had suddenly changed. I could barely get out the words to explain. Those words from him erased all doubt of my mother being "dead." James proved she was alive...somewhere. I knew James Von Praagh was legit and he became world-famous soon after that. Maybe other TV psychics were legit, too. But I wasn't the type to believe it until I saw it for myself.

Still, I had been fortunate enough, and open enough, to have experienced some absolutely unexplainable phenomenon.

The account that follows is one experience people told me to hush. They thought it would damage my credibility as an author and artist so I left it out of my previous memoir. But I refuse to keep it secret any longer.

On a late summer evening in 2001, I lay in my Hollywood townhouse bed, under the covers, on my back. Next to me was my partner Doug,

and also in bed were our sleeping dogs, baby Chihuahua named Deen and a shepherd / beagle named Bodhi. Because I was an asthmatic around dogs and rarely slept well, I often experimented with alternative cures to get sleep. That year I had trained myself to “lucid-dream” at bedtime, meaning that when I closed my eyes I could see a myriad of disjointed symbols parading past my eyes while I was fully awake, which might exhaust me to sleep.

Science had said that the brain filed the day away in symbols, not words; not pictures we'd recognize. So, for years I trained myself to see these fascinating symbols form and dissolve into others. It was mind-boggling to be sure. For example, maybe a tomato would be a spinning top and inside a kite would appear and the kite would light up and dance and then an elephant's foot would be upside down and then striped in pinks and then a bicycle made of aluminum foil would be in the right corner of my still closed eyes' view and then turn into a cane. These did not happen on a flat screen, per se, but were coming from all directions, and at once sometimes. I don't remember the symbols I saw that particular night, or any other night, because they were too quick and complicated; instantaneous and multifaceted. The books I read said this was “lucid-dreaming.”

This was a very entertaining part of the day for me; like watching a bizarre, unpredictable Fellini movie while I was fully awake. After about 10-15 minutes of this, I might doze off and then I assumed the symbols would continue subconsciously as I entered the first stage of sleep.

But on this one unforgettable night, after only a minute into this fascinating parade of symbols did they come to an abrupt halt! This had never happened before. Usually symbols layered on top of each other as time progressed until they exhausted me and became a dream and I fell asleep. Never had everything I saw just disappeared. But I saw nothing. There was blackness—only blackness and stillness—which by its stagnancy meant that the lucid-dreaming was over. No question about it.

Yet I was still totally awake with my eyes closed, stuck, startled...waiting for who knows what. Then I saw something so horrible flash in front of my face that I remember needing to forget what I saw immediately. I have no idea what I saw. I only remember NEEDING to forget it. And I did.

With my eyes closed, the only thing in front of me was darkness; emptiness; still and distant. Then slowly an image emerged, and it was like I had an aerial view looking down a long curved tunnel, and I could "feel" from the bottom of this long, long tunnel an intense "hurting." What did that mean? Nothing like this had ever happened before. But, curious, I lay motionless, waiting for an explanation. I ached along with the heavy hurt emanating out of the long, curved, seemingly endless tunnel.

Suddenly, from the corner of my closed eyes, a couple smears of light flew into the tunnel! Then a few more light smears dove in at top speed, projecting so much love and concern that it gave me goosebumps. My empathetic aching was overridden by a feeling of exhilaration. I had no idea where these lights came from. I simply saw these little beings dash past my eyes from both sides of my face, and downward toward the hurt. But the hurt at the tunnel bottom suddenly increased, and as it did, more dizzying flying smears of light flew in, along with their "love."

In another minute there were dozens and then hundreds of these lighted entities blurring past my eyes. The love they carried was pure and intense and relaxed my whole body. But the guttural pain in the tunnel still existed: I felt that in my stomach.

In a few more seconds, thousands of tiny smears of light dove into this mysterious tunnel of pain. The entire view was flocked with these beings and that shocked me so much I threw open my eyes and I blurted, frightened, "Armageddon!" I was not religious, but that idea shot out of me.

I looked over at Doug who was sound asleep. I lay awake for hours, petting our sleeping Chihuahua, perplexed. What had just happened to me?! It wasn't a dream! I was fully awake! If it hadn't been so late, I could have phoned cowboy Gary to ask him his feedback.

In the morning, Doug woke me to tell me to come downstairs to the living room and see the TV. A plane had crashed into the World Trade Center. By the time I got downstairs, another plane had crashed into the other tower and we all know that the twin towers eventually imploded to the ground, killing thousands of people.

I was shown the night prior that these thousands of people who were dying were going to be met immediately by thousands of individual caring light smears (spirit guides?)!

Was this proof of life after death? Was this proof they did not suffer long? Was time non-linear? How had I seen this ahead of time? The tall towers resembled the curved long tunnel I saw, because I was seeing it from above.

What was I supposed to do with this message? I told my friends and family and the waitresses at Canters deli, where I had recently been hired to wait tables. They knew I wasn't the type to make up stories, so I knew they believed me but wondered what horrible image it was that I needed to forget. I don't think I'll ever know. Maybe someday I'll go under hypnosis to try to see it again.

Perhaps the reason I had this vision is because I had always been open to the idea of spirits and life-after-death. And the fact that I had this vision the night before 9/11 is proof that I had not created this in my imagination. Because of my super sensitivity, which had its benefits and drawbacks both, I experienced a premonition of the loving smears of light helping the thousands of dying people the night before the planes hit the towers.

* 21: GYM SEX

NAKED MUSCULAR STRANGERS ACROSS THE ROOM

True that as I wondered how to regain the sexual relationship with Doug, I recalled that I was the one who always initiated sex and decided what we'd do. This was a bad idea on our second date when I thought it would be sexy to eat food off Doug's amazing body. But eating a brownie off his hairy butt was not a good visual. The hairy butt was—but a brownie on a butt looks like feces—and I was never into scat.

After being together six years, I was getting much more sexual attention at the gym than at home, so I asked Doug if we could open our relationship and if I could jack off with strangers in the gym showers. He was surprised to hear this question, and thought awhile, and then said he was okay with that.

Reviewing my sex life, I primarily only had sex with guys I was in relationships with, or one-night-stands about every two months when I was single. Many other guys had sex at bookstores, park bathrooms, glory holes, white parties, orgies, bath houses and gyms. I never did any of that... until in my late thirties.

But here I was, intrigued with the idea of sex in the gym locker-room. *As long as we did not get arrested and I caught no disease, what could go wrong?*

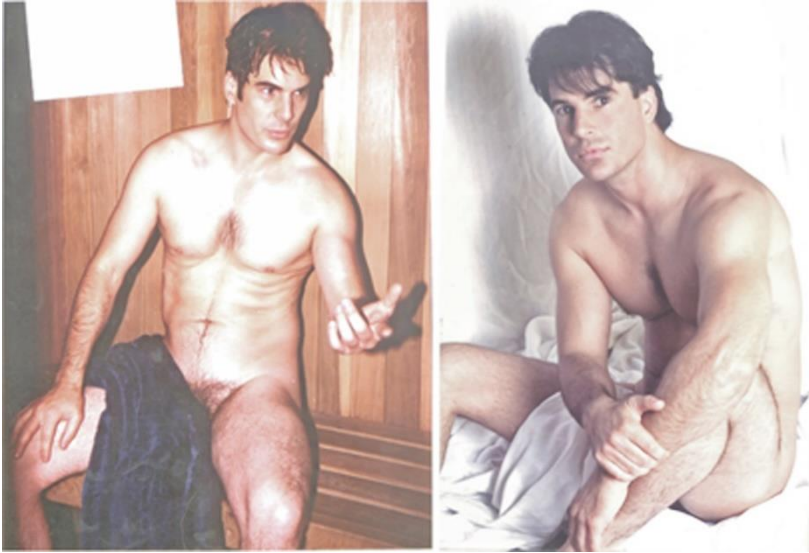
None of the cruising took place in the gym itself when I was working out. Gym sex wasn't something one planned. It was more that you are offered whatever shows up on the buffet table in the showers, sauna or steam room.

24 Hour Fitness on Santa Monica Boulevard was smack in the middle

of the cruisiest gay bars in West Hollywood; it was open 24 hours, so Lord knows what those steam rooms attracted. Once in that steam room was enough to see way too much traffic for my comfort level. This was not a place one could actually share chemistry with one person without being invaded by many permanently lurking men I was not attracted to.

Easton Gym's locker-room also was too open for my taste.

Gold's gym was a great gym, but their shower room was not attached to the locker-room, so I avoided it because I was paranoid if I went to the shower room it would be obvious I was there to do more than shower.



L.A. Fitness at Miracle Mile in Hollywood was inadvertently set up perfectly for gym sex. The huge locker-room was in an entirely different building than the gym and no one saw you enter or leave. After a long hallway, a door opened into a deep locker-room and behind it several more rows of lockers, and even more rows. To the left of the far locker-room was the bathroom, with sinks, and a few stalls. Behind those were seven shower stalls—three on one side,

three on the other, and one bigger one in the middle / back. Although the shower stalls were individual, they had curtains, so it would be easy to hide what you wanted—like the birthmark coming out of my asshole looking like smeared shit—and peek across from you to see if someone was there trying to show you their interest, er, erection.

Even further behind the showers was a sauna on the left and a steam room on the right. This set up was very private with many areas for one to make eye-contact, and body contact, and enough rooms to slip away from anyone you wanted to avoid.

I am guessing straight guys only used the showers and steam room and sauna maybe once or twice before they were hit on, so most avoided it. Seemed like all the guys zipping back and forth between these areas were gay. Even though I was open to mutually jacking off a stranger, I still had a specific type. Sure, I liked handsome men, but I also liked macho men. I really had a thing for Neanderthals. Loved the caveman look with sloping forehead and eyebrows that connected. All body hair turned me on. Even guys with long ear hair, feet hair, leg hair, underarm hair, treasure trails, chest hair, ass hair, or beards and mustaches, or sideburns. I avoided most eye contact from guys I was not interested in to politely keep a distance, but there were occasions when someone I was not attracted to slipped into my action.

At one point, this perfect, brown-haired, medium-height, masculine muscular stud, who totally was good-looking enough to be a movie star, and I were in one of the shower stalls discreetly soaping each others' sore muscles, trying to hide behind the curtain, and this short black guy with huge eyes and dreadlocks forced his way in to join us. He was very sexy naked, but outside the gym, he had the attitude, hair and wardrobe of a miffed drag queen, and that attitude did not excite me sexually.

Speaking of black drag queens, I did enter a Crunch gym steam room and see one very recognizable black drag queen sitting on the top tier squeezed between two other naked guys. When guys sat that close in

a steam room, it was possible they were pleasuring each other. Usually when I opened the door and found action that I wanted to escape, I just pretended I was straight, looked away, took a few breaths then exited. Like I did that time, but later, as I left the gym, the same time as this famous person did, I told him I was a fan. He was scurrying away; maybe afraid I was going to beat him up after allegedly catching him in action.

Another time, this other black guy with a buzz cut who was not handsome or muscular barged into the sauna where a few of us were touching each other under our towels. For some reason even though I was not turned on by him I let the guy beat me off and blow me, and he had no discretion. Another person came in meanwhile and he did not even stop what he was doing and look to see who it was. It could have been a cop, but he sucked onto me like a car wash vacuum and did not let go until I came in his mouth. That was the closest I ever came to an orgy because five of us were there at the end and also the most indiscreet because a total stranger was a witness. I'd never do that again. Too awkward and chancy.

Those were the sleaziest times for me. One strikingly handsome guy with Superman-short dark hair, perfect blue eyes, and cleft chin and I hooked up in the steam room many times for him to service me. When I told him I had a uniform fetish we took it to his place and he put on a police uniform and I fucked him. He wasn't really a cop, but a stripper with many uniforms. He was so handsome that when he met me for breakfast once, a pretty young light-skinned black female customer from another table came over to tell him how good-looking he was. After she left, he told me that the regulars in the sauna had nicknames for everyone and they referred to me as elusive James Dean.

One tall, hairy Mexican guy with a very small limp penis loved nothing more than to give oral sex. Sometimes the sauna and steam room were so busy that he followed me to my car in the parking lot and as I pushed my seat back, he serviced me in the car.

Another guy at the YMCA followed me to my car once and I was not sure why. It was my first time at the YMCA in Hollywood and after my workout, I discovered their locker-room did not have individual shower stalls—instead it had one big shower. *Was this why the Village People roared with excitement in their big disco hit, “YMCA”?* The showers in my high schools were open like that and I never showered then because I was afraid I’d be erect. Even at 40, I was also afraid I’d get a hard-on at the Y, but since no one else was in the communal shower, I chucked my gym clothes in a locker and stepped naked into the shower with the same degree of exhilaration astronauts have when first stepping on the moon.

As I soaped my body, another naked body entered the shower, and I did my best to turn away, as the idea of being naked with a strange man in the same shower was getting me erect no matter who it was. Unfortunately, my erection kept growing and even though I did my best to hide it and avoid the man, he kept getting closer to me. No way could I even look at him because no matter who it was I would not want to have sex in a shower so on display that I could be arrested. As I grabbed my towel and started dressing, the man in the shower also grabbed his and followed me, dressing at his locker. Afraid he was a cop or a straight guy going to beat me up, I dressed quickly and tied on my shoes and darted out the locker-room, toward the exit. The man followed, and I literally ran to my car and sped away before he caught me, though he persisted to run after my car.

Not all gym sex was about sex. Some guys actually fell in love and met their partners in the steam rooms. I’ll never forget beautiful John, a yoga teacher. He looked like God sculpted the ideal male body, covered it with hair, put on an enormous cock and masculine face, and said, “Here. All of you, enjoy him.” It’s like John knew that as well because he let anyone do anything to him. Seriously. He just let everyone have it, any way, any time. He’d let a total stranger fuck him in a crowded steam room without a condom. This, I did not know at first, when he snuck into the big shower with me in the back of LA

Fitness and we made [oral] love to each other, with much French kissing under the water – it was like the most romantic movie. He seemed the perfect man.

When we tired of standing and massaging each other we sat under the stream with crossed-legs Indian style and hugged and kissed. I was falling in love, and was open to love, because by this point I had broken up with Doug. I was looking to fall in love with a man who wanted to touch me like John did. But John was not looking for a partner in that way. In fact, he already had a partner I would find out. He was another perfect 10 who I messed around with in the steam room on occasion, and who apparently was John's therapist. These men were unbelievably beautiful, and I could not believe they were attracted to me, but they came over separately to my place a couple times each, and we had very good sex. It was not only sex, though, and these guys were beautiful inside and out. I loved them for it.

John told me to come over to his house in Santa Monica once, but I had a feeling he did not remember because when I got there he did not answer the door. I knocked and knocked. Eventually he answered, and then was surprised to see me. He allowed me to have sex with him, even fuck him, without a condom—but I wasn't the first to do so that day. There were already skid marks on his sheets. (Add "Nadia's Theme" here as camera pans over the skid marks.)

Nah, I told myself, best not to pursue John even if he is the sexiest man on Earth.

Even though John excited me inside and out, there was one other person who raged my hormones like no one else ever. This man, about my height with a thin bald head had this *American Gladiator* body. One time he crept into the locker-room and I, in a towel, could not resist following him into the restroom. I went into one of the stalls and was erect immediately as I peeked out the door at him by the sink. He could see my interest in the mirror reflection. He had removed his shirt and his back was completely covered with hair like a carpet. This

was extremely bizarre to have such long hair so evenly spread out over his entire back. It was the only time in my life that I'd felt almost helpless to my hormones. He quickly put his shirt on and left.

Looking back, I wonder if he was not a sex change who was pumped with male hormones. Why else would a back be that evenly hairy? Why else would he have such a slender face and gigantic shoulders, back and arms? He did not walk like a caveman either. He kind of slid forward like on a skateboard, maybe like as a woman becoming a man. He or she may have darted out because he or she thought I was going to beat him up if I discovered he was a she, but I masturbated many times fantasizing that he had a pussy and I could bury my cock in his pussy, face to face, hugging his hairy man back.

Another odd sex partner at the gym was a short man who looked a little like an extraterrestrial. He was under five feet and had a long bald head with features like a Gray alien. Maybe he was on a mission to collect my sperm, and I did oblige. He taught me to push down hard with my fist below my belly button to climax. The little alien did his job and no doubt there is now a planet of Thom Bierdzes far away in another galaxy.

The most significant happening at a gym for me was not sex however. I was working out at L.A. Fitness—the wrong way. Intrigued with the pull-up straps on top of a 12-foot machine, and not one to follow directions, I figured I could slip my feet through those and do upside down sit-ups. My shoes fit in the straps fine, but as I released my hands to the side bungee-style, my feet slipped out and my head crashed down 12 feet into the metal bottom of the machine. My body rolled over, flopping me to lie prostate, facing the ceiling. I was instantly paralyzed.

Never before or again have I experienced paralysis, but as my body lay dead, I was conscious. I felt no pain and had no feeling in my body whatsoever. My body could not move, but my eyes could, and I glanced to the side to see if anyone would help me. A short mature

trainer saw me and pretended not to, walking away. Maybe to avoid a lawsuit? I didn't know, but he surely did not want to get involved.

My thoughts were not affected or stifled or unclear, but my mouth could not move to scream. I tried to feel my fingers and could not. I tried to feel my toes and could not. *Oh. My. God.* I thought, *I really did it this time, but NOOOOOOOOO!! I was not going to be paralyzed!!*

Flashing through my head were my recent victimization thoughts, *like I am supposed to be a big star and I am tired of trying so hard and being rejected on auditions. Just fast forward to my destined fame, damn it!!* It occurred to me that I was getting what I asked for—and had created an opportunity to be asleep, or paralyzed, until my desired fame happened. *Noooooooo!!* my thoughts screamed. *I will NOT BE PARALYZED!! NOOO!! I will not allow it!*

By then a few people had started to gather around my immobile body and saw I was in trouble. As my eyes blinked for help; I tried again to feel my fingers. Nothing! No feeling in my toes, legs or stomach either. Slowly, over the next few minutes, with desperate mental effort, a tingling returned to my fingers, then toes, then arms, then legs. Five minutes later, I could feel my entire body and was able to speak.

A sexy man in a tank top said he was a doctor and knelt next to me. Gym staff asked if I wanted to call an ambulance. I was able to reply, coughing up phlegm, “No. I do not have insurance. I can't afford a hospital. I'll be okay.”

Within five more minutes, I could rise and walked out of the gym carefully, my body in perfect condition—besides a sore head. I was convinced I had created an opportunity for paralysis, but my will canceled it.

Later, I would discover stem cell researcher Dr. Bruce Lipton on YouTube who had proven that our emotions and environment turn on and off our DNA / genes. He has helped millions to heal with his book, *The Biology of Belief*. Of similar thought, Dr. Joe Dispenza, who healed

himself with meditation and visualization from a crippling automobile accident decades before, also had a huge Internet presence. He gave free lectures online and had over a hundred testimonials from meditators who overcame everything from paralysis to cancer by their will.

* 22: **SEEKING HELP FOR ANXIETY &...**

THE RICH AND THE POWERFUL

Besides two concussions when I was a clumsy boy, and occasional allergies and asthma, my health had always been above average, and my life enjoyable. I liked volunteering my time for The Art of Elysium charity where I'd help hospitalized kids learn to draw. Jacques, a black teen from South Africa, was my favorite student and did wonderful art regardless of one arm and both legs having been amputated.

Even though my acting career was tanking again, being near Jacques made me grateful for all I had. Almost every day I would have a leisurely breakfast at a quiet café with a friend or just my dogs, work out at the gym, maybe get my hairy lovestick fondled in the gym shower by a buffed stranger, and cater at nights or wait tables at the deli next door.

The few times I approached a straight guy in the showers I was met with no aggression, just a "no thank you" attitude. Certainly, being homosexual at this time in this city was a great blessing, considering the persecution of gays throughout history and still presently in many other places / cities / countries. I actually met with more homophobia outside the gym showers than in them, flashing my erection at the wrong man.

As a waiter at busy Canters Deli, one Mexican busboy in particular, who spoke no English, seemed to dislike me. Yeah, I thought he was cute, and maybe he felt my eyes admiring him once or twice, but it was instantly obvious he was straight, and I never bothered him or touched him or stalked him. He, on the other hand, was stalking a big-breasted blonde waitress, and she was very distressed about it, to the point of tears. Apparently he grabbed her inappropriately many times, and she was too nervous and frightened to tell the authorities

mumbling that he was violent and threatened her. It was my know-it-all nature to intercede, and so I told the Canters managers, and the busboy was fired.

The next day every window in my car was broken, apparently with a bat from that angry busboy, who knew my car because I lived next door to the restaurant. When I called the cops and they came out to question me, they totally dropped the investigation when they heard I was gay, assuming the busboy had damaged my equipment because I was sexually harassing him. It stung for a long time that the cops would assume that because I was gay I was somehow responsible for every window in my car being busted. I figured the old car worthless to me at that point and gave it to one of the Mexican cooks that I liked, who did not have a car, and shopped around for a different used car, using my credit card to get one for about \$2,000.00.

Several millionaires who hired me to bartend came onto me, but I did not feel an attraction. Ironically, I did find billionaire Barry D. sexy because he looked like my masculine Neanderthal type, but when he pulled me aside to issue my check, and we had a moment of eye-contact, I looked frightened, and it was awkward. Once again, I might have unintentionally hurt someone's feelings by looking terrified of the heavy map they'd created across their face.

After our official break-up, Doug and I openly shared custody of our kids / dogs, though they lived with him. Bodhi, our shepherd / beagle was about 45lbs, black and white, whiter in the face with great sensitive brown eyes and black lips. Smartest dog. He understood everything that was going on at all times. Couldn't be friendlier. Great follower, but a leader to Deen the Chihuahua.

Deen was shy of 10lbs, short, tan hair, the cutest face, and mostly white. A face anyone would fall in love with. Deen's legs were the exact size of KFC chicken legs and that was when I gave up meat having the epiphany that if I loved Deen that much, someone else could love a chicken that much, and I wanted nothing to do with the murdering

and eating of such loveable, loving animals. Deen followed Bodhi around, was very much a follower. Certainly, a dependent on all of us. What a treasure he was. Great personality as well, never aggressive or ornery, always happy, perky, like Doug. Being gay guys, of course we dressed the dogs in sweaters, even in California. They only needed clothes in the colder months, but Deen seemed to like a thin shirt on much of the time. I would see my kids at least once a day, usually taking them to an outdoor café, but they lived with Doug because dogs could aggravate my occasional asthma.



FREE CLINICS

While doing my laundry at a West Hollywood laundromat, I met a short, dark, beefy stud with angelic face, and he could tell I was attracted to him by the erection pressing against my gym pants. This intense chemistry lasted all the way through the wash cycle, and after I transferred the laundry to the dryers, without a word to be said, I followed him to his nearby apartment, where I threw him on his bed

and we had great oral sex. Afterward, he lit a cigarette.

The first words spoken were from me: "I'm Thom. And HIV negative by the way," expecting him to confer. He didn't say anything. I realized he must have been positive. Awkward. And the poor guy apparently did not even have a name.

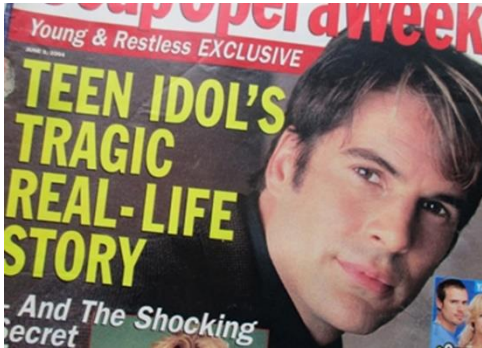
I did not have medical insurance, and was in good health, but got tested for diseases every couple of years at free clinics. I was very self-conscious and paranoid when other guys being tested recognized me from TV, and more so when the doctor drawing my blood did. If I turned up HIV+, would they tell the tabloids? Back then, that could kill an acting career. Fortunately, I remained HIV negative.

When one clinic clerk told me to sign in, I considered using a fake name, but could not lie. I whispered to him that since they do not ask for ID, I could test positive and tell them my name was any movie-star like Clint Eastwood, and then Eastwood would be filed as positive, which could hurt his career. When the file clerk shook his head saying everyone knows what Eastwood looks like, I convinced him that most people do not know most actors, shared my name and credits, and explained that the next patient could test positive and say his name was Thom Bierdz since he was not required to show ID. Within a week, the clinic implemented a new policy insisting people show ID to get tested for HIV. Most people do not like showing ID, but my paranoia was why they began requiring ID.

Still writing my memoir, *Forgiving Troy*, I was often besieged with emotion reliving the hard life and circumstances set before my mother as she tried to deal with a schizophrenic son who threatened to kill her. Many people asked me if I ever felt schizophrenic, since there was a higher chance of being afflicted if related. Truth is, I did suffer from paranoia, but my paranoia was different than anyone else's that I had ever come across.

I was constantly paranoid that I would hurt people's feelings. I had a

somewhat small, gamine face, and my gamine moms' had been even smaller, as she'd only been 5 feet tall. That is what I grew up looking at. For some reason, when a stranger with huge teeth or with large or unusual characteristics was before me, I often looked panicked. Never had my gentle soul ever wanted to hurt anyone, and I was afraid I was doing that everywhere when I looked strangers in the eyes; in the grocery store, at the post office, even addressing a neighbor. Maybe this was related to the post-traumatic stress of Troy killing mom, or my chronic insomnia. But in dire need of sleep and to overcome my anxiety at auditions, I pursued guidance from a free clinic.



It was a nondescript building near Hollywood and Vine that I had never even noticed before but found the address when I searched online for free anxiety medication for people with no insurance. I signed in at a register desk and waited patiently

to see a doctor. Much drama was ensuing with other patients; some cried; some had fits; some hit imaginary monsters. One had a conversation with an invisible Bill Clinton. Within an hour, I was called back to a room with a doctor. He saw my eyes narrowed and my face hunched over in worry. I kept looking at the open doorway and asked if he could close the door. This seemed to be against the rules, but he could tell no threat would come from me. As he read my form, he asked me to clarify. I explained that I could not sleep, and probably had not slept for two hours straight in my adulthood, that I had one schizophrenic brother who killed our mom, and it appeared that my other brother, Gregg, had recently killed himself in a paranoid state.

I became emotional as I whispered, "And I hurt people's feelings all the time by looking afraid of them."

Finally admitting that aloud, I burst into a small, brief sob. He looked up at me, wiping his eyes in disbelief. Maybe he knew me as Phillip Chancellor III and my transition was so hard to fathom. I don't know. But he said, "These people we deal with. You have no idea the violence," and he just regarded me so sympathetically, "And you come here because you don't want to hurt people's feelings?"

"The way I look at them," I said, ashamed. "I am gay. When pretty women strangers look at me, I go back to being a kid and want to push them away. This tall, big brunette girl grabbed my hand and whipped me in circles in my front yard when I was a boy. In high school, Jacqueline, who asked me to Sadie Hawkins, spread rumors I was gay—and other straight female fans put the make on me. If I just keep them away, I am safe. If I had GAY tattooed on my head, I'd be more comfortable around women. I just get neurotic and paranoid that they want me, and I'll hurt their feelings by rejecting them."

"We'll just keep pretty women away from you," he joked. "Send them to me. Are you okay with ugly women?"

"If someone that you define by that term... I can't say it... It's so harsh. That word hurts people so bad. But sure, I know what you mean. When people like that come up to me, I just want to blurt out, why did you do that to yourself? We create our lives. Why did you make that face? Were you abused? Did you put on those wrinkles or pimples or weight to feel safe by keeping others away?"

"It is common for young victims of sexual abuse to try to hide behind weight gain."

"And some faces—wow—old, wrinkled, mean-looking faces. I just want to say, 'why did you do that to yourself?'"

"Like me?"

I laughed at the aging handsome doc, then I said, "When sexy straight guys, like my uncles, meet my eyes, I just want to hide because they'll

know I want them. If I am in a restaurant and a group of black people walk in, I look afraid. But I am afraid because groups of black people often have prejudice from white people, so I am afraid I will look prejudiced. I am not, but I am afraid my fear of looking afraid will hurt them. I am afraid to hurt them, not of them. I don't think white people are better than black people in any way."

We talked a bit more. He suggested maybe I had minor Post Traumatic Stress Disorder from Troy killing mom and threatening to kill me, or me and the police finding Gregg's body not too long before. He asked if I had endured other traumatic instances, like crimes committed against me.

I told him about L. the Asian photographer, and the other minor sexual assaults. He ignored those and fished for incidents where I was really frightened.

I told him that when I was maybe 10 and playing billiards at the Catholic Youth Center building in Kenosha, a tall black boy, in a group of three tall black boys, asked to see my watch. I lifted my arm and he told me, "No, I want to hold it. Take it off." My feeling was he wanted to steal it. I let him hold it, but he put it in his pocket, and when it was his turn to shoot pool, I tattled to the employee that he stole my watch.

"The boy was told to give me back the watch, and the three boys were kicked out. They threatened me then, so I was afraid to leave the building. Dad picked me up, and as were driving away, we saw the three tall boys leaning against the windowless side of the building, as if they were waiting to beat me up."

"What is traumatizing to certain individuals is not to others," the doctor said.

When pressed about other dramas involving black people in my history, I explained the sexy dishwasher Don probably stealing dad's \$70 of coins right after I showed him how to break in through the

window, the racial riots in Kenosha high schools in the 1970s, and also that I'd spent the first two years in what Mom and Dad called "a bad Chicago neighborhood," but I had no memory of any of it. I explained I had some very close black friends and no issues with them one-on-one but felt inept that I was not able to greet all black strangers with a sincere smile, adding that I never greeted any strangers of any race with a sincere smile.

The clinic doctor asked me if I was afraid that white people would think I don't like them.

"Well, yes, but they don't think I am afraid of them because they are white. Black people think I am afraid of them because they are black."

"Do they tell you that?"

"I can see in their eyes, a look of, 'here it comes again, another little, scared white man.'"

"Is it possible you are imaging that?"

"No," I insisted. "But I walk around in public terrified that I am going to look like I don't like people."

"I don't like people," he said bluntly.

His joke, or confession, was a welcome relief and I cried a bit as we laughed.

He added, "The only thing we would do here is put you on lithium, and I do not think you want that. I do not recommend it."

"But I don't know what to do. I am so ashamed. This blonde lady, a holistic doctor, that a friend recommended, tried to heal me with herbs for a whole year, constantly doing that muscle-testing thing, kinesiology, but no change. This other friend of a friend, a lesbian, I saw as a therapist for a while and she tried to hypnotize me but, naw—nothing. I can't sleep. I lay awake feeling bad that I hurt people's

feelings by looking scared of them. I may have given Farrah Fawcett cancer—I mean, my look may have.”

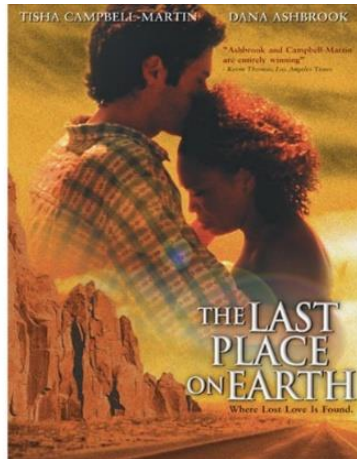
“What if you didn’t care about what people thought?”

“I tried that, doc, and it scared the hell out of me. If I really snapped into a character that did not care about people, like if I totally became someone else, it would work. I could treat people like boxes. I have done that. I have just turned to ice when I felt I had no other choice. But then I feel bad I don’t care.”

He wrote out a prescription, saying, “You can come here in two weeks and we’ll have a formal meeting and put you on lithium if you want that. But I hope you do not come back.”

I left with the prescription, but I never went back or filled it.

THE LAST PLACE ON EARTH



With talented Tisha Cambell-Martin.

Although not terribly confident, I continued to audition, and booked a

role in an independent film starring Tisha Campbell-Martin and Dana Ashbrook. *The Last Place on Earth* began with a powerful death scene by Phyllis Diller (her last part) and also featured Billy Dee Williams and Alison Amgrim. My old crush, Mitchell Anderson, and I were surprisingly reunited to play lovers celebrating our tenth anniversary.

It was great to see Mitchell after 16 years, and meet the other actors. I walked away from that experience with a great new friend, Gina, the assistant director, a tall soulful brunette with a great sense of humor. We'd hang out regularly after that for many years.

An interesting memory I had of that movie set was meeting Kelly Ripa's hunky husband, Mark Consueles—certainly one of the best-looking men I had ever seen—and my type—short and macho. Damn, what a smile! He was starring on *All My Children* where he met his wife, Kelly, and this was his first movie role. He sat with Mitchell and me between scenes as we reacquainted each other with what had happened in our lives. Mitchell explained his successes on *Doogie Howser, M.D.* and *Party of Five* and playing Richard Carpenter in *The Karen Carpenter Story*. He had worked as an actor very steadily and had a long-term partner. I shared the opposite—many boyfriends, nothing stable acting-wise. I explained to Mark that I was once a soap opera star, but was presently bartending for soap opera stars, and waiting tables. Mark's eyes opened widely, and his mouth spilled out, "You are living every actor's nightmare."

* 23: **PRESENT DAY – AM I A HOARDER LIKE MARY?**

2016

Talking to my Lake Arrowhead hoarder neighbor Mary about her hurt feelings regarding a phone call to her daughters in Oregon, my eyes surveyed the stacks of boxes and bags in her windows. They were piled to the ceiling.

It must be garbage, I thought. How irresponsible of her. Her whole home is probably piled in things no one else would find valuable. She probably just came home with more useless stuff every day until she had so much garbage in her home that there was literally no more room for garbage—or—her. Here she was, a beautiful, sensitive woman, with complete ignorance of her being essentially homeless. She was sure to freeze to death in the snow. All she had to do was throw the garbage out and into the dump, six minutes north, then move herself into her house.

She interrupted my thoughts; saying, “Oh, here I go, rattling on about my daughters.”

“It’s okay. Friends rattle.”

“My oldest daughter’s husband doesn’t really want me to fly up for my granddaughter’s wedding. Says all their rooms are taken by other relatives.” Mary looked destroyed, then joked, “I could sleep on their couch. I could sleep on their porch. I could sleep UNDER their porch!”

I chuckled with her, then tried to offer her insight, “Sometimes when we expect others to act as we would, we get so hurt. If we could just not expect things.”

Things. I looked again to her things piled in the windows, the things preventing her from living a normal life.

"I bought new shoes for the wedding," she frowned.

Of course, you did, I thought. You are a hoarder; hoarders buy things they do not need. Hoarders hoard things they do not need.

Then it hit me.

I was a hoarder. Not in material things, as she was. In my head.

I hoarded memories, haunts, suspicions, doubts, judgments, potential fearful scenarios. Here I was, renting the most beautiful private mountain home tucked into pure wilderness, with my perfect dogs. I was making a living, paying my bills by painting pretty pet portraits from posting my paintings on my Facebook page where people could peruse the pics. But also, on FB, instead of being in my spiritual high that my environment brought, I was sucked into people's dramas and argued about corruption in politics.

Furthermore, when I could be in absolute ecstasy progressing spiritual highs in my paradise setting, every day I felt bad I hurt Farrah Fawcett's feelings, and J. C.'s feelings, and black people's feelings. I blushed recalling the boring parties I gave twenty and thirty years ago, and felt bad for those guests who could have had a better time elsewhere. When I twined together pine cones for wreaths on my porch, I did not feel joy. I replayed those memories, and my romantic relationships feeling guilt when others were hurt that I was no longer in love. When I worked my biceps on my pull up bar, I wasn't feeling strong and healthy, I was feeling the jealousy of other soap actors getting Emmys and of Terry P. becoming Mr. Gay Wisconsin over 30 years ago when I wanted it so badly. Also, stuck in my brain were all the auditions I'd bombed, again, going back 30 years, and I did not play any TV or current movies because I was jealous I could do their parts and I never played the TV episodes I did appear in because I did not live up to my expectations. No one was good enough for me and I was not good enough for me.

Directing my entire brain to naked men in porn movies and pleasuring

myself temporarily stopped my guilty memories—unless of course, the theme was so taboo that I felt guilty about it. I masturbated up to five times a day, but usually twice.

Expectations. Hoarding. I was a hoarder. Like Mary, except my head was Mary's house; piled beyond capacity with garbage and wedged in the tiny spaces between my misfiring synapses were the potential fears of hurting people I had not even met.

As Mary rambled on about her daughters not understanding her and not being there for her when she needed them, I held back from saying, "Clean out your fucking house. It doesn't matter the reasons you collected this stuff. You don't need it. You'll die soon. Take your power back and empty your fucking house!!"

Here I was, thinking I knew so much more, yet I could not even empty my brain. I was the hoarder that had wrecked my career, my relationships, my dreams, my brain. Because I could not dump out the garbage in my head, I had moved away to be a recluse, so I could refrain from adding more garbage to my head. And although my days without people were mostly amazingly quiet and pleasurable, I carried around a brain that had never been able to shut off, never even sleeping more than two hours at a time.

* 24: **PITY, PORN & PISS SEX... & SEX WITH A GIRL**

MORE RECKLESS SEX

Back in 2002, my friend Gina, who I met on the set of *The Last Place on Earth*, took me to Vegas for my 40th birthday. Vegas commanded so much attention it relaxed me. However, the cumulative free Remy Martins at the blackjack table inebriated me to the point of later falling asleep in the hotel tub. Thankfully, Gina pounded on the door and woke me up.



On the way home, I got pulled over for not wearing my seatbelt. This was the second citation, so I had to spend eight hours in a crowded traffic school class in West Hollywood. One guy in it intrigued me. Within that time frame, I managed to get him my number, he called, and we went out one night.

When I picked him up for our date, the lighting in his home showed he had HIV from his hallowed sunken face. During dinner, he did reveal that. I shared many accounts of people who had healed themselves, explaining he had the power to do it as well. After dinner, at his place, I had to make the decision to go home or have sex. I felt obligated that night to have sex with him. Pity sex. Not because he was HIV positive. There are so many sexy positive guys, but I really was not attracted to him after all. There was no chemistry, yet I'd pursued

him so hard the day before, I just felt *why not spend 20 minutes and get him off?* It was awkward. I fucked him with a condom but could not climax. And never returned his calls after. I felt bad that I'd probably hurt his feelings.

Fortunately, most guys were honest when it came to sex. They usually disclosed if they had a disease, a lover or a chain saw. But some did not.

An online stranger tempted me to go to his place for sex. He was a tall older guy with gray hair and beard. Very sexy build. Seemed European—had an accent. He undressed me in his living room and we got off in his bedroom. Nothing fantastic, new or horrible. But the next day, I realized my bank card was missing from my wallet. I believe he had arranged for an accomplice to get it while we were in the other room.

I met another guy online. Looked like a movie-star. It is astonishing how many exceptional-looking men I have had as lovers. He couldn't have been nicer, but it was a dumb idea for me to suggest we meet at a busy gay bar, then go to dinner. After just one drink in a crowded bar too noisy for us to talk, I became jealous of all the attention he was receiving. Not a great first date place. We had sex later at my place. It was fine, and he was so very beautiful. I did not pursue him because I saw him in pornography the next day and guessed he would not make a good boyfriend.

While I was a kid in the 70s and a gay bartender in the 80s and a soap star in the late 80s, porn stars were certainly useful, as masturbation tools, but never did I think of having one as a partner. However, in the 90s and 2000s many gays thought porn stars had become the new gods, and almost all gay men just wanted a piece of them to worship. They would have been ecstatic to have had more on an ongoing basis.

I recognized a FB friend as a hairy mature porn star and asked to get together. I knew what to expect in bed and he did not disappoint. I do

not think I impressed him with my body, though, because at one point he put his hands around my pubic hair, cock and balls and said he really liked that section of me. His inference was that he did not love what was outside his hands. No doubt I was doughy and my muscles could've been bigger and firmer. I did ask him to marry me the next day over the phone. He said, "Are you serious?" I said, "Yes." At that point I could have had a boyfriend or husband THAT STUDLY who had sex with others, even professionally. *American Idol*'s first winner Kelly Clarkson captured my awe perfectly in her recent hit "A Moment Like This." Nevertheless the porn stud declined my proposal and it's not like I went searching for more porn stars to propose to.

I did meet another hairy tattooed XXX star from Florida, a FB friend, for dinner in the valley when he was in town to shoot a porn. It was just dinner and drinks and I regret that I turned the conversation into a pity party rehashing my anxiety dilemma while chugging margaritas.

And then there was that sex night with the *Baywatch* actor... Incredible body, sweetheart of a man.

Another guy advertised his 9.5" cock in his email name. He was very good-looking with a studly physique and my height. In bed, he was a fantasy but sitting across from him at a restaurant, I just wanted to scream. He seemed so miserable and unable to connect or listen. There was just no joking with him. Two dates were plenty.

Another FB friend was a beautiful blond man, a few inches taller than me, maybe 35. Brad had agreed to write music together with me; since I'd told him I had many lyrics and melodies in my head. He brought over his guitar and we had much chemistry as we worked on love songs. Things got hot and before I could kiss him, he explained he was bisexual and married. He was feeling very deeply for me and was very confused. I told him I also was falling in love with him but did not want to deceive his wife. My suggestion was for him to level with his wife and get permission to have sex with me, and then I would comply. He felt he could not tell his wife, so we stopped seeing each other and

our song remained unfinished.

I would not consider myself bisexual, but I understood the attraction of the vagina; on a man, not a woman. A gorgeous brunette, Raven, who my brother, Gregg, dated his first year in Hollywood remained a friend to me, and one time we had dinner out, had too much to drink, and tried to have sex in her condo. This was my chance to eat out a pussy, but I could not stay hard. Making it worse, she sucked cock like an epileptic vampire. She sucked so hard I practically lost a ball down her throat and I was pretty sure all my inner organs were perpetually rearranged. I swear



from then on, my kidneys touched. Maybe people without penises didn't know what felt good. Did she think when a man wanted to be sucked off, he meant LITERALLY? Trying to insert my bruised and shriveling manhood between her meat curtains, she insisted I put on a condom. However, all she had were extra-large condoms. Seeing that, I felt very inadequate, and my penis shrunk more. Sex was not going to happen, and we were both so embarrassed that we stopped hanging out.

GOLDEN SHOWERS

I wanted to fall in love again. I craved fairy tale love with a man. And if not, at least some hot stud to piss on my head.

I remembered years back Gregg suggesting I date Dirk Shafer, who was a friend of his wife. Dirk was a popular gay guy, mostly known for being *Playgirl* Man of The Year 1995. We had met several times but had very different vibrations, meaning he was extroverted and I was introverted. Oddly, I also fantasized about being a *Playgirl* centerfold, and years before asked Dirk for a contact. I even did a test shoot – but the magazine was not interested. LOL and ouch.

Hoping for love, I did bring a man named Paul home from The Eagle. I did not even remember him two months later because I was introducing myself to him online since he seemed my type—short, hairy, cute. He reminded me we'd already had sex. I was embarrassed that I did not remember, but our current thread was about golden showers and I had wanted to experiment with that for decades although few of my partners did, so he agreed to come over and we would pee on each other. The sex was great, and we pretty much just pissed, drank cranberry juice and pissed for an hour in my bathroom, as he shoved an enormous dildo up his ass. It was very hot, but he was kind of sketchy, so I knew that he was not going to be my Pister Right.

* 25: **AT LONG LAST; MY SOULMATE**

JESUS, DARN IT, GIVE ME A SOULMATE

Driving to the Eagle in Silver Lake, I prayed to Jesus, something I rarely did. When I turned 18, I'd taken the name T.J., secretly meaning To Jesus, until I got my professional name of Thom Bierdz, but the Catholic church and its gay bashing had turned me off over the years. I stopped interest in any religion and pursued my spirituality in general, whether a real Jesus existed or not. I found incredible exhilaration in new age spirituality and avoided using the "J" word. But that night, I begged Jesus to have me meet my soulmate, not that I really believed in designated soulmates. But as a man who believed we humans were unlimited, and that we all deserved everything, I wanted to experience a new love feeling that many would classify as a soulmate.

Wow, less than 15 minutes later in a crowded gay bar, there was a man, no perfect 10 or Chippendale, that I felt an unexplainable compulsion to get to know. His name was Jay, and he kind of resembled my childhood TV crush, Mike Connors of *Mannix*. He was about my height, decent build, chiseled face, blue eyes, and was surrounded by friends, who seemed reluctant for me to enter their circle. Once I did, nearer to his body, laughing at his quick wit, I felt like I had been reunited with a long-lost brother from another world.

I cannot explain my fervent attraction to him because it was not my personality to fall so quick and so devoted, and it's not like his body was all that great, nor any part of it. But I had never been so in love in my life. There is no explanation; he was not even hairy, but I would have married him in a second or done anything for him. These were not good things to say on a first date, even with my eyes, and especially not with energy. I wanted him to pee on me, and I returned

it. We fell to my bathroom floor and kissed in our urine and he directed my fingers to his ass. One, two, three, four. As a germophobe, I did not enjoy getting my fingers dirty, but he liked it. I fucked him on the bed and when he left, I worried I'd not see him again.

A few days later, he showed up with crinkled clothes and said I had no idea who he is or what he does. I did not know if he was a CIA hitman, a prostitute or drug addict. He was amazingly bright so maybe he was with CIA or FBI or something. No idea.

My energy was suffocating and my phone messages to him were worse. We saw each other a few more weeks until he told me he played my phone messages back for his friends and they told him to lose me because I was psycho. The last time I held onto him on my bed I knew would be the final time I would ever hold him in a physical sense. I was out of my body—out of his—it was beyond us. This was an entity I had loved before—somewhere. It hurt like hell to let go of him.

Of course, I understood how unattractive my suffocating energy was, as I was usually on the receiving end of that. Years later I ran across Jay at the beach walk in Santa Monica. He had gained weight and seemed more relaxed. He had made a lot of money designing porn sites, which were just exploding online in that decade. He said he'd like to see me again, but I did not call him.

If I rekindled our love, I knew what all my remaining years would be like. I would be helplessly devoted to this man of mystery, aching to have him completely, pining when he ignored me, jealous of his other contacts. I would be obsessed with him, and I did not want that. It was so foreign to who I usually was. I did not think it was healthy to love someone so obsessively, so my brain pulled my heart away that time.

Was there really a Jesus? Did Jesus really send me the soulmate I'd begged for?

Did Jesus understand my loves and lusts? Did he have loves and lusts

when in human body? What kind of sex did Jesus have? What was his pubic hair like? Is sex still naughty? Is pubic hair still naughty?

AS ABOVE SO BELOW

Reading this book some may think my entire Earth journey was decided by my penis, pecker, shaft, rod, wand, sword, injector, destroyer, schlong, snake, salami, pepperoni, Polish sausage, lovestick, knob, skinflute, power gun, slam pole, testosterone tube, beefsteak, mantool, missile, pleasure meat, exploding unit, dangling hammer. But that's not true. Ever since I felt a greater being outside my young Catholic self and entertained the possibility of a god or spirits, I had been a spiritual seeker. Much more time of mine had been devoted to the seeking of truth or higher powers or consciousness or communicating with the afterlife or listening to Near Death Experience accounts or *The Science of Mind* or *A Course in Miracles* or *Seth Speaks* or Abraham-Hicks than to hot men and sex and love. This book, however, is about my sexual journey, but it does not go unnoticed that a man with such an earnest intention to understand who we are at the highest has been rooted in the lowest. I do think that base primitive urges like sex are often needed to balance those who spend so much time "in the clouds."

Certainly, most people, or at least the characters written into movies, find not only a sexual and heart connection with a mate, but mind and soul connection as well. I usually separated love and sex, and that may have gone back to my childhood confusion. Maybe a lot of people did that. But very few times in my life had I made love like with Jay or looked into someone's eyes with love when we were naked. Typically I was in a monogamous relationship with a wonderful, handsome, sexy, funny, loyal man, but I avoided cuddling and gentle kisses and eye-contact in bed. I preferred focusing on body hair and muscles and

sex organs and talking dirty and even pretending we were strangers. My confident roleplay usually got us both off. The sex was satisfying, but it wasn't romantic.

But being in a relationship with a wonderful, handsome man was very romantic when we were playing *Scrabble*, or with another couple in an Indian restaurant, or pursuing a common goal, or decorating a house, or building a house, or skiing or roller-skating or juggling fruit or riding bikes or playing slot machines or blackjack or writing songs or making dinner or setting up a campfire. Humor turned me on and all my boyfriends and I laughed at stupid jokes and puns and characters we'd do. In this book, I zipped through wonderful relationships, and they deserved more time, and if this book were about love and relationships, there'd be more pages dedicated to that. It does not escape me that an average man like myself has had sex with gods out of his league, been in love with the most wonderful men who have walked the planet and had very functional, honest, productive dialogues and epiphanies. Agreeably most people would stay in those satisfying relationships, but most people would also not have left Wisconsin to pursue being a movie star. My personality was not complacent to accept what wonderful things happened to me—I was on a custom ride, no limits—and could offer no apologies, unless I intentionally hurt another, which I never did.

Men country danced with men as Big & Rich's "Save A Horse [Ride A Cowboy]" played in a North Hollywood gay bar, Oil Can Harry's. Bruce and I went to watch and play pool. A thin blond / white-haired man's wit and humor attracted me more than his face and body, but man, was I drawn to him. When I told Bruce, he asked, "The man that smells like a dirty dishrag?"

"No," I said, "That can't be him. I think there's a dirty dishrag over there by him somewhere."

The stranger and I exchanged numbers, and I went to his place to pick him up a day later for dinner. He smelled like a dirty dishrag. I did not

tell him as I did not want to hurt his feelings, but I am not sure if someone like Pike the cop being honest with him wouldn't have served him better. I had no idea why he smelled like that.

I love the way a man usually smelled—his natural scent, his underarms, his balls. Such a turn-on for me that I made sure to always ask my dates to not wear cologne.

* 26: **AN OLDER LOVER TO FATHER & MANAGE ME**

JOE

Joe, 48, had cologne on when he answered the door of his West Hollywood apartment in spring of 2004 (I was 42). Hated the cologne, but masculine Joe was very attractive, which I knew, because we had met before, which he did not remember. He was hard to forget with his jock looks, from many nationalities, and his high cheekbones of Cherokee descent were very rare, as was his premature salt and pepper hair. I first saw him decades ago at one of the very gay *A Course in Miracles* lectures.

A couple years earlier, when Bruce and I were at an El Pollo Loco, Bruce stopped at Joe's table and they chatted about Joe having a heart attack and getting a pacemaker implanted, which he later had removed, claiming he had partially healed himself with visualization. That had impressed me as much as his looks, but I was then with Doug, so did not flirt with Joe. But seeing as Doug and I were no longer together, I was looking for love online hour after hour each day, and had come across Joe's massage ad. Legit, he insisted.

After I undressed completely and dangled my hammer, Joe legitimately massaged me. There was much chemistry and an erection on my part. This was not the first time I had paid for a massage hoping for full release. Twice, I had worked out an exchange to paint a canvas in return for several happy-ending massages. A few other times, I shelled out \$100 to have totally hot macho studs rub me down, and up, and down, and up and down and up and down and up...

Safe. Most of my life I had not felt safe, but I felt safe under Joe's hands. As he kneaded my back and butt, I shared where we had initially met, and what was going on with my career. *Entertainment Tonight* had recently done a Cover Story on me writing my memoir

Forgiving Troy, also sharing my brother Gregg's suicide, and my emotional roller coaster ride. *The Young and the Restless* also had asked me back to film an episode, even though my character had been dead since 1989. I was to play a ghost that appeared to drunk Katherine Chancellor to warn her to stop drinking. Joe seemed very interested in me having a screenplay on the subject matter of forgiveness and transcending family tragedy, and the next day he would become my lover, and my manager.

Joe kept his word – the massage was legit. However once I was off the massage table in his living room and paid and we talked more, we eventually did make love in his bedroom. I could not climax because he looked me straight in the eyes, which made me extremely self-conscious and ruined the sex. Realizing this was dysfunctional, I over-explained my anxiety, and found him not only to be a wonderful paternal figure but a trained therapist. Being in Alcoholics Anonymous for 20 years, he had heard every dysfunctional story under the sun and was not the least bit phased by mine.

The next night he took me to an overpriced fancy dinner then we played my favorite game, *Scrabble*, at his place. It seemed I had found an older man who wanted to father me with the attention I'd always craved from my dad. Whenever I showered at Joe's place, afterwards he'd cover my shoulders with an enormous white towel. I was digging the attention, and yet, I was afraid of it. Easter came that week and though we had hardly known each other, he bought me a huge basket with my favorite foods and the new Johnny Mathis 6 CD set because he knew Johnny was my favorite. Not one to hide my real emotions, he knew I was not grateful for that expensive gift; I was weirded out by it.

It was no accident that we found each other since we both believed in the Law of Attraction and similar vibrations magnetically pulled to each other. Later we would see that I was also playing out his dysfunctional relationship with his long-deceased militant father, who always criticized Joe for not being good enough. While I had a pattern

of attracting wonderful, loving men who scared me by wanting my future, Joe also had a pattern of fixing dysfunctional men, or trying to. Our goo-goo-eyed honeymoon stage ended within months, and we seemed to drift right into love / hate and passion / aggression. We were entwining like co-dependents and participating in the drama therein.

Our disagreements escalated quickly. In one, he said, “Wow!” after I said something, and he said it in the way people do when they are trying to get you to believe what you said was craazy. So I just “Wow!!”ed him louder. There was a time I annoyed him so much that he threw a desk chair across the room. That may have been after I stirred my margarita in his face. As a pledged alcoholic, he did not find that as amusing as I had.

Another time he insisted I not say “Sci-Fi” in the dramatic way of a TV announcer. Okay, it was my twentieth time saying it as he was working on papers but still I was not about to be told I could not say anything, so I kept saying “Sci-Fi” in that unnerving vocal pattern all day and he kept getting as furious as if I was burning him with hot coals.

However, he was there for me when I needed someone, because usually he listened with no judgment. I called him from the Los Angeles courthouse bathroom once.

“Joe?”

“Yeah?”

“Today a bunch of us were being questioned as possible jurors. We were in a crowded courtroom, and on the left, was a big group of lawyers. The judge called my name, and when I stood up, I exhaled in this loud, long moan and everyone laughed, but I wasn’t trying to be funny.”

“Why did you moan?”

“I was nervous! Then the judge asked me if I had any reason not to be a juror, and I said that I prefer to stay home and write. She asked what I was writing, and I said a screenplay: my schizophrenic brother killed our mom and my other brother killed himself. I think all the lawyers and jurors and she could see I was paranoid by the way I was avoiding eye contact, and she let me go.”

He was sensitive to the emotion in my voice, saying, “Oh honey, I am sorry.”

“I just wanted them to think I was paranoid so that I could get out of jury duty.”

He laughed, but then heard my emotional wimper, and he could tell I had doubts about being able to deal with groups; doubts I could be indeed paranoid.

Joe did not judge me for being paranoid of groups at times; he instead complimented me on how I was able to portray those emotions onto my canvases.

About this time I visited another free clinic to get help with my chronic insomnia. They did not give out sleeping pills without a doctor’s note and suggested that I get a complete psychiatric evaluation. I knew that I had great social anxiety, but I did not see it as a mental illness. That being said, I realized that I could probably get any psychiatric evaluation result that I wanted. The fact that my schizophrenic brother killed our mom and my other brother had probably killed himself in paranoia, along with a few choice words on my part, could probably guarantee I could get a mental illness disability diagnosis—and a monthly disability check—which could take care of my rent. However, I did not believe I had a mental illness or legitimate disability, so I left the clinic, refusing the psychiatric evaluation and possible disability income, hoping instead to buy Ambien off the street from any stranger willing to sell it.

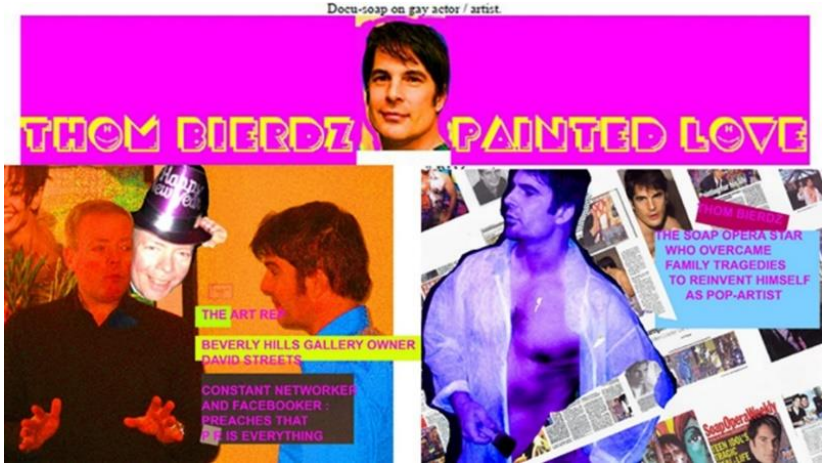
Joe did become my manager and would receive a percentage of my

painting sales or script sale, and he worked his butt off, but he really was not very connected, since he was a spiritual counselor by trade. That being said, he had some very big contacts turn up in Beverly Hills' Alcoholic Anonymous. With Joe's passion and his friends' leads we had eventually met with the president of Fox 2000 to discuss *Forgiving Troy* as a movie. The head of ICM was also very interested, as was an Oscar-nominated screenwriter. I did have a small producer involved, but the deal fell through. Other small producers were interested as well, and one draft I wrote with John Stamos's producing partner—but that did not result in a green light for a movie at that time.

One day, walking into the Burbank building where Stamos had his office, I saw the incredibly cute Ryan Seacrest walking toward me. My face lit up in recognition and he answered my smile with a smile. Ryan was someone I had fantasized about fucking, a lot, and so I instantly stopped my smile and flirted with my eyebrows and intense come-hither look, and then he quickly looked away. He was definitely not interested.

About that time several TV producers wanted to create a reality TV show around my life. They liked the fact that I was alternately overconfident and unpredictably anxious, and the drama of my love life, my *Forgiving Troy* screenplay in development and art career. We made sizzle reels, and met TV executives, but did not get an official deal.

THOM BIERDZ



As much as I needed a manager, or handler, Joe needed something to be passionate about, and he brought my art to a Beverly Hills gallery where a friend of his worked. She loved my paintings and wanted to be involved as my art rep as well.



With Scarlett Johansson.

Joe and I met again with The Art of Elysium charity, which brought singers and painters into the hospital rooms of sick kids. Once a year they sponsored an exhibit by an artist, and they chose me for 2004. Joe worked all the angles for my November art premier; a red-carpet event attended by many stars and hosted by movie star Scarlett Johansson. Scarlett was only 19 and has since become a collector of my work.

My art and show got rave reviews, and one of my paintings sold for \$6,000. *It wasn't that long ago that I was making cappuccinos at Swing Café and sold a painting for \$60. My art had increased in value 100 times!* That thrilled Joe and I both, but my sexual attraction to him

was fading then. Partly because I was co-dependent on him procuring my income through my talents, and also partly because he had little body hair. It was hard for me to get off with a man who had little or none, and especially difficult if the hairless man looked into my eyes and saw my over-wracked brain TRYING to get off. That is when I suggested he and I did some bondage, handcuffs, leash, rough sex. He complied, but he was the sweetest man and it was not his comfort zone.

Passionate about my book and script as much as he was for me, he flew to Wisconsin with me to meet my family and see Troy in his prison visiting room. Since 1994, I had flown back about once a year to visit Troy. Joe genuinely wanted to be there, meet him and help him if he could.

After seeing Troy, Joe and I spent time in the Indian casinos and in tourist restaurants on scenic Wisconsin Dells lakes. We took a kayak ride and fooled around in an overgrown field.

In our hotel room, I took a flashlight under the covers and initiated flashlight sex with Joe, reminding me of being a boy in a tent. That worked, but I was unable to be the cuddly devoted lover that he was to me because when any man put his arms around me after sex as we lay in bed, I interpreted that to mean he expected a lifetime of commitment and I became so panicked my eyes enlarged like Marty Feldman's. I could not sleep.

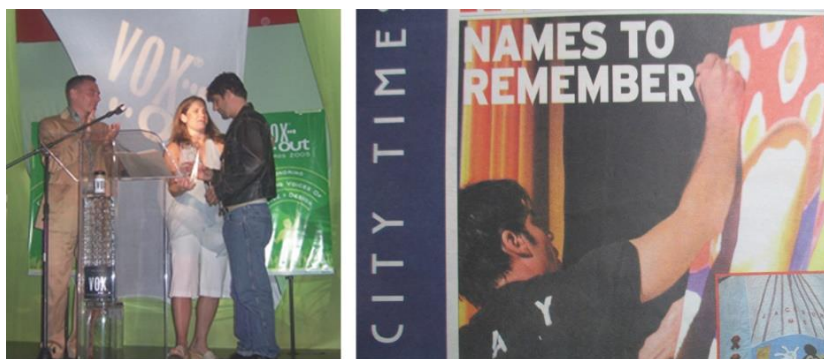
By the time we flew to Washington DC for my art exhibit, Joe and I had transitioned from lovers to friends. As *A Course in Miracles* professes, love does not die, it just changes form. While I believed this was true in all cases, it was very evident with Joe and me, who were co-dependent in my career, and perhaps old soulmates from other lives. Though I no longer wanted to be his partner or future husband, his integrity and honesty had impressed me as had his genuine intention to help people. Never before had I known anyone who wanted to help people more than he wanted to help himself. While it is true that I

wanted to help people, and prayed many times that I be able to, it was always with the disclaimer, “At no cost to myself.” I did not want to be a martyr.

There were gay bars in Washington DC where they hired Adonises to walk and dance completely nude! Patrons could even watch through glass walls as these gods showered. No doubt they made tons of tips. I was not used to looking at a beautiful naked man—in public. I felt self-conscious. *Wow though, so freeing on one level—and how great of those incredible specimens to walk around and let everyone appreciate them or tip them.* Reminded me of John in the gym showers who allowed anyone to touch him in any way—except John did it for free.

Also, in Washington DC, I made a complete ass of myself at my art show. Intimidated to speak in public, I drank too much to prepare, slurred my speech, and then went to the bar and handed the cutest bartender my hotel room key. Talk about arrogance. Of course, he never came over—we had not even exchanged a word. Celebrity ego and alcohol was not a good mix that night.

Thanks to Joe, in 2005, I received the VOX / OUT Emerging Voices of Style + Design Award.



Also, in 2005, a new cable show titled *The Takedown* featured me as one of “L.A.’s hottest artists” and did an episode showing how easily an art thief could steal one of my paintings during a gallery exhibition.

THOM BIERDZ

Thanks to Joe, in 2006, I started to receive invitations to go around the country to create "live" paintings during charity events. The finished art would be auctioned off to the highest bidder, often fetching \$6,000 apiece. A gay charity associated with the Kentucky Derby flew me in as a celebrity for several days, and I got to meet several of the *Queer Eye For The Straight Guy* cast and a member of the Village People. Randy Jones, the cowboy, could not have been nicer - but I was hoping it would be Mark Lee and we'd rekindle our one-night flame from decades ago.



I raised money for many charities with live auctions of my live paintings, and later that year, was awarded the Key to the Light Award as a thank you from Debbie Reynolds and Ruta Lee of The Thaliens charity. Afterward, I told Debbie I was a huge fan of her old movies, to which she replied, "You're not old enough." That prompted me to sing "Tammy" to her, probably way off-key. Joe gave her my *Forgiving Troy* book and we talked about mental illness. She brought up her daughter, Carrie Fisher, and said, sipping her cocktail, "I told Carrie to give up the drugs and instead, drink like me." Half-bombed myself, I clicked her glass in agreement.

Not only did Joe transform his West Hollywood apartment into a Thom Bierdz Gallery, but he also set up my show at the West Hollywood Advocate Gochis Gallery at the Gay and Lesbian Center.

This festive night was a big success, even with my social anxiety. When I invited people to anything, I always hoped they did not come. If they did, I felt pressure. My comfort zone was being with one person at a time, or with my dogs. But that art exhibit night, everyone I knew attended, thanks to Joe.

But he did not invite my new boyfriend. I did—and Joe was not too happy about it.

We had discussed very openly that we were broken up, but it was not Joe's nature to move on as fast as I could. For me, it always took one to get over one.



Photos by Barry King



Scarlett Johansson at Soicher-Marin.

Randy Jackson at my Rodeo Drive show.



Getting 'Thalian's Key To The Light ' award from Debbie Reynolds and Ruta Lee.



Painting at Connie Stevens's charity. Painting at Katrina fundraiser hosted by Kathy Griffin. Painting at charity hosted by Rosalynn Carter. Reunited with old cast mate Lauralee Bell, and with Lisa Rinna on Soap Talk.



I am thrilled my art has raised over \$100,000 for charities! |

* 27: **PERFECT MIKE**

MIKE

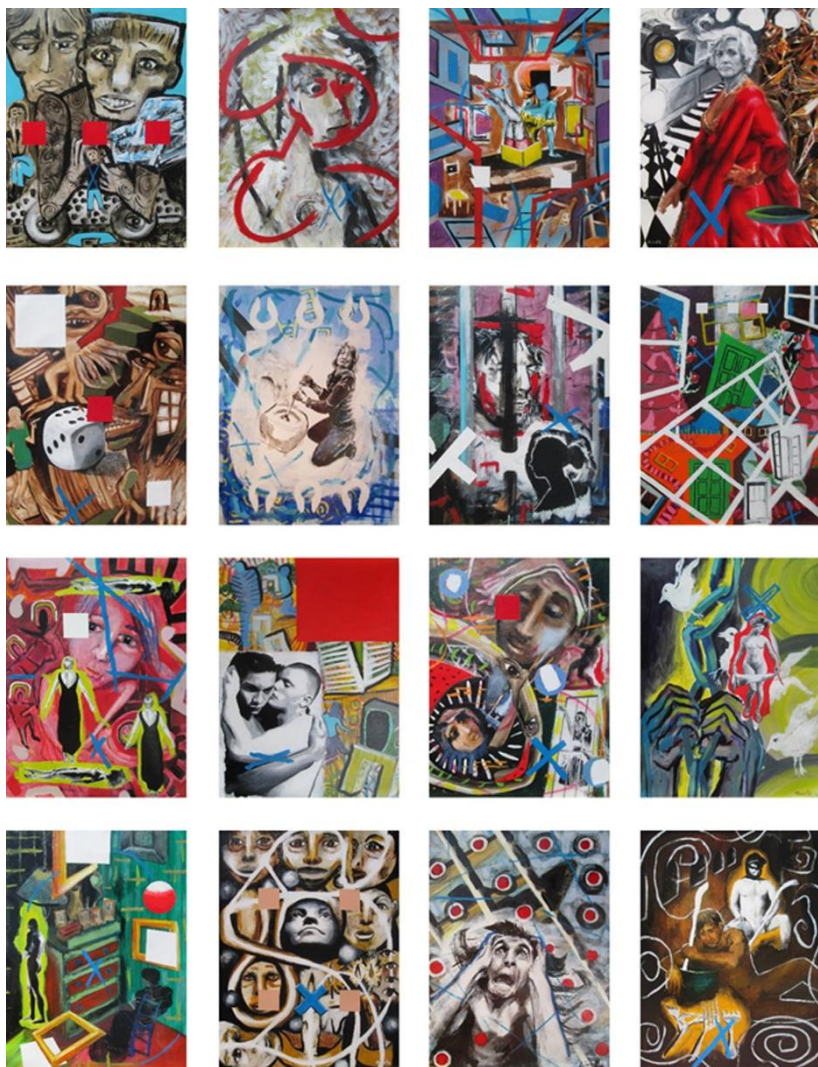
Mike R., 38, was an incredibly handsome actor known for his hunky shirtless roles in small gay independent films. His face was chiseled like a model, engaging blue eyes, black hair, dimples—and he was as beautiful on the inside as he was on the outside—as were Joe, Doug, Big Dog, and Gary. Seems I had a pattern of falling in love with men beautiful inside and out, probably because I had such trust issues and usually ran away from guys who made me suspicious. Okay, Mike did not have a hairy chest, but he had great wit and humor, and could talk dirty in bed.

The friends who I had not seen for years whom Joe invited to the gallery show liked Mike, and Joe, very much. Even Mike liked Joe, but I caught Joe looking angry several times that evening, which only added to my anxiety and guilt of replacing him with a new boyfriend. The expressionism canvases on the walls also revealed my innermost dysfunctions, adding to me feeling vulnerable.

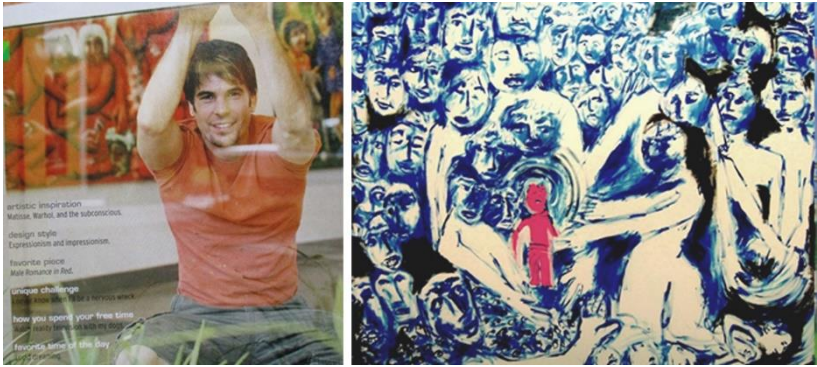
After the crowded gallery event, at Mike's modest Hollywood apartment, I told him I loved him for the first time, and he reciprocated. But I stopped our romantic kiss to say, "Babe, I have to go home and paint. I am feeling too much emotion."

He had expected me to go to my apartment and paint our blossoming love. However, the next day, he saw the large canvas with a small red man paranoid of a crowd of figures reaching to him. And he was beginning to understand how I could not sleep off crowds like most people. I had to spill my anxiety onto a canvas to get it out of my head.

THOM BIERDZ



I kept picturing all the faces at my show, reading what was behind their smiles, wondering if what was spoken was sincere, rehashing if I could smile genuinely at each face, or how many people's feelings I hurt by looking afraid of them.



“Paranoid In Red” 48x60” Available at www.ThomBierdz.com

I had met Mike in a house off Melrose Avenue. A gay couple was holding a large gay wedding in their yard. Bruce and I went, and among the crowd, I found Mike to be one of the most handsome men I had ever seen. It would not take me much time to learn he was also probably one of the best partners anyone could want.

Mike was completely organized, scheduling when he'd lift weights, go to voice class, cut coupons, microwave his food, and watch his numerous reality TV shows. But he was also open to impromptu changes, like when I suggested we both fuck the watermelon he bought; and he had plenty of ideas of his own.

Mike gladly supported me at my many live painting events arranged by Joe, where I would paint in the crowd and later the art would be auctioned off onstage for the charity—raising thousands of dollars. The key word was support. Although Mike was an actor, he was not like me and other actors who were easily threatened by others' success or entering show business to get the love we felt owed as a child. He also did not have my mad drive and ambition, and whereas I was a gambler without any savings, he was extremely organized, resourceful and invested cautiously.

After one of my live-painting events in Chicago for a gay charity, I awoke in the hotel room and Mike was gone. I recalled that we had had sex every day, except that day, and figured that he must be having

sex with someone else. As I tossed in confusion, wondering how I should vocalize my trust issue that he had not told me where he was going, he entered the room quietly. He was not cheating; he was so interested in my memoir, *Forgiving Troy*, that he had been reading it in the lobby.

I remember telling a good friend that I would be a fool to ever leave Mike because he was such a good partner. I was not able to return Mike's generous support. We flew to NY for a movie premier of his, and to hang with his co-stars, and I felt completely lost. It was like I had disappeared and had no body or history and had become a dot bouncing back and forth between the eyes of his friends. He could not understand why I would not support him like he supported me.

Mike could not understand why I could paint in front of a thousand people and auction my painting off onstage seemingly very confident yet be panicked at his cast dinner of 16. I explained that I did not like being in front of a thousand people onstage, but it was my job. That was how I got clients and money for my bills. If I seemed comfortable, it was the tequila.

I did not have a drinking problem. I had a drinking SOLUTION. I did not like alcohol and never drank it at home and never abused it. I merely used it medicinally at social events to transform me from the nervous paranoid artist to the friendly soap star. No one could tell I was drinking, and since my social events were pretty rare, I really only had a couple drinks a week, or a month.

Mike was so generous to also fly to Wisconsin to meet Troy at his prison and joked that he was interested in becoming an inmate to make the 35 cents an hour to hand towels to showering prisoners. Joe came along, having grown to like Mike quite a bit, and because Joe had such affection for Troy and a desire to reform Troy's confusion and guilt. Mike and I got a separate hotel room from Joe, and we spent a few romantic hours alone. I took Mike to a field not far from the prison walls, undressed him and ordered him to piss on me, which he

did. Was it bold or stupid to have gay sex outdoors so near my brother's prison? Similar to this book, it was a rebellious act to defy the sex shaming of my childhood.

Is sex still naughty?

When I was getting bored with our routine sex, Mike also humored me by making a glory hole out of a refrigerator box. This fulfilled that fantasy for me, which I had never actually done with a stranger with a real glory hole. Though Mike appeared very proper and upstanding, he was not innocent and had been around the block. He was very fun and open to roleplay, and I got to pretend I was different truckers wrestling and seducing him.

It would only make sense that he wanted to introduce me to this large family in Ohio for Thanksgiving. Even though I resisted it, I relented.

He had several dozen family members and had scheduled family events almost each day. I saw a photo of him in his parent's house which showed him with an insanely hairy chest—that he did not have. When I asked him about this, as he knew body hair was my fetish, he explained he hated his hairy chest and years ago had had electrolysis and removed it.

Of course, I had no right to be furious, but I was. The truth was I would in fact have been more attracted to him if he had kept the hairy chest. It was so awkward for me to go through those emotions, to feel bad about them, and also to keep silent.

So many family members and friends of his showed up at his parents' house to meet me and catch up with him. When I painted at events, and even when I did personal appearances at shopping malls in the late 1980s, my social limit was three hours. For that amount of time I could do what was required and appear extroverted and happy, but after three hours, I could not force a smile or pretend to like people. Introverts need to be alone to recharge.

After three busy days of meeting his family, on the fourth night, he asked me to join him at a brother's gathering. I said no, that wasn't on our pre-approved schedule, and I couldn't do it, I had had no time to recharge. He insisted. I refused. He insisted. I refused. He insisted.

I said, "You really want to force me to do something that I do not want to do? I would never force you to do something you don't want to do."

"Yes," he insisted.

I went, hoping I would come across friendly.

His brother's new house was very beautiful, but very bright. I felt onstage and extremely uncomfortable leaning against the kitchen island with Mike's pretty, normal, adjusted, smiley relatives surrounding me asking me questions. Most people would enjoy the variety of faces and topics, but neurotics like me become plagued thinking everyone is thinking about me ME me. I left to find a quieter room, and preferred being in the basement where I found about four young kids. Kids were easier to deal with at these get-togethers because you didn't have to try and figure out what they were thinking and how you came across. I played catch with a kid then the father came downstairs. My gut told me he was worried about a strange man spending time in the basement with the kids. *Damn! Where could I hide now?*

I put on my coat and slipped out for a walk around the neighborhood. Their house was as bright as the sun and as noisy as a tied World Series. I walked half an hour on iced streets, but it was zero degrees freezing so had to go back. My asthma had kicked in and I couldn't breathe.

On the drive home with Mike, I insisted I get a motel room—alone—so I could relax, catch my breath, and recharge. The next morning, still short on breath, Mike and I met at a restaurant. I broke up with him. He cried but I said if I did not break up, I would not be able to catch my breath.

It was not a manipulation. It was for real. Whether valid or not, I felt suffocated by Mike's (reasonable) demands and I needed to be safe away from his (reasonable) expectations. His parents met and fell in love in high school and had stayed together faithfully since then. His many straight siblings followed their example. Mike deserved that happily-ever-after promise, but I was not the one who could give him that, yet I felt pressured to.

The rest of the week-long Ohio trip, I stayed in that hotel room, trying to catch my breath, but could not breathe laying down. I propped myself up with four pillows behind my back and sat up and watched boring TV news.

Mike was one of the nicest men alive and was there as a friend to me after our break-up. On Wednesday mornings we'd take Bodhi and Deen to breakfast, but he wasn't as ready as I was to move on, and eventually, we stopped doing breakfast.

There was great relief in knowing that not long after we'd separated, he met another actor on a movie set, and after six years of dating they officially married. They have the great committed life Mike always wanted. Mike deserved a partner who was more devoted to him than I could be—and now has one.

I hope Mike can remember our great times as I do. What an honor it was to have him as a partner in this lifetime.

* 28: **HIGH-MAINTENANCE & DYSFUNCTIONAL**

HOLIDAY

That Ohio incident was not the first time Thanksgiving with a boyfriend took my breath away. Two years before, in a Lake Arrowhead cabin with lover Joe, his sister and her handsome light-skinned younger black boyfriend, my asthma got so bad that I used my inhaler 19 times in one night. I figured it was old cat hair being blown by the heater. At three in the morning, Joe hugged me, and felt my heart beating like a high school band. He said, “We need to get you out of here.”

We drove home to Los Angeles that night. I could not lay down flat for two weeks. Each time I tried, my breath stopped. I sat propped up on his couch for two weeks, occasionally nodding off to sleep for 10 minutes.

Even worse was the Thanksgiving before at Joe’s sister’s condo. She had cooked an incredible meal for her boyfriend, his siblings and Joe and me. However, I was so tense that when I drove on the highway afterward, with Joe as passenger, I went completely blind. Driving 70 miles per hour on Thanksgiving night, my sight went entirely away. I could see nothing!

“Grab the wheel!” I said, “Joe! I can’t see!!”

He did not believe me, but I was sightless several minutes as he controlled the steering wheel and told me when to apply the brakes. This remains the only time I have ever lost my sight.

I believed my asthma was psychosomatic. I think when I was afraid that I was unsafe, my asthma kicked in to get me some place where I could be alone—and breathe.

In *Forgiving Troy* I shared at length how rediscovering my brother Troy in prison and forgiving him added so much to my heart, and life in general. I mentioned that when I was visiting him alone that there was no one on Earth I'd rather be sitting with and no one who could understand my anxieties to the extent that he could. That was one reason he was on my mind constantly, and I wrote him letters weekly, and was always excited to receive his monthly phone calls.

NEW BOYFRIENDS

In 2006, Joe got me a gig painting on an all gay cruise on the Queen Mary II going from New York to London. Having never been on a cruise, I found it like being inside a mall for six days, but fortunately I had a room with an ocean view. Had I been more of an extrovert maybe I would have participated in the onboard sex parties, but never having done that, I was fine spending free time at the slot machines. I did get the attention of a handsome dark-haired man at another slot machine and invited him to my room for sex. It really was quick, and I would never be able to recognize him. Being with thousands of gay men on a boat, it was nice to have physical contact for 15 minutes, but it was pretty empty, and I would never recall his face or voice. Okay, his hairy chest I could pick out of a line-up.

Empty, also: my tryst with a very attractive famous gay country singer. We met at a small party and the chemistry was intense, but when we finally got together alone, I felt that both of us had left—and that our vacated bodies just carried out sex habits. The extremely talented star was shockingly hung but hairless.

Dyed my hair blond again. I liked it, but people found it dreadful. A sexy, short, Jewish guy named Jacob came up to me at Whole Foods as I was buying vegetarian pizza and said, "I can fix that bad hair for you." I laughed. He gave me his card, said he had a salon just down

the street. I took him up on his offer and was very turned on by his short, muscular, hairy body rubbing against me as he cut my hair. But when he wanted \$90, my jaw dropped. I had never spent more than \$20 for a haircut before, so I complained, and he settled for \$70.

We hooked up quickly for dinner. In his small apartment was an issue of *IN Magazine*, of which I graced the cover for my recent art exhibits. Jacob knew me from the soap opera because it had played in Israel with subtitles as he grew up. He was an Israeli soldier turned American hairdresser, and my manager, Paul, laughed so much when I described him that way. I thought it was hot because uniforms turned me on.



Jacob and I had great chemistry and great sex. He liked to blow me watching *Friends* reruns. I, however, did not like watching *Friends* reruns, or any popular TV show because I felt a failure to not be on the number one TV shows—but *when someone has your dick in their mouth, they get the remote because they are unable to speak with a dick in their mouth. Can we just all accept that as an implied rule? Wouldn't Miss Manners and Dear Abby agree?* Jacob and I had an exciting short romance. I still play the Norah Jones “Come Away With Me” album he gave me. Jacob was great to my dogs, and even bought a Christmas tree to celebrate the holidays. Being Jewish, he'd obviously did it for me, but he did not know I was not religious and naturally rebelled against traditions that were assigned to society. I

felt they were designed to boost commercial sales – not spiritual.

Jacob was very direct and wanted a commitment, but I could not give it to him, so we parted as friends.



Each day in 2007 my fingers worked fastidiously over different muscular naked men. Not alive humans though, rather small 11x14” canvases because I realized my big bright artworks were hard sells, and more people had apartments and wallets better suited for portable monochromatic treasures. That year I painted at least 60 classic gold nudes in trees, a few inspired by iconic photographers like the multi-award-winning David Vance. Over the years I sold all 60, but place some here to show you that era of mine. (These are available as prints from my www.ThomBierdz.com site, and shown bigger in my companion book to this one, titled *The Erotic Photos And Paintings Of Thom Bierdz*, also at Amazon.)

SEX ASSUALTS?

Scouting the West Hollywood bars one night, I ran into a friend who

was so drunk that he vomited on a stripper. After walking him home safely, I started talking to a military-looking blond man, 40, who also stripped in bars on occasion and even showered in a G-string in one bar. He was so wide-jawed and masculine he appeared as a cartoon, and I had always been attracted to him. We had a few drinks in an obnoxiously loud bar, then made out in the parking lot—something I had never done; not being a fan of public displays of affection.

I invited him to a pool party where I was to attend a few days later because I needed rent money and my plan was to pass out my business card to get painting clients. I was drinking to appear calm. When he and I were alone in a room of the party house, I put my dick in his red plastic beer cup. *What could be sexier*, I thought.

He was horrified. Maybe he thought I'd peed in his beer? But I thought that would also be sexy. However, he did not. (Cue the haunting "Nadia's Theme"...sensitive soap opera background piano finally breaking away from safe conventional Y&R plots to underscore a "What do I do now with this penis in your beer cup?" plot twist.) I quickly put my dick back in my pants and got him another beer, but he wanted nothing to do with me after that.

Was it my dick? Was it my etiquette? Did he think I'd sexually assaulted him? Hey, I was on a date with a guy who showered for crowds and stripped for dollars, so I hardly felt I was assaulting him by stuffing my cock in his beer. What would Judge Judy say?

Among the general population, sexual assault seemed to have various meanings – and double standards. Often alcohol or drugs were involved which further varied interpretations of sexual assault or sexual impropriety.

Case in point: At a party with Joe I met a very handsome East Indian man, Amir. Much chemistry. We had dinner and sex a few times and I was excited about him being a new boyfriend, but we had not yet had any discussion of that. He drove me to the home of my new best

friend, a real stoner named Kyle who rented a cozy house hidden in the brush of Beachwood Canyon Hills. Kyle had long hair, a goatee and a cowboy hat, and it took him forever, like a stoner, to start dinner. We had margaritas going by his backyard grill and talked about life and men, then Kyle went to give Amir a tour of his house. They asked me to join and I said no since I always loved my alone-time to recharge.

I sat outside by the grill fire drinking my margarita on the rocks, and just let music and lyrics come out of me, like it always did. I was in a great mood, and excited about having a new boyfriend. But after 15 minutes, I wondered where they were since the only room Amir had not seen was Kyle's downstairs bedroom.

Walking into the house, and to the stairs, I said, "Where are you guys?"

Silence. Then after a long beat, Kyle answered, "You can come join us."

I walked downstairs to see Kyle and Amir laying on the bed, pants at their ankles, jacking each other's spermguns. True that years before I'd wanted a threesome, but Kyle was my friend and I was not attracted to him and too shocked to speak.

When I was 20 and saw Mr. Gay Wisconsin on my boyfriend Gary's lap, I had shouted, "Get. The. Fuck. Off. Of. Gary!" Then I yanked him off.

I was not the same man in my 40s. *Why would I deny anything to someone I like or love? Why would I tell others how to act?* I did not protest or inflict an objection to Amir. I just felt I had intruded where I was not wanted. I tried to hide my shock and slowly walked around the bed, then toward the window pretending a bird had caught my attention, then I went out the bedroom door to the trees.

Then I climbed a fence.

Then I started walking to the street.

Then I started running and within five miles fortunately came across a cab.

Once home, I did not know what to do, so I got in my car and drove to the Eagle in Silver Lake where I occasionally played pool. Still flabbergasted at my boyfriend having sex with my best friend like a sorry plot on a soap opera, I chugged back a beer and shared this info with the bartender. Then apologetic Kyle walked in, knowing my hangout.

I tried to avoid him but Kyle stalked me back and forth through the bar, insisting we talk about it. Yes, he was my best friend, but we'd only known each other a few months, and I had no interest in continuing our friendship since trust was broken. But each time I would write my name on the chalkboard to play pool, he would also write his under it, and since I kept winning, I could not escape him.

He said he thought I was okay with him blowing Amir.

MORE RISKY SEX

Saw a very muscular Czechoslovakian, my height, online, selling full release massages. Curt, with a drooping face, was even sexier in person to guys like me who liked Neanderthals. He was a nice guy and we started playing with each other on his massage table. He let me fuck him on it, without a condom. I knew I was HIV negative, so I was not worried for him in that case, although there was still confusion as to how people contracted HIV. Some said you could get it by topping as well as bottoming.

Seemed Curt let anyone fuck him, without a condom, because a few weeks later he pleaded with me to take him to a free clinic where he

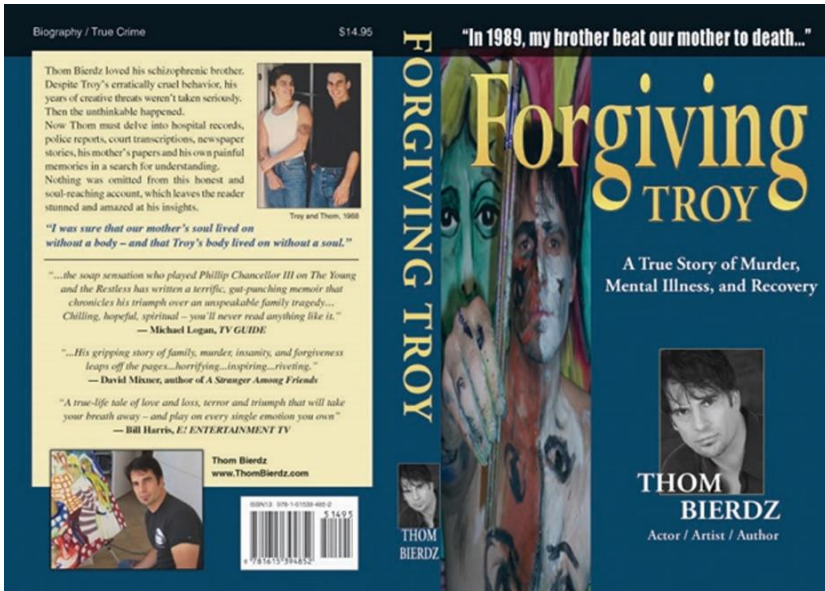
could get an emergency treatment to kill the AIDS virus. Apparently his most recent sex partner told him, after they'd had sex, that he was HIV positive, and careless, carless Curt was currently catatonic. I drove him to clinics and he was treated for free and a couple months later tested HIV negative.

Interesting that one time when I attended a very famous gay publicist's party at his mansion, I recalled Curt once asking me to drop him off there to massage a client. I have no doubt that the rich and famous gay men; actors, agents, writers, directors, producers, publicists, are indeed laying hands, and more, on these muscular massage studs.

A very sweet and established Broadway producer in New York was a big fan of mine and became a prime art collector, buying over a dozen of my paintings. He insisted he and his straight friend massage me when I was in New York with Mike for his movie premier. I consented, making sure to say it would not be a sexual massage. It amused me that this older Broadway producer who had tons of money gave four-handed massages along with his young, naked straight friend. He was obviously not doing it for the money.

Joe told every industry person he came across about the screenplay adaptation I was writing of *Forgiving Troy*. By this time, my book had received critical acclaim from *TV Guide* and *National Enquirer* and was the winner in the highly competitive autobiography / memoir category in the (USA Book News) National Best Book Awards. In the (USA Book News) INTERNATIONAL Best Book Awards, it also won that memoir category, as well as the GRAND PRIZE Spirituality "Sacred Light" Award, 1st Place in Non-Fiction Narrative, 1st Place in Gay & Lesbian Non-Fiction and 1st Place in True Crime. Joe helped garner TV interviews on me and the book and I was featured on *NBC News*, *FOX News*, *Brunch with Honey Labrador*, *Joan Quinn Profiles* and *Soap Talk*, (interviewed by gorgeous Lisa Rinna, who had known me from *Y&R* but last seen me with a bow tie and cocktail tray offering her hors d'oeuvres at Kenny G's estate). *Oprah's* producer loved my book well

enough to pass it up, and her senior producer also loved it, but we never heard anything after that.



Joe got my book to A-list publicist Simon Halls, who knew my soap opera character from years back. Simon asked me to go hiking in Runyan Canyon. He was good-looking, but very tall, and for that reason not my type. As we walked it occurred to me that he may have thought it was a date. I thought it was a business meeting. He talked about wanting kids and I explained how I'd hate to have kids. They seemed so much work, and may wind up killing you, as my brother did to my mom. He never called me after that realizing I was not the match he was looking for. I was disappointed because he had had regular access to the biggest stars in Hollywood and could make *Forgiving Troy* a movie in about five phone calls.

A few months later, Simon was with a handsome tall actor he introduced as Matt Bomer. At that time I knew I was going to be returning to *The Young and the Restless* as a gay character back from the dead, and said, "The soap might want a romance for my character. I can refer you if you want?" They both hurriedly said no, and later I

understood why. Matt was already a soap actor (*Guiding Light*) and had plans to go beyond soaps with a *Tru-Calling* series premiering in the fall, and *Chuck* and other movies lined up. I had not realized that Matt and Simon were new lovers. Over the next years they would get married and have three kids, enjoying two phenomenally successful careers.

Another time when I was seeking managers an older gay guy told me he regularly let strangers fist him until he bled. While I was only at his place discussing management, I could not get off his couch and out the door fast enough. *But who was I to judge someone on what turned them on?* Probably because I was raised as a germophobe never to drink out of anyone's glass or eat off their fork, the idea of fist-fucking with possible blood and feces on the couch totally grossed me out.

But hey, I was into golden showers. Fortunately, urine was actually sterile and helpful, not hurtful. In fact, several of the oldest books in the world are on Urine Therapy presenting historical documentation of thousands of years of urine as medicine. (On YouTube you may want to listen to Gary Ward's six-hour lecture on the benefits of urine therapy curing countless illnesses. Fascinating. When one doesn't have health insurance, YouTube can be a phenomenal source for alternative medicines.)

Whatever floats your boat was my motto; unless it harmed another. Over the years, I'd heard of so many sexual fetishes that did not turn me on, but I resisted judging others for their fetishes that they could not control. They could control acting on them, but they could not control their obsessive fantasies of them.

Some men injected saline into their urethra to have a longer, more intense orgasm. I couldn't imagine a needle in my dick being worth it. Some men routinely injected saline into their balls and dick, and created gigantic extremities, but that seemed dangerous to me. Ouch! But hey, I wouldn't rule that out in my future.

I heard of a man who was only turned on by sensitive men, so he made his partner picture his relatives' deaths until he cried, then he wanted to make love.

Others were into fart domination and shitting on a body part or getting shit on. I guessed this went back to formative years in childhood?

Others got off on a partner's coughing, hacking up phlegm, choking or vomiting. Others collected body excretions in jars. Some masturbated to models as food arrangements. Some got into latex, or costumes, or diapers, or cross-dressing. Macrophiliacs got off on pretending to be tiny with a giant partner, and some messianists got off on messiahs. (Y&R theme song here?) Others preferred clown porn, amputee appendages, being wacked off by feet, being burned by cigarettes, vibrating sound wands... One man had a barn fetish and raised three pigs in his urban apartment but did not tell this to partners before they arrived and often they backed out. One Australian sex worker had a john offer him \$10,000 to behead him within three months. The sex worker declined.

Maybe even weirder: A Republican Congressmen who routinely FB messaged me nude photos of himself when he was drunk, jack-off clubs who splooged on Ann Coulter's photos, sapiosexuals who were turned on by intelligence, men who fucked girls and get this...men who made love with eye contact. I AM SERIOUS. EYE CONTACT. I am not making this stuff up.

* 29: **A PERFECT MATURE BI HUSBAND?**

2009. A nice guy I met on FB came to my gallery apartment to pick up the painting of his dogs. He may have been under the influence of drugs, because without the slightest bit of sexual discussion, he pretty much undressed, jumped on my bed and threw his legs up. His hairy asshole quivering in the air, *how could I refuse?* As I was inching into him, I said, “You want me to go in slower?” He responded, “Oh, girl. Not even.”

Hearing “Oh girl” when I am fucking does not keep me hard. Although I have had dozens of people pick up paintings, he is the only art collector who left with my sperm. Was a good lay, though, because he had more moving parts than a Swiss watch.

Following guidance from the Law of Attraction on obtaining a boyfriend, in the bath I sung to Johnny Mathis’s old ballad “Warm (We Keep Each Other Warm)” over and over—each night for weeks—until I felt I really was in love so that I would attract that. The philosophy was that one only attracts what they are – so if one is lonely – they will attract that. One has to fake being in love to attract being in love. No doubt I seriously disturbed the neighbors with my attempt to belt this as if I were on the *American Idol* finale, or, joke reel.

Playing pool one night at another Silver Lake leather bar, a beautiful blond man walked in. Randy was 5’ 10”, my age, about 45. Later he would tell me he knew all eyes would be on him as he swaggered in and slowly removed his jean jacket revealing his muscular hairy chest in a tight wife-beater tank top. He had done that before, joking with a friend that he could make the place silent. And he did.

He had a rugged face, was not a chiseled movie-star, and was exceedingly masculine, in fact bisexual. He was about an inch taller than me, and we were obviously getting turned on playing each other in pool. An hour later I suggested we go across the street and get Thai

food.

As Beyonce's "Single Ladies (Put A Ring On It)" played, I probably talked too loud and too much upfront, explaining my soap opera character was coming back from the dead. Phillip Chancellor III died in 1989 on a hospital bed reaching out to his wife and baby, but since I was openly gay, I had recently written the show and suggested they write me back in with the premise that my character faked his death for 20 years because he was secretly gay. I was not trying to impress this handsome stranger with my intermittent fame; I just always spilled whatever it was that I was thinking about.

Like when we walked into my apartment bedroom an hour later and I hit my phone message light. Message said, "This is the Hollywood Free Clinic. Please give us a call as soon as you can."

I spilled these words aloud to Randy on our first date: "Oh damn! I hope my gonorrhea didn't come back!"

A couple months before, a sexy chiseled Asian with a great body had given me the best blowjob of my life at his house, but it didn't come without a price. Seemed I had contracted gonorrhea, which had been treated at the clinic.

I no longer had symptoms, and Randy was a courageous trooper to exchange hand jobs that night. The next day I called the clinic and they just wanted to give me negative results on my other disease tests.

Half the time in social situations I was fine, even overconfident, but half uncomfortable—and I got the feeling Randy had a hard time figuring me out. At a Mexican restaurant after the waitress took our order and walked away, he said, "I never met anyone like you. You are the most frightened man I have ever met, and also the most courageous man I have ever met."

"My real talent is making everything about me. See that waitress?" I joked. "She appears to be taking an order from that old woman, but

they are both actually completely obsessed with me. Me me me me MEEE. In fact, everyone in here has only one thought in their head, at all times.”

“You?”

“Me me MEEE me me,” I chuckled, blushing. “Just another needy self-obsessed hedonistic neurotic actor in Hollywood.”

Humor was actually a great way to take my attention off my anxiety.

Randy lived in Los Feliz, but even though I had a car, for exercise I rode the bike that Joe gave me half an hour through dangerous Hollywood traffic to Randy’s house every night. He owned a beautiful craftsman cottage and even rented his fixed-up garage to tenants. He was such a man in the way I’d envisioned men when I was a boy; meaning he was so responsible, usually looked serious, slightly angry or overwhelmed, had a sexy low voice, and was never anything girly. Very adult and responsible. He worked from his home office as a graphic designer, employing a crabby old woman as a secretary that he complained about, as much as she complained to him. Randy was ultra-responsible, and he envied I was not, and in our relationship, I reawakened his love for acting. He was a much better actor than I ever was, even though I was the one to soon make headlines for a top secret May Sweeps reappearance on CBS’s #1 soap opera.

Randy had had a lot more sex than I did and had quite a past. He was fine going along when I suggested we roleplay. We did the handcuffs and blindfolds in his bed, but then, since we were both actors, I suggested we take it further. I pretended to be a thief who broke into his house and he pretended to be straight and married with a wife out shopping. This worked fine until he got offended with my ad libs like: “Your wife decorated your place pretty girly with those lamps.” However, he had a great intelligence and sense of humor and we laughed a lot.

He seemed to always want to plan ahead, like a good father would.

He was always trying to schedule new things we would enjoy, like a museum trip or a hike or a new restaurant. Sometimes he'd just say, "I feel like a really bad Joan Crawford movie where she eats up the scenery." We'd walk across the Ralph's parking lot to the movie rental place and find a film. I'd cook dinner as he finished his graphic design, then we'd watch Joan, 69 and go to sleep.

Holidays were coming, and we put on our coats and went to buy a live evergreen tree off the temporary Hollywood Boulevard tree lot. How great to be in love during the holidays, right? All his decorations were in storage, so we impromptu-ed ornaments by searching online for antique photos of odd people, cutting them out, and taping them to the tree. We had a blast creating that weird holiday tree.

Randy had very comfortable parties with just the right amount of people. His house also had many small dark rooms, so I never felt anxious like I was in one big room with all eyes on me.

New Year's Eve, however, was my turn to have a party, and mainly sell art to make my rent, at my West Hollywood apartment which looked like an art gallery. I invited hundreds of strangers on FB and also my email list. Only eight people came. It was dreadful. Randy felt so bad for my few friends who showed up that he snuck into my kitchen, dialed his friends and told them not to show up and to go elsewhere. Anywhere else would have been more fun. He was right. My party bombed.

Randy usually was under stress and one Saturday morning he was feeling pain in his arms and back and thought he might've been having a heart attack. He asked me if he should go to the hospital. I said it depends—do you have insurance? I did not. He did—we went to the emergency room.

The cardiologists would not be in until Monday. So, they did a few preliminary tests and moved him to intensive care—but he was doing fine. It was kind of a fun weekend for me to sleep in the hospital bed

with him, and also sneak in the food he wanted every couple hours. At one point, a young team—a doctor and maybe nurses or apprentices—not dressed in typical doctor outfits—barged in and I backed away to give them room. The main guy, with a note board, directed a woman to poke a needle in Randy, and within seconds Randy collapsed unconscious before our eyes. To me, it seemed like whatever they'd injected him with had killed him. They administered the defibrillator machine to pump his heart and brought him back to consciousness a minute later, then they left. It appeared like young medical personnel were testing a life and death apparatus on patients! Randy excused it by saying needles made him faint.

When the Monday cardiologist arrived, they released Randy saying he was fine. However, a month later, a hospital bill arrived for over \$100,000—which could have given Randy a real heart attack. He disputed it (I offered my testimony on the injection causing him to lose consciousness) and they dropped the bill entirely.

It was time for my annual trip to see Troy, and Randy flew to Wisconsin with me, although he had no interest in seeing Troy, finding what he did to my mom unforgiveable. Randy was very supportive of me and booked a nice rental home on a frozen lake. Turned on by the prison theme, we role-played prison sex in the rental home's large shower.

As much as he and I were not alike, we were alike as well, but maybe did not realize it. As much as he wanted to act, I really wanted to do what he did: graphic design. In subsequent years, I became very much like him as I sat in my office of the Lake Arrowhead mountain home and created <https://www.americanartawards.com>, my business where I brought together America's best galleries and the world's best artists through 50 categories of online art.



No one had to explain to me that I could not commit to one man. My old friend Jamie was right when he said I had as many issues as a magazine stand. Trying to learn from my past relationships, I told Randy what I needed from him was to always give me my freedom and be my rock and then we'd have a chance at longterm. Even though one or both of us may have gotten bored with sex in the years to come, he was such a cool, fun, responsible good guy to be around, I could see us having a life together.

That idea of our love continuing was severely challenged the day I had an interview and photo shoot about my soap opera return. Believing honesty is always the best policy, I told Randy that evening that I had fallen in love with the 25-year-old straight lighting guy. I was not joking. I had. I have the ability to love like that.

A mature partner could have seen through what I had said and known nothing could possibly come from it. Mature partners could even tease each other and grow together sharing silly fantasies.

But Randy was jealous, and a fighter. He ordered me out of bed. At first, I thought he was joking but he gathered my clothes I had brought over in the prior months and threw them on his lawn.

He was not my rock, nor did he give me the freedom I needed, so I understood we could not be partners longterm. Looking back, my rock could have said, with a chuckle, "OK, my love, I want your happiness.

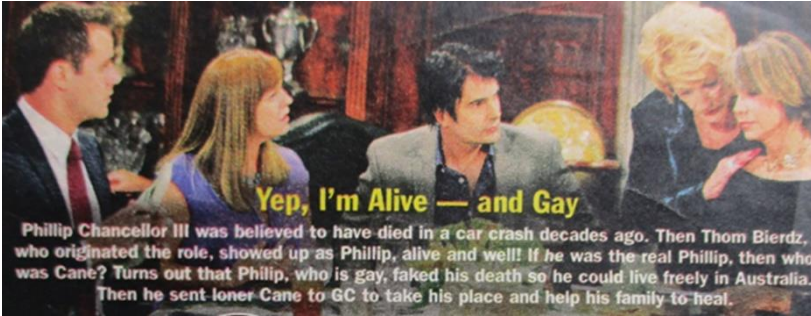
I look forward to hearing how the straight kid responds to you.”

He was another fantastic catch that I let slip away. Truly a remarkable man and potential partner. But never had I felt I was missing a part of myself that someone could complete; never had I searched for a soulmate (besides Jay), and never did I think my life would suck going back to my independent self. It is possible though that he and I could have stayed together if we'd opened up the relationship sexually. While I say that, knowing many gay men have happy functional long-term open relationships, I really have never had one, and Randy would have been way too jealous for that to work. Maybe I would have been jealous, too. I don't know.

After Randy and I broke up, instead of riding my bike to his house across town, I rode my bike daily up the hill to Crunch gym, and after working out occasionally lucked out with sauna jerk-offs. Once I stopped at a West Hollywood swimsuit and shorts store, and the clever employee convinced me to buy three pairs of really short shorts and some tight tank tops, lying that they looked great on me. It took me—now regularly dying my gray hair unrealistically blue black, laughing off questions if I was wearing a toupee—awhile to realize that riding my bike in these boy shorts was very mid-life-crisis-desperate-aging-has-been material. Having been in Hollywood now 26 years, I began to think maybe I'd stayed too long at the fair.

In my free time I'd caress a canvas with my brush and isolated treehouses emerged. By the tenth painting it was no secret my subconscious was yearning for a beautiful safe haven somewhere far away from this city, some place in magical nature where no other humans existed.

*** 30: YOUNG & RESTLESS AGAIN AFTER 20 YEARS DEAD**



Soap Opera Spoiler Alert

PHILLIP BACK FROM DEAD ON Y&R – NOW HE'S GAY!

Actor Thom Bierdz was in the closet when his character died 20 years ago

LINKY soap star Thom Bierdz once feared coming out of the closet would ruin his career, but now he's returned to top-billed *The Young and the Restless* after 20 years - and his character is gay just like him!

Bierdz's character Phillip Chancellor III was killed off in 1999 in a drunk-driving accident. But *Y&R* bigwigs are bringing him back to life with the clever explanation that "Phillip is GAY and faked his death because he couldn't continue living a lie" explains an insider.

Bierdz, 47, has been hired to reprise the role he played for three years - and he's thrilled. "The shocking story line is part of a trend sweeping daytime dramas where producers believe gay romances boost ratings," *GLOBE* reported on Feb. 2. As the *World Turns* made soap history by having daytime's first gay sexual encounter with Luke and Noah, played by Van Hansis and Jake Silbermann, in a passionate tryst. And three weeks ago, *GLOBE* revealed Chris Enger, who portrayed Adam Wilson, quit *Y&R* after being asked to kiss another man in the soap's first gay story line.

Ironically, when Bierdz first starred on *Y&R* in 1986, he was warned by show bosses to hide his true sexuality, which he did.

Then just weeks after leaving *Y&R*, he was clobbered by a heart-breaking tragedy. His younger brother Troy, 18, used a baseball bat to beat their mom Phyllis to death in their Kenosha, Wis., home.

Bierdz was overcome with guilt because shortly before her murder, he'd confessed to his mother that he was gay during her visit to L.A. "She was so shocked, she immediately went back to Wisconsin," says the insider. "And Thom never saw her again."

Troy is now serving a life sentence in prison without the possibility of parole.

Then in 2002, Bierdz was again devastated when his older brother Craig committed suicide by blowing his brains out.

But now, things are looking up for him with a six-month soap contract.

"The big question is - who will he hook up with on *Y&R*?" says the source, adding that all bets are on attorney Rafe Torres, played by Vani Geltman.

Thom today (above) and with Laurence Fishburne, who plays Christine Blair on *Y&R*, in 1997 (inset)

No limits! In 2009, at 47, I painted live to raise money for charities and also reprised my role as Phillip Chancellor III on *The Young and the Restless*. Turns out Phillip only faked his death 20 years prior because he'd thought no one would understand his secret of being a closeted homosexual! That was very exciting for me to play, and I felt I'd earned the right to be the only openly gay actor on this soap which was like a second home to me. It was a lifetime ago when Danny the florist and I had hid our love and I was ashamed to be gay and afraid I'd lose my career, and afraid to test HIV+ in a scene where a nurse drew real blood. Twenty years later I was back correcting those insecurities. I

was surprisingly confident on the days I had much dialogue, educating the viewers on homosexuality. It felt fantastic to have this insightful new storyline on a show that had been seen around the world by 100 million people almost 40 years.



After the big May Sweeps surprise of Phillip returning from the dead announcing his homosexuality, my dialogue lessened to a great degree. My gay love interest that was talked about with the producer and head writer never happened, nor did the other promises, like Phillip being an artist so that I, Thom, could promote my own art.

Usually we shot the scenes at CBS, but I went to a lot on Universal Studios to film Billy's (played by handsome Billy Miller) and Victoria's (Amelia Heinle) wedding scenes. This was the only place my character had a flirtatious line with another gay character, Rafe (played by sexy straight Yani Gellman); the impetus for a gay romance that never happened. Actor and reality TV star Eric Roberts was on the set that day as he played a recurring lawyer, and about a week prior in the CBS make-up room I'd told him that I enjoyed watching him bear his soul and addictions on *Celebrity Rehab*. I was a huge fan of his acting career

going back decades. At Universal Studios lot, in an outdoor bridal setting, the cast was seated in pews for long amounts of time, because soap operas like to get many camera angles on the related characters, especially during weddings. It was a very quiet set, and when I was whispering between scenes to someone about my personal life, Eric, a few rows back, shouted for everyone to hear, “How many cocks do you have to suck to be gay?!”

If he was looking for a fight, he’d picked on the wrong guy, because I never fought. While some gay actors may have been offended and even filed a law suit for hate speech, I thought he was hysterical. “Twelve!” I shouted back. No one laughed though except me and Eric.

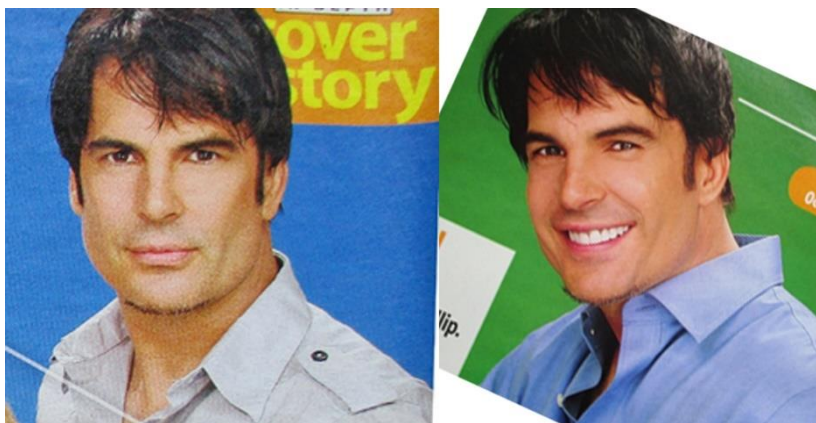
BILLY MILLER BLEW ME ON THE CBS SET

On the CBS set one day, there was a camera angle on four of us actors. I stood in front with Tricia Cast next to me, who played my ex-wife, Nina. Directly behind me stood the impossibly handsome and talented Billy Miller, who was winning constant Emmys playing my brother, Billy Abbott. Next to him was the amazing actress Elizabeth Hendrickson who played Chloe, I think. It could have been the equally talented Amelia who played Victoria.

To be funny, as we waited for lighting, Billy blew me. He simply leaned in a few inches to me and blew air into the back of my head. I froze, not knowing how to respond. So, I did not. I just ignored it. He figured his joke went unnoticed, and once again blew harder into my hair. I knew he and Elizabeth awaited my laughing, or reaction, but again I completely ignored it. I felt like a nerd in school, with the cool guy playing a joke, and not knowing how to respond; kind of like years back when Andrew Stevens had grabbed my leg under the table when I was a waiter. Billy may have thought that I did not feel it, so, for a third time, he blew into my hair, very hard. Of course, I felt it. He knew

it. Elizabeth knew it. Tricia knew it and members of the crew saw and knew it—but I didn't know what to do—so I ignored it.

I am guessing Billy thought I was trying to embarrass him, because when we were alone between scenes another time, I tried to be warm and joke with him, and he ignored me. I didn't blame him. I was actually not acting out of integrity when I ignored his blowing me because my truest self would have turned around and grabbed his crotch for a joke, or simply announced, "Billy Miller just blew me!" Unfortunately, I was scared, and didn't have the confidence to return his fun.

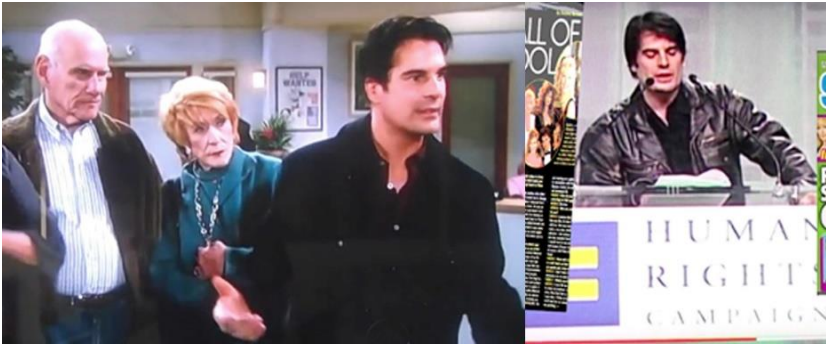


2009 pics.

Somehow, even with my average body, I still thought *Playgirl* would want me as a centerfold. A friend of mine contacted the magazine, explained I was a current soap opera star, arranged another test shoot, with my stipulation being I had to be on the cover of the mag, and the cover had to state I was gay. That was my ego-centric way to help gay visibility. In any event, the magazine was not interested. LOL Twice they turned me down! LOL Either I was not as sexy as I thought I was – or I was not as important as I thought I was.

I was two people, like a schizophrenic. I was a shy paranoid recluse half the time, and other times an irreverent, offbeat clown, and no one—not even me—knew who would show up. My heart was beating

like a drum in Minneapolis when I accepted the Human Rights Campaign award for Visibility for being the first openly gay soap actor in a principle role. To today's YouTubers, that 2009 speech may appear rather calm and collected, thanks to four margaritas. Afterward, I was sweating and panting at the table, my brain frantic, and the gallery owner sitting beside me, who was exhibiting my art, whispered to me in befuddlement, "Calm down. It's all right. It's over." He did not understand the degree of social anxiety many of us deal with. Here's the link of that speech, but unfortunately my victory was brief as the promised gay storyline dwindled: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gTuxWpJDEt0&t=304s>



Weeks later, when I was back on the CBS sets shooting only a couple of meaningless lines about the straight storylines surrounding my character, my anxiety returned. I felt useless. Having health insurance again, I tried a prescription for marijuana. One of my exes loved pot, and now I could understand the attraction, and why he lost focus following a simple Dorito commercial. When I inhaled pot, my brain stopped. That, indeed, was appealing.

At Crunch gym, a very hairy young bear caught my eye, and we dated a bit. Once we had sex in my bedroom on pot. Not a good thing. I remember telling a friend the next day I just wanted that queeny bear to leave. I am sure I was not that attractive that evening either.

Twice I brought a marijuana brownie to my CBS dressing room. It was a mood changer but did not really relax me. Everything seemed so

slow and heavy. I may have come across as stoned.

Pot did not help my anxiety, and neither did living in such a crowded city. My apartment was on Blackburn Avenue across from the popular Grove Shopping Center. Whenever I was anywhere near my apartment, my senses were alarmed by over-stimulus. Though I never had an official nervous breakdown, I wondered about the possibility, and considered leaving Hollywood when my *Y&R* episodes expired.

About this time, a scandal made national news regarding Michael Muhney, a main actor on *Y&R*, allegedly sexually assaulting a woman in a dressing room. He happened to be one of the actors I liked most because his off-screen humor cracked me up. When I posted on FB about this, asking fans for their feedback, many defended him vehemently though they'd never met him, as fans can do. Eileen Davidson who had played Ashley for years, and would later star in *Real Housewives Of Beverly Hills*, politely asked to unfriend me on FB at that time. She explained she knew things others did not and that it was upsetting for her to read fan's name-calling comments on this. She apologized to me, saying she really only used FB for her friends and family, whereas I made my living on FB, friended anyone hoping they'd buy my art and had 10,000 FB friends on two pages. I told her of course. I understood—no big deal. (My own family usually stayed away from my FB because I predominantly used it to entertain and sell art.)

Eileen was one of the rare individuals who had incomparable looks, incomparable talent and seemed so intelligent, she finessed a remarkable career in daytime, becoming the most famous woman in daytime perhaps. I don't recall us ever having a long or in depth conversation but I have so admired her for decades. She also went out of her way once to help me with a script by sending it to her agent (who was not interested).

Sure, I noticed her having an insecure moment or two in the many years I knew her, but so few! None of my friends or co-stars absorbed

the tension in social situations like I did. *Was I an empath, or was there something wrong with my physical makeup? Maybe my brain was not working normally. It is true many manic types have misfiring synapses, and if I could have ruled that out, it would bring relaxation.*

My dad reminded me that twice when I was a boy I had concussions. In Chicago, before I was two, I had fallen into a 10-foot window well and cracked my head on the stone bottom. Several years later in Kenosha, I was climbing onto a neighbor's shed roof and fell onto the cement also cracking my head open. Was it possible that during those traumas my brain had been permanently injured, causing me anxiety?

*** 31: MRI DOCTOR, ANDY COHEN & ANOTHER NY CRUSH**

ORANGE COUNTY

Fortunately a very sexy doctor from Orange County, California, that I was flirting with online had the ability to give me an MRI. Being back on TV, I was soon to have health insurance again, but my insurance would not cover an optional MRI. Without insurance, a brain scan procedure like that was \$6,000. The handsome doc traded me an MRI appointment for several paintings.

He was the nicest guy with a huge hairy chest, dreamy dark features and long black bangs. My MRI came back completely normal, and weeks later, I delivered his paintings.

The attention he gave me was exactly what I was looking for from a man, and he was honest as well. He had a difficult time getting erect though, and said it was because of nerves. Even though he was a phenomenal catch, I knew his job meant he must live in Orange County, but I did not want to live in Orange County, so we parted friends.

I do regret not getting to know him more. He was exactly my type. And had such a beautiful honesty to him.

Maybe I was too honest with a doctor the next month, or maybe he was too honest with me? Finally having health insurance again and concerned about the asthma I had around dogs, I was assigned a busy family practitioner at Cedar Sinai hospital. Apparently the short, dark Jewish doc took anyone because his waiting room was filled with every type of person and ailment. After waiting two hours, he gave me a routine physical and I said I'd also like my annual HIV test. He seemed surprised. I said I was gay...between my coughing as he held

my balls. He asked if I was promiscuous. I shrugged and nodded. Then he pulled my underwear up and said, flustered, “Is it too much to ask you to just find one guy and settle down?”

I chuckled at first but was later offended by his words and judgment. It cracked me up that a stranger to me was trying to guilt me into a monogamous relationship, although I understood he was certainly overtaxed by trying to heal innumerable sick patients.

LONG ISLAND

I flirted online with Bravo’s Andy Cohen, who was aware of my soap opera role. Loving medium-height hairy guys, he was my sexual type, and I asked if I could take him to dinner when I came to New York. He agreed and had joked back flirtatiously on FB on occasion.

I was scheduled to be flown to Long Island to be honored at another political gay event for my reappearance on CBS with my newly gay character.



Andrew Stern of GLBT Network, Long Island, hands me award.

I canceled on Andy Cohen because another Internet romance was further along—with Zach, 40. 5' 11", dark blonde hair, clean cut. Such a nice guy, who reminded me of Midwest boys. He didn't live in New York but worked for a Mercedes Company in New Jersey and had a quaint cabin on a tiny lake off the woody suburbs.

Since I was to be onstage and speak at the gay event, I was drinking my usual three tequilas to relax, and he was a very supportive, fun date. The event went well, and when we went back to the hotel, we had good sex. He was very impressive and romantic, and the next morning we braved the strong winds to tour some of the beach terrain.

We only had a day together, so when I got a paid gig in Florida, I asked him to fly and meet me in Jacksonville.

It was a busy and dramatic event in Jacksonville, and that night as we lie on the hotel bed, my trust issues came up, and maybe his did as well. Too much was going through my head, and I was falling in love with parts of his body and already divorcing other parts. The next

morning, we toured some gardens and I gave him the cold shoulder. It must have been so awkward for him that I was so hot and cold. Neither of us said much so I was unclear of his thoughts.

As soon as I arrived back in Hollywood I regretted distancing myself from him, and apologized, but he, too, was distancing himself from me. Part of me guessed that he was in AA and that the event in Jacksonville had pushed him to drink, and he was regretting it. This was just a hunch because he seemed to withdraw far from me when I did from him. He later moved to a tropical location and we remained FB friends, and recently did admit my AA suspicions that night were exactly accurate.

He was such an incredible catch. OMG. What an ass I was. Such a straight-forward, honest good-looking, smart, funny, responsible nice-guy. A fantasy partner.

* 32: **STRAIGHT STARS IN MY GAY MARRIAGE PAINTINGS**

MARRIAGE EQUALITY PAINTINGS

As I've shared, the week before I turned 18, I wrote a letter to God asking him to kill me before I was 18 if being gay was bad, because I felt I would grow up to be an important gay man. At 21, I told a bishop someday I would come out publicly and help gay rights. The time had come.

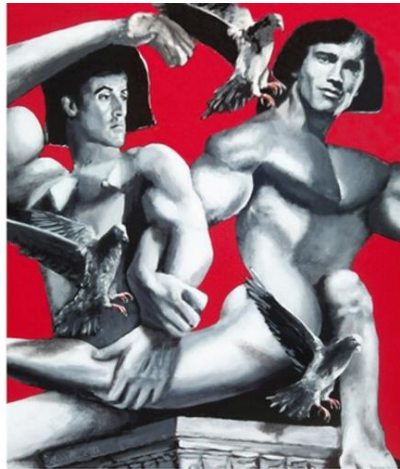
Excited that I had a platform as a gay actor, in 2009, I wanted to help gay people have equal marriage rights. I painted 14 Marriage Equality Paintings showing straight icons in various gay marriage scenarios. My intention was for homophobes to see these and say, "You know what? Maybe gay marriage is not that bad. I like these guys. I could allow them equal rights."

From a 2009 press release: "The presentation, 'HOLLYWOOD IN RED,' will reveal these fictional gay vignettes: Rob Lowe is awed by Brad Pitt's marriage proposal. Sean Penn and Johnny Depp push their baby in a carriage. Young couple James Dean and Elvis Presley move to Hollywood to pursue their dreams. Mario Lopez and The Rock can't keep their hands off each other. Chris Issak and Obama slow-dance with a physical spark. Fun gays with Chippendale posters and muscle dolls, Leonardo DiCaprio and Justin Timberlake ogle Ryan Reynolds, *People's* 'Sexiest Man Alive.' Bruce Willis is held in bed by lover Russell Crowe. Still in make-up from an award show, witty George Clooney vacuums with a meatball recipe taped to his pubic hair, playfully extending his hand for a tip from his lover Jake Pavelka of *The Bachelor*. Daniel Radcliffe and Taylor Lautner don't know what to say, feel or write in their first Valentine's Day card. Stallone and Schwarzenegger are revered as "the god-couple" at White Parties.

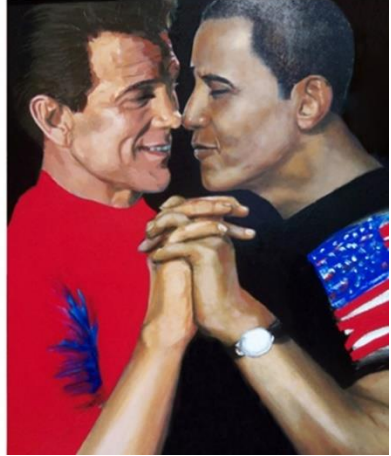
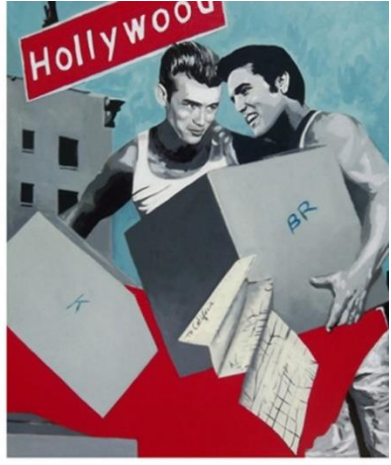
THOM BIERDZ

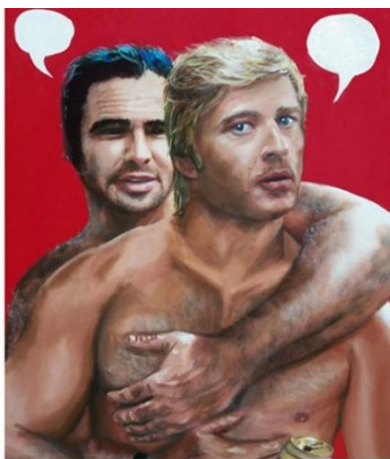
Surrounded by their beloved ranch animals, Johnny Cash and John Wayne celebrate their 40th anniversary. Post sex, Colin Farrell is confused about his feelings for clingy Matthew McConaughey. Burt Reynolds and Robert Redford are hairy macho bears throwing a barbecue. Bret Michaels and James Franco are a political couple who come out publicly in a parade for equal rights.

“Thom Bierdz is daytime television’s only OUT actor who has bravely climbed out on a limb, painting 28 straight icons as 14 gay married couples. Bierdz explains, “I didn’t want to OUT any movie stars, so I painted straight ones as if they were gay. I realized I could give people a visual of the inevitable future when gay movie stars can come out and get married. I wanted people to see it’s sweet, not scary.””



YOUNG, GAY & RESTLESS





Yep, I wanted straight people to see gay marriage as not scary...but secretly, the idea terrified a commitment-phobe like me.

It took me months to do these paintings, but I usually had the company of Deen and Bodhi, although Bodhi was getting older and suffering many complications due to medicines for his illnesses. He was partially blind, and always bumping into walls, but Doug and I did not want to have him put down.

YOUNG, GAY & RESTLESS

Paintings available at www.ThomBierdz.com

* 33: **LOOKING FOR CHEAP THRILLS AS I APPROACH**
50

SEX TOYS

Over the years, my favorite way to masturbate was by fucking a lubed Fleshlight pussy between pillows for thirty minutes as the TV played porn. I did this so often that I actually ground my butt bone into my lower back bone by incessantly pulling in and out like a circus acrobat.

Joe referred me to a chiropractor who happened to be an extremely handsome straight bodybuilder. He had a line of women and men waiting for his Herculean touch and gave us each a strongman hug in every session, which made me giggle like a Girl Scout because I felt so small against his Schwarzenegger frame. He accepted my newly reinstated health insurance, and as part of my reversing-the-problem exercises, adhered me in standing position and placed blocks behind my ass. Apparently, this straightened out my back, but it also threw my dick way upfront as it had been when I was a boy in a tent showing the Briksteins how I could swing my penis. The hulky doctor's bondage-like contraption always gave me an erection, stretching my jeans out very noticeably to him and whatever other patients were in the room.

Shopping at the adult bookstore, I bought a pussy toy that actually vibrated on batteries. This was an embarrassing find at the airport security check when I took it with me to Wisconsin on another visit to see Troy. Even more embarrassing was that as I stood in the casino hotel line to book a room, inching my carry-on bag up the line, the toy switch clicked on and buzzed. The dropping of the bag must have turned on the vibrating pussy. People started looking around to see where the noise was coming from, but too embarrassed, I pretended it was not coming from my bag. Fourteen minutes and eleven seconds

later, with a face flushed as red as slot machine 7's, I checked in and was assigned a room.

To teach the pussy a lesson I fucked it real hard.

Some would say anyone who moves to Hollywood to be an actor is a gambler, and I would agree that I certainly was a gambler in every sense of the word. Slot machines were my favorite games because each time I played I expected to win the jackpot. After I got a few hours sleep in that casino hotel, my naked body jumped from the bed and into the previous night's jeans. As I hurried down the hallway and into the elevator toward the slot machines, I was unaware that last night's underwear was hanging out from one of my jean legs. Who knows how many people saw me drag my underwear across the casino carpet as I went from one slot machine to the next for an hour, wiping sleep from my eye? When the cocktail waitress brought me my morning coffee, I looked down at her tray to put a tip on it and saw my underwear over my shoe.

Even though it was illegal to sell worn underwear on eBay as I had years ago, I did have FB fans who offered to buy pictures or videos of me nude. I did not have those, but a persistent lawyer, who'd also bought a painting, had a fetish for long pubes, so he regularly ordered by emails my underwear or a plastic bag of my pubes. The \$100 went to my groceries. He did pay through my art site and my bookkeeper did claim it, so this was, in fact, a legal art sale I was taxed on.

Truth is I also had a huge fetish for untrimmed pubic hair, probably one reason that nothing turned me on like the side-burned *Playgirl* models of the 1970s. I loved having long pubic hair, but the truth is my dick looked three inches bigger when it was trimmed off.

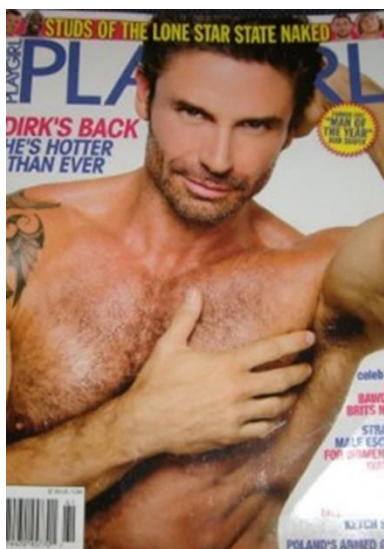
Occasionally at the gym I'd see my old séance friend, Jason Gould, working out. I knew Joe had a crush on him, so I gave Jason his number, and they began dating. I figured Jason was like me, a guarded sensitive "celebrity," and would be a nice match for Joe, a paternal

figure who looked like a younger James Brolin, always on a mission to help younger men.

Walking Deen and blind Bodhi, I ran into sexy *Playgirl* centerfold Dirk Shafer at the bank ATM. Even though he was out of my league, I still wanted him. He never was interested. Not long after, I watched the movie he wrote and directed about White Parties titled *Circuit*. I was horrified. The rampant drug use, partying, orgies and gossiping turned my stomach.

This sex book of mine may come across that I was a slut and promiscuous, but aside from my monogamous boyfriends, I have only had sex with a human being on an average of once every couple of months. However, being an opinionated goody-goody jerk, I harbored judgment for those who were not as discriminating as me. I emailed Dirk and told him that his film made me embarrassed to be gay.

He did not write back, and I felt bad incriminating him that way, but my intention was not to hurt his feelings, I was once again just blurting out my unedited true emotions; being the most honest man in the world. Now as I write this book, I am sure many will feel my



sexcapades make them embarrassed to be gay. Remembering this moment was especially sobering when I learned of Dirk's death within a few years. At 52 he'd had a heart attack in his car outside the gym and died an incredibly beautiful gay hero. He will always be young and beautiful and a perfect 10 idolized by me and millions. Even though we never dated, and he was never interested in me, when I die and take my memories, he will be one of *The*

Men Who I Loved.

2010 – THE DEATH OF BODHI

The Young and the Restless had cut any mention of the word gay in my storyline, and I only made semi-regular appearances in a supportive role for the related straight characters. Even in 2010, this soap opera had never aired a gay kiss or gay romantic storyline, although they had aired probably over 10,000 straight kisses and innumerable straight love stories in their decades on TV. Damn – I had been convinced I would return to this soap and be a major player and bring equality to that canvas – but I was hardly used, and I felt silly and worthless.

I did try several prescribed anxiety pills at that time, and my face bloated to where I was unrecognizable. So I had neck lipo and stopped all anxiety pills because none helped anyway.



Skeletal Bodhi was so sickly and skinny that a female stranger confronted Doug and I when walking him, lecturing, “Put him to sleep! He is suffering!”



Doug and I had not ever heard Bodhi cry or moan in pain, and we did not have the heart to force him to exit this life. We did all we could to keep him alive. Even Joe would periodically watch him as well, trying to tempt him to eat his pills with fresh lunchmeat. Eventually Bodhi's head stopped lifting and eating, and he could no longer even walk. I asked Joe to come to the vet with me and Doug to put Bodhi down, knowing Doug would be very emotional.

Not wanting Deen to wonder what happened and continue to look for his brother, Bodhi, I wanted Deen in the room when the vet euthanized Bodhi, so Deen could make peace with his best friend passing. Knowing Doug needed a strong shoulder, I was strong, and hid my emotion. But I also needed a strong shoulder, and Joe was strong for me.

CARLOS

YOUNG, GAY & RESTLESS

In 2010 I met a total stud at a Silver Lake leather bar. His name was Carlos. Five eleven, hairy, built, macho, Venezuelan. His English was decent but he was having a hard time finding work. As we dated, I created a resume for him and drove him to businesses to apply for employment.



His mom was visiting so I drove them to see Vegas, stopping at Buffalo Bills at the Nevada line to treat them to the roller coaster. She refused to get on. Carlos and I buckled in the ride instead, and as it started to drop at insane declines I realized I was in my late 40s and my body was stiff as a board. It occurred to me I could break. My arm could break off. My neck could break off. My back could snap in two. It had been decades since I'd been on a roller coaster and as I screamed my head off I decided that if I survived, I would never ride one again.

After I survived, and we got to Vegas, I paid for two rooms: One for his mom and Carlos and I shared the other. I had no guaranteed income

and lived month-to-month as an artist painting portraits of pets for FB friends, and even though I owed credit card companies, I always had 20 or 50 bucks to gamble in a slot machine. Carlos was in poverty consciousness though, and had no job, and he did not put a nickel into one slot machine. If you don't gamble, how can you win?

The next day we took his mom to see Pasadena, then headed to the airport to see her off.

A week later, at a party, another guy was really hitting on Carlos strongly. When I interrupted, Carlos said he may be interested in the other guy. I figured out not to fantasize any relationship with Carlos then, and I much preferred his honesty than leading me on. We never got to a stage where we were speaking monogamy, and there were a few times he did not come over to my place at the time he'd said he would. I think he had better offers at his gym, which was fine with me because we weren't really in a relationship.

However, I had been painting a visualization portrait—of me in my dream body in a luxurious, white contemporary penthouse with agents and managers and sexy partner Carlos. To me, this did not mean it had to be Carlos exactly, but I sure liked the hairy Venezuelan type. After a while when we stopped seeing each other, I painted over his face Picasso-esque and still have the portrait.

Seeing Carlos's beautiful face on FB, I would always write a kind word. That really surprised him. But I meant it when I said earlier in the book that when I loved someone, I always would. *A Course in Miracles* said it best: "Love doesn't die. It just changes form." To my surprise, in 2017, Carlos actually attained his law degree.

Because I was totally honest with all my boyfriends, and as far as I knew, almost all returned that, there was no reason for any of us to dislike each other. It was astonishing that these beautiful men, inside and out, shared so much with me. I was eternally grateful—and eternally in love with all of them.

YOUNG, GAY & RESTLESS

* 34: **SEX FOR ROLES?**

INGENUE NEIGHBOR

“Is this a gallery?!” said a cute young girl looking through my front windows.

“Hi. Kind of. Are you moving in next door?”

“I am. I’m Isabella. I came to Hollywood to be a movie star,” she said, putting down her heavy box, blowing a few strands of black hair away from her full cheeks.

By sheer coincidence, she was also Venezuelan like Carlos, but spoke perfect English. She and her handsome brother, both fresh-faces in their early 20s, couldn’t have been friendlier, and I was happy to help them move in their refrigerator.

Another coincidence: Isabella’s first visitor was her acting coach, John Denos, who I knew from 1987 because he’d starred on *Y&R* as Cricket’s photographer. After becoming reacquainted, all focus moved to the exuberant, but slightly chubby, Isabella—whose drive to become a soap star was intense.

Over the next month, she lost 15 pounds and became a tiny, chiseled doll-like beauty—a perfect size for Hollywood pictures. It was astonishing how social she was, and how she quickly became friends with many industry people, partying with young study agent assistants to first time directors.

One afternoon she was rather disheartened, so we sat in my gallery apartment space and talked as I painted a dog portrait commissioned by a fan.

“A producer wants me to sleep with him for a role,” she said,

conflicted.

“Oh. Wow. And what do you think about that?”

“I don’t know. Is that how people break into show business?”

“I never slept with anyone for an actor job,” I said, thinking, “I was never actually propositioned directly like that. I would not have. No way. My energy probably did not attract that. But now, heck, I’m almost 50 and never did movies like I’ve dreamed. I mean, if a producer actually said to me, Thom, let me suck your dick and you’ll star in a feature, I mean, I guess I would say yes today. If it were guaranteed. In fact, my condition would be: We make this sex deal public because I’d want everyone to know our deal—because it’s kind of funny. At my age. Not yours. How long have you known this producer?”

“Not long. Met him at a party. He keeps texting. I don’t know what to do?”

“Just because you have sex with him does not mean he would actually come through with his promise.”

“I guess not.”

“I mean, honestly? I suppose if it was guaranteed you’d get the role, maybe it’s worth considering. But I don’t think it can be guaranteed. And then you may get a reputation of prostituting yourself. I don’t know.”

“Do a lot of actors and actresses do it?”

“My brother, Gregg, used to be an agent assistant and named a few famous actresses who did, but I don’t know how many do. I think in today’s environment, movies cost so much money. Therefore, a lot of top execs have to agree on the actors in it. Not just one man.”

She never mentioned it to me again, so I do not know what happened.

I was surprised by my permissiveness of the idea of trading sex for an actor job—because it was the opposite of my beliefs my entire time in California.

True that 100,000,000 people worldwide knew me as Phillip Chancellor because in the 1980s the soap opera was huge in many countries across the globe. I was on the cover of French *TV Guide* four times! True that I'd recently made a soap opera comeback. But I was not Tom Cruise and that had been my goal. True that in recent years, I had inconsequential parts in well-intentioned projects like *Hungry for Love* and *The Cavanaughs*, but these lacked financial backing to be mainstream and would never find an audience. The sobering fact was that I paid my rent by painting dog portraits, not acting.

If I could do it over again, I would have done some things differently, but overall, I never answered to anyone. And I never laid a finger on anyone that I did not want to touch.

TO GET INVOLVED OR NOT

George, head hairstylist from *The Young and the Restless*, and his husband, met me at a gay movie premier in Long Beach. We had a good time, and I met a new friend there, an attractive publicist named John. He was 5' 10", hard muscular, a bit ethnic, maybe Italian or Salvadorian.

John seemed to have a good gig repping an old actress, but he had no car, so I often gave him rides. He invited me to many D-list events, but since I didn't really like crowds, I didn't see the point since they did not lead to any acting gigs or painting sales.

John was rarely on time when he asked me to pick him up. Talking to a mutual female friend, Gloria, I learned John had been missing for

several days. That was when perhaps I could have taken the stance, “I don’t want to get involved,” but I did get involved; maybe too much.

Gloria and I showed up at John’s East Hollywood apartment and kept yelling for him to answer. He did not. We were not sure he was even inside, but she hinted he may have been a crystal meth user and could possibly be in danger. In an enormous antiquated old apartment building, our beating his door did not even attract one resident asking what we were doing. Then I started kicking John’s door. No response. She and I yelled that we’d break the door down. No answer. Huge old hardwood door—not easy to break. But I stepped back and charged it. Damn, it hurt, and the door did not budge. Still no sounds from inside. While we hollered for 10 minutes, I kept backing away and then running to the door, throwing my weight into it. After kicking it like a maniac, and screaming we’d call the police, the door swung open and a scary-looking Aryan guy stood there. This was the last thing we expected, and my eyes must have popped. Both Gloria and I screamed.

The mystery intruder did not say anything, but looked furious, then gestured to John, who had just that second fallen unconscious on the bed. It appeared John had just been drugged to lose consciousness. He was naked, and later admitted that they had been on a crystal meth sex marathon.

As Gloria and I wondered what to do, she grabbed a phone and dialed 911. I asked the stranger who he was and what was wrong with John. He pretended not to know and slipped away out the door as we tried to explain to the operator that our friend needed an ambulance and was unconscious...maybe dead.

Within 15 minutes, the paramedics arrived, and took him to the hospital. I followed in my car.

When John awoke he was his usual happy party-guy self, and embarrassed, admitted that he was doing meth and said he needed

to stop. His brother came to see him within an hour, and I watched, finding it odd how comfortable John seemed to be in this scenario. Maybe this was familiar to him.

Maybe we'd saved his life, or maybe we'd just stuck him with a huge medical bill? I didn't know. Never had I hung around any friends who'd done drugs and I just did not see how this situation would be productive. It reminded me of an earlier event:

Over 20 years earlier, before I started *The Young and The Restless*, a neighbor and friend of mine had asked to use my pick-up truck so he could buy a new couch. I said sure, and not only drove him to a furniture store, but I went in with him, and talked to the clerk with him, asking questions about the store. After we loaded the couch in the back of my pick-up, and then carried it into his apartment, my friend told me, "You weren't supposed to talk so much to the clerk."

"Why?" I asked.

"Someone left this credit card at the restaurant last night."

"You just stole someone's credit card?!"

"Borrowed it," he laughed.

He stole a couch and used me as an accomplice, without my knowledge (plus, I was soon on a soap opera and could be easily recognized). That pissed me off so much that I avoided him after that.

Hollywood was not full of great memories or potential anymore. I had definitely stayed too long at the fair and trying to look cute with dyed hair and bright tiny shorts on a bike to Crunch yoga class was embarrassing to me, and also everyone who saw me.

I again considered leaving the source of frustration: Hollywood. But where would I go?

Interesting to note that having little success, actor Craig T. Nelson left

Hollywood, and spent seven years in nature. He actually came back and had great success, scoring *Coach*, but I wondered if he sacrificed the peace of being away and secluded.

Movie star Doris Day, one the highest grossing actresses of the 1950s and 60s, left Hollywood in the 1970s. For over 40 years she has lived in peace with many rescue dogs near Carmel, California. She is an avid animal rights advocate nursing strays back to health and rarely seen in public.

Part of me yearned to escape celluloid city, but that would mean surrendering my lifelong dream to be a movie-star; a goal that had always taken priority over friends, family and lovers.

I couldn't give that up; it was my reason for living.

* 35: **PSYCHO FAN ROOMMATE**

LIVING WITH CRAZY

Facebook was a great tool for me to be in touch with friends and fans for the most part. Several years before, a man named Biff Winfrey, my age, 5'11", long blond hair, had friend-requested me.

In 2010, Biff flew me to his book release party in Jacksonville, Florida, promising me several thousand dollars to appear. His book was not published, so there turned out to be no reason for an event, and he did not pay me any money as promised. He was, however, clever enough to link his book event with a huge dance club party and in this way his event looked like a success with a line around the block because a crowd flocked to this nightclub. In reality, his event was a dinner for 12 people in a side area of the enormous club. It was way too noisy of course to carry on a conversation.

This was the event where I had asked new-romance, Zach from New Jersey, to meet me. Zach and I were sitting at an ostentatious table in the noisy nightclub surrounded by velvet ropes and VIP SECTION signs. Overly dramatic Biff gave Zach attitude at first, but then completely changed to being overly-friendly. Biff loved this party and being the focus. It was nice to see Jacksonville because I had never been there, but Biff's personality changes became almost like a cartoon. Was this indicative of a severe mental disorder?

Back in Hollywood, my best friend of 20 years, ten years older than me, was probably going through a mid-life crisis. He did not verbalize that, but as talented as he was, he realized he had never become a famous actor, and he did not have a love relationship that he craved. Adding to his frustrations, many of his friends were famous actors and in solid marriages. Consequently, he was irritable and complaining a great deal, and when I brought this to his attention in hopes he'd

change his energy to attract better things, he refused to be accountable for his moods and instead pointed his finger at me calling me negative. Whether I was or not, I did not want to listen to his complaining all the time, so I took a break from hanging out with him. This was a seismic change to my life though because even though we had some dysfunction, like many long-term relationships, we also had very comfortable, patterned, reliable and predictable times, and almost nightly restaurant dinners. He was sorely missed, but each time I felt like grabbing the phone to renew our friendship, I decided I did not want to complain about his complaining and resisted.

With my short shorts and black dyed hair, I was also entering a mid-life depression. Like most people in their late 40s I realized my life had not turned out the way I had expected. Sure, I had sold hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of art over a decade, enough to cover monthly bills, and was recurring on the number one soap opera as an actor, but those careers had no guarantees. I was still in credit card debt and had more grandiose career expectations and had not met them. Also, I had failed to co-create a great relationship with a romantic partner who I could trust, although I certainly had been offered many options.

Without my best friend I was also lonely.

Although the Jacksonville event was disappointing both in my Zach romance growing cold and Biff not paying me, Biff did play into my ego by fawning over my character on *The Young and the Restless* and proposed many storyline ideas. Apparently, his dream was to write for the soap opera and move to Hollywood.

Without my encouragement, he moved to Los Angeles the following month, but he had nowhere to stay and no money for an apartment deposit. He was so devoted to my career interests and felt I should indeed be a movie star, and since he was still homeless, I offered him my second bedroom in exchange that he become my assistant. He was such a fan that I figured his genuine passion for my acting could finally

sell me to movie casting directors.

The first month was great and exciting. He became my new best friend. His experience with cosmetic surgeries and face creams helped us look younger and fit. His curious knowledge of pharmaceuticals promised to end my decades of insomnia.

Biff made me a protein shake every morning and put strange vitamins by my coffee cup while I was checking my morning emails. He swept the large gallery-looking apartment daily, played with Deen when he was over, and apparently loved doing laundry because my machine was always going. He folded the laundry and even my socks that I had never folded. His fussing and pampering made me feel like a star of old Hollywood.

Knowing that my ideal sexually fantasy was short, hairy, Middle-Eastern men, he even arranged a sex date for me via an online hook-up site. Thar, a beautiful Arab man, maybe 30, met me in the lobby of the Sheraton Hotel by Universal City. Wow! Was he stunning in real life! Like a Disney Arab! Both of us being shy, I gave him a tour of the Universal City restaurants, bought him lunch, and we small talked about nothing exciting nor memorable. Once back in his hotel room, I stripped him, laid him on the bed on his back and slapped his tight Arab ass with my Hollywood cock and balls. He remarked what a great surprise my sexual dominance was, and I continued to call him my property and position him in various ways for half an hour until he exploded in orgasm.

The next day Biff spent much time on a sex site and asked me to drop him off at a house. He came home four hours later, thrilled that he had just let two strangers fuck him without a condom. By the way he was walking, with such an extreme limp to the side, I would not be surprised if they'd fucked him with a chair. He told me his fantasy was to be beat up and raped. I could not identify. Even though I'd let Mr. International Leather cuff me and feed me his load in a Reno basement, I never fantasized about being in any pain or actually

raped.

Biff glowed. He was finally living his dream—Hollywood! He cooked me the vegetarian dinners I requested, and we shared many stories of growing up gay in a straight world. Oddly, he had no contact with his family. He also didn't have any friends. I tried to read his soap opera-themed novel that he quickly self-published but found it impossible to follow. I figured him delusional to think he could be hired as a writer on *The Young and the Restless*. But, I nevertheless supported his dream, vowing to help him if I could, appreciative of his helping me.

The soap opera industry had shrunk from a dozen soap operas to only four, and consequently those four had access to a myriad of experienced writers. Telling this gently to Biff, he replied angrily that he was the “soap’s number one fan.” By now, I was used to fans telling me they wanted to write for my soap, but it was alarming how Biff actually thought in a year he would be head writer. Certainly, many people over the decades figured my lofty dreams to be unattainable, so who was I to rain on anyone else's parade? I began to joke of his devotion to me by calling him Eve Harrington, based on the movie *All About Eve*, where devoted Eve is at first Margo Channing’s biggest fan, then steals her life.

I introduced Biff to my friends, mainly Joe and Doug. Whereas I was friends with all my ex-boyfriends because there were never any lies or reason to not like each other, Biff, on the other hand, seemed to hate all his exes. I noticed he really despised so much about so many things. I had tried to get rid of negativity by removing myself from my longtime friend because he was always complaining.... but whoa! Biff was also of that negative energy. Being a student of the Law of Attraction, I had to wonder what energy I was putting out to attract him.

Biff would watch the soap opera with me and repeat campy lines pretending to be the actresses he was obsessed with. He loved throwing his long hair and repeating their dialogue throughout the

day, as if he believed he was them and they were real. He also loved repeating how a transsexual friend of his named Miki something said to him upon meeting, "I recognized you immediately for the scheming Eve that you are." After he'd say that, he'd end in one of those crazy-people laughs where their mouth is still open in a big smile and they stare right at you expecting you to laugh at it AGAIN. Bizarre behavior. He told me he and Miki (from New York I think) were best friends but he also told me she was the meanest, nastiest bitch you'd ever meet. I thought that was odd that he would describe his best friend that way. I never had friends like that, and if I did, I'd stop being friends with them. I loved to spend my time with kind, compassionate, funny people. I also liked unusual, eccentric, free-thinkers... but no one mean.

But hey, who was I to judge Biff? We both had faults. With Biff's help a doctor had prescribed Ambien and I was finally sleeping after decades of insomnia! I was so grateful to Biff and also grateful that Biff had accompanied me to the CBS set in January when I'd filmed scenes. Plus, since I was so shy, I always loved it when eyes were off me, and like Bruce or Jamie, Biff loved all eyes on him.

Months later I was told that no one at CBS trusted Biff, but at the time it felt great to introduce a fan to his greatest soap idols and let him gossip in the makeup and hair room.

We gave Biff's book to my co-stars and I introduced him with great praise to the Y&R office because Biff said he would be willing to start at an assistant level. Like Eve Harrington, he planned to be an assistant and then climb the ropes and be boss in a year. He was exploding with excited adrenaline then, but months later when I did get him a meeting for employment at CBS, he came home disgusted, screaming that the lowly job available was way beneath him, and that he deserved so much more. He explained he had been a top model agent in NY, but by then I didn't know whether to believe him or not. He told me what a bitch he was to CBS and seemed to feel good about being condescending to people. Biff either felt people were beneath him or

he was beneath others. He would switch back and forth.

People at CBS commented that Biff wanted to be me. When I grew facial hair, he did. When I cut my hair (well, actually Biff cut my hair—he was shaving me, too and telling me which dye to use on my stubble), Biff cut his hair the same way himself. It seemed there was nothing he couldn't do. But regardless of his talents, he was homeless except for my spare bedroom.



2011. Biff doting on me.

A photographer, Skylar Aud, took great photos of me at an art museum, and Biff, like Eve Harrington, was there as my assistant, holding a bag of my shirts. Biff quietly asked to have his photo taken by the professional as well. However, I had offered to take pics of the photographer first. Biff watched me as I took dozens of photos, directing the photographer to move, because I knew one has to take many pics to capture a relaxed face at a flattering angle. Biff steamed and threw my clothing bag at the museum wall, screamed and marched off. Skylar and I looked at each other like, "What was that?"

Biff eventually apologized and asked again for photos, so Skylar obliged and snapped Biff's pic in many settings, each time with a costume change as Biff squeezed into different shirts of mine.



Photos by Sklar Aud day of museum shoot.

Back at my apartment, Biff jumped on the computer to look at his photos. By the time I grabbed a juice and sat next to him, he was sobbing.

"I am so hideous!!" he wept. "Oh, I hate myself! I had so many surgeries but look what they did to the back of my neck! It's like snake skin!"

He was correct. His rear neck skin was patterned and resembled tile squares. He cried saying he was disgusting and wanted to die. Suddenly he clutched onto me and I didn't know what to do. No one in my life had ever clutched onto me like a scene from of an old Bette Davis film. I froze.

As he sobbed, pulling me nearer, I peeked at the computer screen. And I also started to shake like he was, but I was shaking because I was trying to hold in my laughter. In the photos, his big frame squeezed buttons off my short-sleeved checkered shirt, and it was not flattering.

His face tilted like a smiley Christie Brinkley, his eyes opened exaggeratingly.

He heard my muffled laughter, glared at me then followed my eyes to the screen. Suddenly, he burst into chuckles. We laughed hysterically as the computer showed new images of his bizarre posing; he held his head to the side and flipped his hair with attitude.

"Oh my God, I am so ridiculous!" he screamed, "What was I thinking?!"

I told him that many times I also had taken shots where I thought I looked good and didn't.

"I can't look anymore!" he laughed, then wept, then sat motionless on the couch watching a TV gossip news program, forgetting all about his photos as he instead became totally hypnotized by the daily Kim Kardashian gossip.

Sitting at the computer, I kept looking at more of his pics, and found one where he looked so psychotic that I again could not stop laughing.

He jerked his head to me and his eyes looked devastated, so I went silent. He turned back to his TV gossip news program and said he hated the Kardashians. That may have been true, but he watched their show and relished the rumors. I never watched the Kardashians or Hollywood news. *How did I attract this?* I wondered. A crazy man sat on my couch wearing my shirt, watching crazy TV gossip, telling me he hates himself, hates the Kardashians but he really wants to be a Kardashian.

After his temper tantrum at the museum, I second-guessed allowing him in my home. Though he had promised to make calls getting me auditions for movies, or an agent, he really was not helping my career at all. He thought his email had gotten me a feature story on my Marriage Equality Paintings, but I already had an established relationship with that particular gay magazine.

Biff had started snapping at me by now. If we disagreed on something, instead of talking reasonably he became psychotic. I learned not to argue with him and tried to keep Deen out of his room afraid he'd hurt Deen. When I asked him if he'd done laundry, he snapped at me about him not being my slave. I told him I did not allow a guest to speak to me in that tone and asked him to leave. When he calmed down, he said he had no money and no job and no one was buying his book. I pitied him and let him stay.

"I want you out in two months. June first."

"Okay. By then I'll be able to afford it."

He was planning a big party for the magazine launch on my paintings, but when he became mean to me I told him, "Look, I don't care about the party. You do what you have to do to promote yourself. I will show up but that's it. I am not inviting anyone."

His grandiose party planning was odd, and he spent so much attention on meaningless gift bags. He told me it is all about show. The magazine was shocked when Biff sent out the press release and didn't include the website of the magazine. Only a few people came to the party at a West Hollywood bar, despite Biff saying he had great contacts. It looked like a successful event, though, because Biff tied it into a crowded weekend dance event.

A few days later when I was on the computer, he passed me and screamed into a phone, "You better send me those packages, or I will kill you, you bitch!"

I had never threatened anyone so could not accept or excuse his behavior. It terrified me remembering his words that meds made him a person who was able to function but when he was without meds he was psychotic.

One night when I left my bedroom and walked into the kitchen I found him going through my paperwork files in the cupboards. He looked

panicked, like a kid caught with his hand in the cookie jar. His fingers dropped my papers and were trembling. His entire body shook, and he said that he had just heard from my dead brother, Gregg, and then picked up my art portfolio document that showed a painting with the words "the end" written on it. Biff said he knew it was the end and cried. By then I was used to his insanity, so I just tried to back out of the kitchen, not holding and comforting him as it seemed he wanted.

I disliked Biff in February and walked on eggshells in my own home throughout March, April and May. Even though I tried to keep Deen out of Biff's room, occasionally he did go in to play with Biff, and Deen seemed to be sicklier afterwards. It could have been his heart, lung and thyroid issues naturally declining, but I wondered what Biff was capable of.

Biff finally moved out June first. I tried to play nice and release him out of my life, however, when he emailed me demanding I let him know when his medication arrived in the mail, I responded, "You have tried to embarrass me with tweets. I do not like hanging around you. Change your address."

He emailed me back threatening my life if I did not give him his medication which apparently was en route to my address. I believed Biff's threat. I say what I mean. I never told anyone I would kill them. Biff told me he'd kill me. I took his email threat to the Los Angeles courthouse to file a restraining order. In my note to ask the judge for help I summed up our entire relationship and said I was afraid for my safety, that Biff had threatened me and that he'd had numerous breakdowns in my apartment.

My restraining order was denied. The policeman explained that almost all are denied because email threats do not really matter, "People have to come in with bruises."

When I got home I checked my AOL to read another harassing email from Biff saying that because I showed his threatening emails to my

photographer friend who took our pictures I was a “sissy girl.” I just emailed back saying, “I filed a restraining order. Please do not contact me again or I'll call the police.”

A few minutes later Biff's favorite TV gossip news program called. The host, a celebrity for hounding celebrities, introduced himself. I was shocked. He said he knew about my court visit and asked if he could hand the phone over to "Mike" who would see if they got the story correct. I waited for Mike to talk but Mike only asked me questions. I said, "I thought you were going to tell ME what the story was?" No answer so I hung up.

I think Biff tipped them off, but it may have been a leak at the courthouse. I didn't know for certain. When Biff threatened me, I did not go to the press. I went to the police. That TV gossip news program called me. Biff alleged that I was set on slandering him. It was quite the opposite. In fact, all of Biff's accusations were the opposite. He continued to send me vicious threats and slandering emails with lies about me addicted to pills (because my cupboard still had the anxiety meds I tried a year before, which did not work, but as a rule I never threw away medicines) to everyone he knew that I knew. Luckily everyone who had met him did not like him enough to believe him, however he may have damaged my reputation to my soap opera and Hollywood contacts.

He was the most wounded man I had ever met. I was wounded too, in my mid-life crisis. I had to take accountability for asking him into my life. If I could do it all over again, I would have kicked him out onto the street in our first argument. Who puts up with a mean houseguest? Well, I did.

I am sorry Biff ruined his credibility and maybe mine, but it was clear why he was estranged from his family and had only one friend that I knew of whom he described as mean and nasty. Feeling powerless and hideous, Biff seemed to delight in hurting people because it made him feel powerful. I remember him breaking down, weeping in my kitchen,

telling me how disgusting he was.

Verifying his words, I received a surprising email (changed the names below to protect identities):

Hi Thom,

My name is John Ricson.

I am Biff Winfrey's brother. His real name is Joseph Louis Ricson III from [deleted], NY born 4/28/1962. He is a convicted criminal and was arrested for Fraud Felony E in New York and was in prison in Virginia where he also violated his parole. He stole more than \$20,000 from my mother Marilyn Ricson, who just died 2 weeks ago. He forged her credit cards and put her in so much debt she had to rent a room in some stranger's house in the 80's. My other brother is a retired NYC Detective and has informed me his police record can be found in public records online. We never prosecuted for the thefts he perpetrated to our family though-- hoping he would change.

He leaves victims wherever he goes. He invades their lives, always looking for an angle to take advantage of them. He was not a model in New York nor was he a successful publicist there. I read his bio from NY and almost every word is a lie. He once threw a cast iron trophy, full speed into my head right in front of my mom and I was bleeding profusely. My memory of him is dangerous and demented.

None of our family has spoken to him in 25 years but now I had to find him because he was in my mom's Will. She left him 1 dollar. He will not give me or the Court his address because he just wants to inflict more distress by having us spend all sorts of money tracking him down.

If you have his address and phone numbers could you please email them to me. I promise with every grain of integrity I have I will not divulge where I got it from. My family would be glad to provide you

with any details that will assist you if he bothers you again. I am so sorry he inflicted pain in your life. If he shows up, contact me and we'll call the authorities."

Sincerely,

John Ricson

Wow. That email suggested this was absolutely the makings of a horror film: lonely, neurotic soap star invites psychotic fan to be live-in assistant.

What could possibly go wrong?

Yes, I have indeed stayed too long at the fair.

Another of Biff's past victims also contacted me; a Jacksonville doctor who gave Biff free cosmetic surgery because Biff had blackmailed him with something he'd found in his files. (Is he the one that made his back neck look like tile?)

This made me realize that when I caught Biff going through my cabinets and papers, he was probably searching for something he could use to blackmail me about in the future. Lucky for me, I was an open book, and I had no skeleton in the closet for him to use against me.

The TV gossip news show also twisted to say I was an old has-been who was in love with my beautiful, much-younger assistant, Biff. I suppose he could have been handsome, but he was certainly not my type, and not younger, and I never wanted him sexually.

When *The Young and the Restless* stopped writing episodes for my newly gay character, I could think of no other reason to keep myself in Hollywood.

* 36: **A NEW LIFE**

2011 - LAKE ARROWHEAD

It was time for me to leave Hollywood. I felt it; that I was not confident enough to win auditions and be cast as the movie star that I had always before dreamed possible. Not only was *The Young and the Restless* avoiding a gay storyline leaving me with very slim chances of work, but my erratic behavior was possibly also scaring them away from using me.

The annual *Y&R* fan event at the Universal City Sheraton hotel was approaching. Recalling that my nervous energy completely vacated when I was furious, I planned to be furious at the party, so I would not come across anxious. To have half of my mind programmed on smiley and friendly and the other half secretly furious, I carried around in my back-pocket key phrases from Biff's lies and accusations. My intent was to sneak peeks of these throughout the event when I felt anxious, to anger me. Because when I was furious, I was not nervous.

However, I had not planned on dropping this note with the most horrible lies about me on the floor of the event. An hour after I arrived, the impossibly gorgeous Traci Bregman, who played Lauren, quietly approached me and asked if the paper was mine.

Oh, my God, I thought. What did she think? Who did she tell? How many people had seen it? These unconnected slanderous accusations about me were meant only for me to get furious, not for others to actually question my sanity. What a ridiculous fool I had been. The damage was done. I would seem crazy to anyone who read that page even in explaining that it was a method exercise which I needed to relax me, so I could seem normal around people.

I had not only stayed too long at the fair, I was a clown who'd stayed

too long in a tangled trapeze. For the first time in my life, I saw my frailties, my obstructions, my limits, and my unhealthy energy. When my landlord wanted to raise my rent to \$2,000 a month, it just reiterated that the time had come for me to start a new life at the first of the month. Somewhere affordable away from Hollywood.

The next morning, after breakfast on Santa Monica Boulevard with Joe and my adorable Deen, I searched online and was intrigued by a home rental in Lake Arrowhead. Every year or two in my past, usually with a boyfriend, we'd vacationed in Lake Arrowhead, Big Bear or Yosemite. That was my evergreen paradise and the terrain where I had always planned to locate after I became Tom Cruise. *Was it possible I could live there now, skipping the movie star part?*

Seemed so. A two-story two-bedroom cabin with a chateau knotty-pine ceiling was only \$950 a month, about half what I was paying for my Blackburn Avenue apartment. Joe loaned me a few thousand dollars for my down-payment that I made back a few weeks later with a moving sale on my paintings.

By September 1, 2011, a U-Haul moving truck packed with my belongings in a dirt driveway was being unloaded by three Mexican men I'd hired at the mobile park in nearby Blue Jay. They carried my paintings and furniture, including a heavy antique buffet and armoire, up the 43 cement stairs to my new home. Two of the three movers did so well I doubled the fifty dollars we'd agreed on to a hundred. The third I just gave fifty.

Two bedrooms were downstairs, but I preferred to sleep upstairs in the living-room area because of the million-dollar views. Trees outside all the tall windows: it was eerily like the tree houses I painted the past few years had come to life! Since I had no visitors, I arranged my bed in the living room. The open upper floorplan had a brick fireplace, bathroom, kitchen, four walls of paneling and 17 windows, some as high as 20 feet, to admire oaks and pines in four rich seasons. From the kitchen and deck the lake could be seen, less than a mile away.

The landlord had a hard time renting this magical place because of the 43 uneven steep stairs outside that could get icy; not good for kids and families. So he had advertised it as an Artist's Retreat. It certainly was. Having just given up my acting career I filled that place with my joy of painting full-time.

Before I moved I asked Doug how we could share Deen, offering to take him full time. Doug generously let Deen come move with me permanently and agreed to take him on occasion. This meant Deen would have 24-hour-supervision by me since he was not feeling great, having taken many pills for many years.



Me overlooking the top deck. Deen on the lower deck.

One day when I was walking Deen we passed a beautiful woman who resembled Pamela Anderson literally pulling a tree up the mountain to the road. Vanessa, 40, was strong as an ox, and I hired her to do everything from chainsaw my wood to hem my shirts for a few years. Once she sawed down a dead tree on my lot into night, and since there were no lights on my street, she forgot my car was there... and leaving, she plowed her truck into it, causing extensive damage to mine – which her insurance eventually paid. I liked her and her husband but when she questioned if all homosexuals were pedophiles, I told her no, of course not. More heterosexuals were. This full-figured mountain woman believed me but when she later asked me to pick up her son from school because she could not, I was paranoid accepting her request. The entire drive home I asked the boy to be on

his phone with her. My worst fear was she and her husband could make up a false charge to get me back for their insurance loss. The more I thought about it, it was entirely irrational to be paranoid, but gay men of my generation knew how false accusations can ruin a career and reputation. I had much more to lose by doing a suspicious woman a small favor regarding her child than to gain.

That being said, I do recognize that at our greatest potential, we human beings control our environments and circumstances/events. But how often are we at our greatest potential? I know my strengths and weaknesses, and that I am not at my greatest potential when I accept an invite into a situation where I might feel unwarranted guilt. So it has become a habit to avoid those.

I had mentioned before in this book that sex WITH ADULTS grounded me, and I was actually as much a spiritual seeker as I was a hedonist. Since I had no sex in Lake Arrowhead, besides masturbating to porn, I was anxious to test my psychic abilities, and offered free psychic readings to FB fans to see if I was really capable of seeing paranormal events in their lives.

Half said I was accurate and other half did not relate to the images I saw in my head.

I, too, was not convinced that I was seeing something that related to them, because the images in my head could have been symbolic and related to me. Because my brain was often filled with pornography, wouldn't it have been funny if I was not aware of porn images pertaining to me and assigned them to my clients? Like if I saw a porn earlier that day about a blowjob on a motor boat and when I psychically read the client, I said, "I see a motor boat in your future."

What if I said, "I see a blowjob on a motorboat for you. Or, I see watersports for you. Or, I see your neighbor's mom tossing your salad."

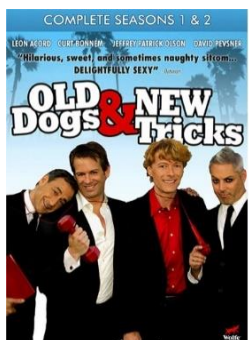
It amused me to think, since I was infatuated with massive pubic and

body hair, I could sell myself as a psychic that only read men's body hair.

"Yes, that's right. I need your husband to stand next to me and lower his underwear just this far." Cups hand around stranger's bush. "I am getting an image of your grandfather. He had a sizable bush as well, am I right? Do you have a photo of your grandfather's bush?"

Is there a market for that? Maybe a web series?

Writer / creator of the web series *Old Dogs New Tricks*, about older gay guys on the make, asked me to guest star on several seasons. I said sure because any visibility helped my painting sales, but the web series only paid \$12 an hour, so it was hardly worth driving several hours to film scenes. Still, the shoots went well. Funny lines, great actors - definitely worth seeing.



I played a lover of Dr. Jeffrey Patrick Olson in *Old Dogs, New Tricks*.

I pursued no other acting work. Oddly, my life was not dark, empty or upsetting having surrendered my dream. It was actually better. I felt like I'd died and gone to Heaven, finally getting to experience all day every day a rustic lodge home in a private forest with the soul who mattered most to me, my precious Deen. To leave Hollywood where I was almost constantly in overstimulated noisy crowded environments and to completely divorce from people and chaos entirely was a very welcome transition. In my weekly phone calls with Joe I joked that maybe I had actually died, maybe Biff had actually killed me, and I was

in my afterlife / Heaven?

Initially I got cable TV hooked up, but TV did not make me feel good. True that I still was jealous of actors in roles I did not get, knowing I could have done the parts. But more so, in hundreds of channels, there were only two shows that kept my interest. One was *The Bachelorette* because it had sexy straight hunks, and the other was *Iyanla, Fix My Life*, because here was a fresh inspired, intuitive therapist healing stranger's lives, without using standard practices or overprescribed medicines. And speaking of medicines, almost all TV commercials aggravated me, too, because I believed as a spiritual seeker that we have all the healing abilities inside ourselves and do not need pills. But since half of Americans were now chronically ill, almost every commercial was for pills. Yes, Ambien worked for me, but again without insurance I was no longer taking it – and was pill free. Surely, there was a natural way for me to sleep, maybe one I had not discovered yet. It seemed that every other commercial was for meat. I had been a vegetarian for a decade and empathic of the needless torture and murder that chickens, cows and pigs endured. The synchronicity of leaving Hollywood and TV within two years made sense.

After giving up TV, I opted to paint portraits as I listened to documentaries on YouTube. Between Deen's walks at idyllic Lake Arrowhead Village or through the forest, I searched online for current lectures on spirituality, consciousness, natural remedies and natural foods. Having no shortage of nutrition speakers, I learned that dairy cows had to be raped by a cold metal rod and impregnated with bull sperm, then carry their child through pregnancy, and when the calf was born, it was ripped away, so humans could have the milk nature intended for the calf. The calf was then usually locked in a small cage unable to use its muscles for months so it could be slaughtered and eaten as veal. As much as I craved my cheese, I did not want to harm animals in any way, so I finally gave up dairy and became vegan.



Several years later, I even wrote a cookbook, explaining that a vegan diet with tons of fresh fruit and vegetables can reverse many diseases (check out Gary Null on YouTube). My dog allergies and asthma had completely disappeared since I gave up dairy – or – was it because I gave up people?

My transition was slow: Over decades, I went from no red meat to no chicken to no fish to no dairy to no fried to very little gluten to very little oil to very little processed foods. Most nutritionists agree that the less processed foods we eat, the better. The more natural and raw, the better. Some of my body fat drained away.

After a couple years in the woods I got horny and tried to find gay guys in my area. Since I was home all day with a keyboard and big screen computer, I had no need for a smartphone or iPhone, so I did not have Grindr on a smartphone which many gay men used to find gays in their area. I did try to search using Manhunt, though, and had two sex trysts from locals but they were pretty empty. No chemistry really.

No big loss though, because almost every minute of my mountain days was filled with joy – as were my nights. Though I never left the house after dark, in the warmer months when the sun disappeared I'd drag a mattress on the upper deck for me and Deen. We each had a

blanket, my head on a pillow, looking at the faint stars appearing in the sky, my hands petting a dog who was relishing his nightly “big treat.” What could make this better? Not a man – but my choice of listening on YouTube: a new account of someone’s Near Death Experience, where they recounted their most enlightening moments, receiving messages from higher entities.

I bet none of my soap opera cast mates, and maybe no one in Hollywood period, had the amount of peace I had attained in this forest life.

A handsome, built ex-banker now motivational speaker, who was a FB friend, visited Lake Arrowhead a few days. We had dinner at the Thai restaurant overlooking the lake, then on a pier afterwards as he was taking the night sky in, I hugged him from behind, which led to sex in his hotel. It was a great release, but he was gone the next day and so it really could not become more than that.

* 37: **HOW I FINALLY BECAME A MOVIE-STAR**

In 2011, *CBS NEWS* anchor, Pat Harvey, and her crew came out to interview me for a special segment on my book, *Forgiving Troy*. About once a year, I'd also have a gallery show or book signing; from Long Beach's Belsito-Roché Fine Art Gallery to Palm Springs' Savage Gallery to Miami's Art Fusion Gallery.

Aside from that, I regularly sold my art via Facebook, and presided over the American Art Awards, strictly an online venture. Each spring, the American Art Awards selected the 25 Best Galleries and Museums in America, and in autumn, these 25 impressive galleries scored online art in 50+ categories from artists around the world. Since I'd co-founded www.AmericanArtAwards.com in 2009 and had since received complete ownership of it, I stood to make good money if I ever sold it. Friends suggested I partner with celebrities on it, or find a known personality to partner with, to bring it great free press. Realizing I knew Donald Trump's agent, in 2014, I queried to see if Trump wanted to buy the American Art Awards, since he already owned Miss Universe, and may have wanted to become king of the art world. He and his agent took this idea very seriously but a few weeks later I heard back with a polite, "Trump says thank you but he has too much on his plate right now." At that time who would have guessed he'd run for president of America in 2016—and win?

www.AmericanArtAwards.com not only helped me; it awarded 25 galleries each year and issued them good press. Annually, over 300 artists from 50+ countries won prizes bringing much desired validation to their art careers. In the past decades I had spent much time writing 10 books and a dozen screenplays, few of which ever sold or benefitted anyone. Finally I was working very hard on a creative project, in my private space, which was helping thousands of people all over the world. Feeling great about it, I got the words American Art Awards tattooed across my chest.



I copied a winged tattoo design I saw on a porn star but changed his words. Only after I had the ink on my chest did I find out that conspiracy theorists considered the eye in a pyramid the covert symbol for Illuminati elite families, who supposedly ruled the world with a sinister agenda. I know many people will now think I am Illuminati because I am famous with that eye-in-a-pyramid tattoo, but come on, most of my adult life I did not even have rent money until a few days before I needed it. I swear I am not Illuminati. Illuminati can afford the dentist.

I do not want to bash conspiracy theorists. Not having TV, I do enjoy listening to all kinds of videos on YouTube, and over the decades many conspiracies have been proven to be correct, and many more are on their way to being proven correct. I totally support investigative journalism especially in the present climate where journalists who work for big corporations (TV, newspapers) would be fired if they actually left script and did investigative journalism. They simply are not allowed to say anything that conflicts with their boss's narrative.

ACTOR VERSUS ARTIST: THE SPLITTING PERSONALITY OF THOM BIERDZ

Almost every night I would go to bed listening to several of the hundreds of YouTube videos on people recounting their Near-Death Experiences. Always a believer in life after death, I began to wonder what my afterlife would be like. *Would I carry to the next life a bitterness of a dream unfulfilled; my failure to become a movie-star—my goal since I was six years-old?*

Yes, I imagined I would. Unless I fulfilled that dream.

Could I become a movie-star in Lake Arrowhead? In my own kitchen? Why not?

With my limited technical ability, even I could learn a simple computer editing software. Then with a \$100 camera, I could shoot a whole movie. *If I starred in a movie, even at my own making, could I be a movie-star? More so, could I prove to myself that I was in fact a movie star, whether that was acknowledged by others or not?*

For many months in 2012-2016, I filmed myself playing five characters in a homemade movie I titled *Actor Versus Artist: The Splitting Personality of Thom Bierdz*. I played an artist who got a knock on the door from his former actor self, trying to pull him back to Hollywood. I played a sitcom queen who added humor, a sexy side-burned straight guy and an older bespectacled psychiatrist. Finally, I was able to put on film good acting without being self-conscious. It was a blast.



I wrote, acted, edited. Ultimately, the little docufilm is my greatest art contribution.

THOM BIERDZ

Now when I die, I will not be bitter. I starred in a movie, therefore I am, in fact, a movie-star. Mission accomplished.

Deen is also a movie-star.

* 38: **IN LOVE WITH AN AIR FORCE SERGEANT**

MY G. I. JOE FANTASY

In 2012, I searched Big Muscle Bears web site for hairy guys in my area and did catch the attention of an ex-Air Force Sergeant who lived in the Palm Springs area, about two hours away. Ron was ruggedly handsome with a perfect small square head and even had the exact same scar as my old G. I. Joe on the left side of his face. But while the G. I. Joe's body when naked was quite lacking, Air Force Ron was quite beautiful and fulfilling naked. He also had a great butt because he enjoyed running and riding his bike around his desert ranch. He didn't have a carpet of chest hair, but he did have some, and he kept his bush long and untrimmed for me.



Ron was masculine with a slow and low voice. Sometimes when you're with a person you forget their voice because it's so routine, but on the phone calls over the months each time I heard his voice it turned me on so much. Not that he was a great conversationalist. Like me, he was a recluse and a bit eccentric, and his world was small, so he did not play games or pretend. Also, like me, he also dressed in old jeans and T-shirts or ripped flannel shirts, had an old car, and didn't care what people thought of it, or that I accidentally scratched it with Deen's

leash.

Deen loved Ron, and Ron loved to photograph Deen. Ron was also a photographer and spent most of his time shooting the desert sky, or when he was at my place, shooting me and Deen, the snow on the evergreens or the bears we'd come across hiking in the forest.

Like a few of my other exes, Ron had some Native American in him so he inherited a real peace and trust with animals and insects. He'd let desert scorpions and tarantulas crawl on his fingers and knew the breeds of all the small birds who landed on his arms.

When my sister and nieces came to visit for a Thanksgiving, Ron was nervous. But when we visited his dying mother in Mystic, Connecticut the following year, I saw a very bright confident Ron when his relatives gathered around to hear him talk.

Later we toured the Gilded Age Mansions in Newport, Rhode Island. They rivaled Versailles. Never had I seen such enormous, ornate estates—breathtaking. Unfortunately, I couldn't figure out how to operate my Breakers Mansion audio headset and got pissed that Ron stayed a room ahead instead of walking back to share the fantastical tour experience with me.

Also, in Connecticut, we stayed at a SUPER 8 motel, and had great sex all week, even involving the strange use of a coffee table. The motel supplied breakfast so each morning we'd walk to the waffle room where a Philippine woman cooked for us.

"I know who you are," she said. "My mother-in-law was famous, too."

The next day she explained that she knew me from the soap and was divorced from Katherine Hepburn's son. It was so strange for a Philippine lady to have the name Tess Hepburn.

Ron was a perfect part-time G. I. Joe lover, because over a couple years we saw each other every couple of weeks. He was part-time in

the committal arena, too, pretty unavailable, which I was fine with. I don't think we ever had a talk about being monogamous, but it was inferred for a few months of the two years, and aside from that, I really made clear that what I needed was somebody honest, not necessarily someone monogamous.

He and I were 50+ and I wanted to love who he was and who he used to be and who he wanted to be and support what turned him on, doubting I could keep turning on the same man for years. However, as he helped me build deck chairs from logs and branches on Valentine's weekend in 2014, he preferred to spend the actual holiday at a gay rodeo in Phoenix photographing hot cowboys. It's not that I minded being rejected by that, rather it cemented the doubts I was already having for our future. *Why should he settle for me if he'd rather be with strangers on Valentine's Day and why should I settle for a man who'd rather be with strangers on Valentine's Day?*



What it came down to was that he was a man with four properties in the desert, and I was a mountain man who loved trees, especially evergreens. I could never appreciate the desert. It seemed barren, brown and lifeless to me. The trees around my rental home in Arrowhead were tall, reaching, intertwining and alive. Heck, I talked to them.

Ron and I parted as great friends and confidences, and kept emailing each other every day, sharing our new paths and senses of humor.

Although I did convince him to become vegan, because he so loved

animals and chose not to hurt them for food, he and I weren't a perfect match, and we were honest enough to tell each other exactly what each of us was looking for. And it wasn't each other; not really.

*** 39: INCONSOLABLE PAIN OF LOSING MY ONE TRUE LOVE**

Joe was always there when I needed him, and in autumn of 2014, I certainly needed a friend I could talk to.

Actually, cry to.

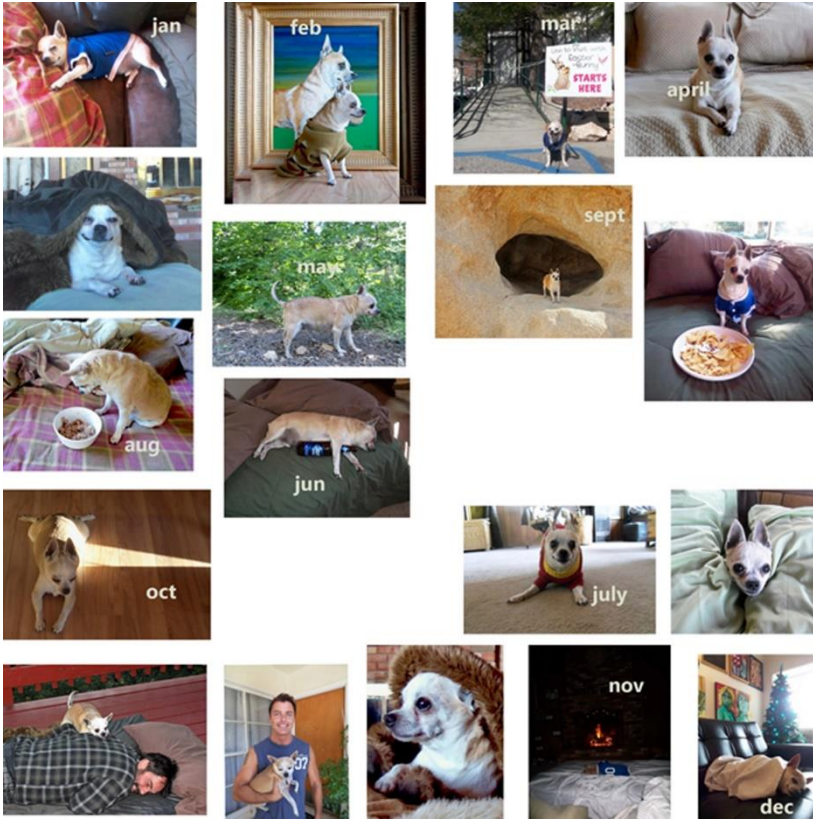
I maybe cried twice on my life. I'd rarely felt helpless and upset to the point of tears.

Deen was about 14 and after taking about 20,000 pills over the past five years for his double heart failure, thyroid, cough and lungs, he was dying. Though my vegan self had fed him meat his entire life and bought him all kinds of fresh meats at the end to entice him to eat his pills, he refused to eat anything. His nose was chapped, and he could not swallow. For years he'd had trouble breathing and would often lie on his side with his belly pumping way too fast for half an hour. That must have been so trying, yet his eyes never complained. He could not walk at the end, though, so I would carry him on our walks.

His poops were becoming very painful, and he would wake me up and circle and circle around, trying to poop on the floor, yet he never seemed finished. I sat petting him, crying, telling him that he was the best love of my life and that it was okay for him to die when he needed to die. Every other relationship I had that had ended—all my boyfriends, and even the death of my mother and brother— had been easier to deal with because I understood the time had come to let go.

But Deen was my perfect partner. We had the perfect relationship. This was the only relationship I had ever been in that I was not willing for it to end or change.

THOM BIERDZ



A calendar of Doug's photos of Deen.

From a metaphysical perspective, I understood why I was in a single human body. Meaning that we are all souls who inhabit separate bodies in this Earth game. Even though we may come from the same or a similar source and have been united as souls before our Earth ride, once here, we separate and take individual bodies. I understood that it was only because Deen and I had separate bodies and feelings that we could experience such enormous unconditional love / need for each other. Also, because we were separate, we could become attached, and feel devastation and loss if we separated.

Even before he died, I was missing him, but I was praying that he would die in his sleep. His body was bloated with fluids and he could no longer stand, and at night he could not lay on his stomach. He

looked like a dead dog sleeping on his side, skipping breaths, and it was exhaustive for him to push his ballooned body up on his little legs in the morning.

But each morning I would wipe my eyes hoping he was dead already, so I would not have to him put down, but he remained barely alive, but alive nonetheless.

I called Doug and told him we needed to help him transition. Doug understood.

I called the Lake Arrowhead vet and took in Deen, my face distorted in pain and tears. Even though the vet administered the lethal injection, Deen did not fall or appear to be dying. He was staying strong—maybe for me—maybe because his body was so diseased and veins so hardened that the poison would not commute. I kept looking into his beautiful brown eyes and telling him what a good boy he was. Minutes passed. The vet assistant pushed his legs down, accelerating his death. When his little body finally went limp, I walked out, knowing I had lost the greatest love and partner I would ever have in this incarnation as Thom Bierdz.

When I got home, I called Doug, and told him it was done, speaking without much emotion to be the strong partner for him. Then I hung up and called Joe, and as I walked through the towering oaks and evergreens, I sobbed so much that he could not understand me.

“I told Deen,” I blurted, then cried more, before resuming, “That I would never hurt him. And I lied. I killed him.”

Joe asked me the specifics and he said I did exactly what Deen would have wanted. Still, I relented, “I always keep my word. You know I keep my word. For 14 years I told him I’d never hurt him, and I took him to the vet to end his life.”

Never had I wept like that, and Joe, as always, was a very generous, loving friend, even offering to come up and see me.

“Naw, I’m okay, I just needed to talk to someone,” I said.

I told Air Force Ron the same thing in our daily email, but he drove up two hours to make sure I was okay. I made us lunch, and we held onto each other lying down, then he left a few hours later.

Each hour, each day, each night, I ached inside my stomach, heart, and head. Deen was the most important being to me. *Why didn’t I let him die on his own? Why didn’t I wait?!* I was furious with myself and overwrought in guilt.

“Deen,” I would say, “Wherever you are, I am so sorry. I should have let you die on your own. I am sorry I hurt you. Please forgive me. I love you.”

I prayed each night that he’d somehow let me know he was okay in the afterlife. I plead aloud to him to please show me he was okay.

FB post from Oct 15, 2014:

“DEEN VISITED ME FROM THE AFTER-LIFE LAST NIGHT. Been the most emotionally painful week of my life losing Deen. Last night as I lay awake hour after hour in bed I begged aloud to have proof he is ok in the after-life. About 4AM I found myself holding him and it was a spiritual visit which filled us both with enormous electrical joy. I felt every inch of his happy tail-wagging body and realized it was his younger healthy body from years ago. I wondered if this was real or a dream -- and then we were in a dream where I was walking him around the block in my old Hollywood neighborhood. The more I questioned if this was a dream, the more I realized it had become that, and the more I would lose sight of Deen who raced ahead and eventually disappeared. Although it ended in a dream, I am convinced his spirit came to me as a visit in the beginning of this event. THANK YOU DEEN.

DAVID

About a month before Deen died, I was in Blue Jay, a neighbor mountain town, at a printer place, and a woman walked in. She looked at Deen and said, “Nice Chihuahua, you want another?”

I looked at Deen and thought if he had a friend it could help his health. “Maybe,” I told her.

She explained that right after she picked up her printing she was dropping a puppy off at Big Bear Animal Shelter. We went to her car and she pulled out the little, furry, brown guy, likely a mix of Pomeranian, Weiner, Chihuahua.



He got along with Deen just fine, so I took him right there on the spot.

Deen did not like him once we got him home. David was just a puppy and wanted to play with Deen, and jump on him, and Deen was old and sick. I did not feel right giving the dog back but separated the two on different blanketed areas, and

hoped Deen would grow to like him, but he did not. When I fed the dogs, I made sure we all knew Deen was the Alpha and got first options. David was fine with that.

After Deen passed I was thrilled I had David’s company, and I know he helped me heal. Like my men, it took one to get over one. Even though Doug and I had no more physical desire for each other, he was a great parent to “our boys,” and I asked him if he’d like to co-parent David

with me, kidding we could change his name to Doug Pays Half The Vet Bills. Doug laughed but declined.

Deen and I were so happy alone in our postcard-perfect house in the woods, but David was not pleased to be alone with just me. He had been around many other dogs and many people before me and missed the social activity. Even though I worked from home and walked him up to seven times a day, he seemed to always want to prefer staying at Mary's or with any stranger who was petting him.

I promised him I'd get him another dog, and the next year we went hunting for a Goliath. Because there are often coyotes or bears out back, I worried small dogs could be killed by them, so I wanted a bigger dog. Since I also had had two attempted break-ins, and the guys were never caught, a big dog could also be protection from an intruder.

At the shelter I felt drawn to a 50lb short-haired dog, same brown coat and black features as 10lb David. I did not want a Pitbull because of their reputation but almost half the dogs at the shelter were pits, and they told me this dog, with many scars on his body, was probably a shepherd lab mix. I rescued him, took him home with David and named him Goliath. As time passed and he'd bark violently at strangers and their dogs, people surmised he was part Pitbull and may have been used as a bait dog; a target for vicious animal fights.

Goliath has had a terrible previous life, as the many scars on his body indicate, and although he has bonded with David, he remains alarmingly aggressive and barks viciously like a wolf at all other dogs. That was not what I wanted, but he is perfect inside our home, and now David is happy to have a full pack: he, me and Goliath. At last, when David meets a stranger, he no longer wants to stay with them but chooses to be with me and Goliath. We're all in our paradise now.

YOUNG, GAY & RESTLESS



* 40: **OTHER SECRETS ABOUT MY LOVERS**

When I was 17, my father gave me a book titled *There Are Men Too Gentle To Live Among Wolves* by James Kavanaugh. Back then I resented him or anyone thinking I was gentle; even though I was skinny and brittle, I wanted to be a macho rugged cowboy. Perhaps I have become that now.

For the first time I opened that book without resentment and read the title poem. Did Dad know then I was too gentle for “Hollywood, crowds, commitments and clamor?” That I would do better in a cabin with “fragrant grass, or snow, to wonder if the leaves will change their color too soon?”



I emailed Dad in Washington my excitement of this sex memoir coming along, but I recalled him saying he did not want to read it. Nevertheless, when he inquired why anyone would be interested, I emailed him the pages. I don't know if he read them or not. He really was a very sweet man, and had been wonderfully supportive of all my boyfriends. Dad had also listened to me tell him I had a father figure

sexual fantasy. He really was a very patient, respectful, analytical, loving father—but despite being my actual father, he was not my actual father sex fantasy—that would be Sean Connery or Tom Selleck.

As a spiritual seeker I wonder though if all I wanted was to find a safe place in God's lap, where I do not have to be on guard. *Could I just rest in God's pubic hair when I die?*

Robert A. Johnson, *Ecstasy: Understanding the Psychology of Joy*: "So many of our lives are touched by addiction. The successful young entrepreneurs who think they need cocaine to give them a competitive edge. The supermoms who can't get through the day without a tranquilizer. The harried managers who need two to three drinks every night to unwind. The young children who try street drugs because they're already touched by our society's bankruptcy of feeling. The college students who go to parties to get drunk and stoned. The dangerously fast drivers who are addicted to the thrill of speed. The insider traders who make illegal deals on the stock market because they're addicted to the kick of making money. And the perpetual singles who go from lover to lover addicted to the first glow of romantic love." *Was I that??*

The AFI student film director who died of AIDS and in love with 22-year-old me, bequeathed me a reading from Kate Diamond, a celebrated numerologist. By my birth year and letters in my name, Kate had deduced that unless I committed to a love relationship early, my life would become little more than a series of dramatic love affairs.

I had no regrets of being in a dozen monogamous relationships with stunningly beautiful, admirable men, and maybe only regretted 10% of the sex I had with, *what, maybe 200 men? No skin off my back (thanks to penicillin).*

PERSONAL INFO ON LOVERS

This book was incredibly honest as a challenge to myself, brought into a world that shamed homosexuality. As I matured and grew away from obstacles, traditions and societal comforts, as artists do become unconventional, I shed that poisonous skin of shame. What the churches or my family or my exes or you think of me is truly none of my business. It may be valid, but it doesn't mean anything to who I am.

As mentioned, my main concern was hurting people's feelings—ironic perhaps—because you have read many accounts of hurt boyfriends. Though I changed their names, they and others can figure out who they are, so I avoided minor details which may embarrass them. Yet these may be pertinent in a sex book, so I'll address these now, without being specific to whom they pertained to.

Certainly, in the 1980's I was afraid of AIDS and would not have dated or touched a man with HIV. That was many years ago, and I evolved along with the American public. At least three of my boyfriends have been HIV positive. One told me upfront; I figured out another one before we even kissed, and brought it up, to his surprise, and the third was hiding it from himself and me for a long time. I remain HIV negative.

One of my lovers had a very good toupee, and I had no idea until he told me. It wasn't a turn-off. I never saw him without it. He was paying \$400 a month to have it weaved on to look natural, and he did express the desire to go without it and save that money.

One of my lovers was a little feminine, but he changed that for me when I explained I was only attracted to masculine guys. His friends gave him a hard time for "not being the same anymore." Yes, some will be offended by me not being attracted to feminine guys, but how can you make yourself get erect if you're not turned on? Why not just

be honest as to what floats your boat?



One of my lovers had a foot fetish. And I do not mean he occasionally liked to lick my feet, I mean the one and only way he could get off was for me to stand on his chest for 20 minutes as he closed his eyes and beat off. That is a long time and can get boring so to make him cum faster I would kick him or rub my feet in his face, stick my toes in his mouth. He would bring me new shoes all the time, different sizes, and I would rub these into his chest and face. I certainly did not mind that. It wasn't as much physical work as other sexual fetishes require, but it did nothing for me. My feet, to me, were not sexy at all, and another boyfriend actually kidded me that my feet were so small (9 ½) that I must have had them bound like Chinese women. Since stepping on or kicking this foot-fetish lover HARD was the only way he could shoot his load, that really did not leave much room for us to experiment with sex. It also made me paranoid that I could accidentally kill him by collapsing his rib cage, so I made him explain on a private video if he died I was merely following his sexual request. His second request was me biting his nipples until they bled. This I hated, and never bit them until they bled, and instead offered him nipple clamps, but the idea of any nipples bleeding or ripping grossed me out. I did worry how we

could ever be long-term partners, knowing if I did that for 30 years I'd probably be resentful. Not sure. I loved his hairy dick and body, though, so could easily beat off to climax on my knees in a minute flat as he sat in a chair with his legs spread and semen dripping off his rod.

One of my lovers was a total bottom. That worked great. He would douche in the shower in a minute flat, then lay on the bed on his stomach. I'd climb on top of him and fuck him for 15 minutes, talking dirty, shouting that he was my property and I'd do whatever I wanted to him whenever I wanted to, and he'd come without even touching his dick.

One of my lovers wanted to be submissive, so I squeezed him under my desk to pleasure me as I took care of business emails. Worked for both of us. Still pledging to be my man slave, I told him to lay naked in an outside area until I was ready to sit on his face. After I dominated him outside about twenty minutes, I came in to take my daily bath, and was yelling in silence to myself, "OMG! I got a man slave!! Score!" I was so excited and figured although this was a new role, I could easily order someone around day and night. Unfortunately, he got cold, came in and went home. So, although we did continue dating, it was not as master slave per se.

Many people liked master slave play. Others committed to it in unprecedented ways. In the Southwest I heard there was a ranch where wannabe gay slaves actually had their hands and feet cut off, walked like dogs and drank from dog bowls. Certainly, if this were true, it was extreme. However, from a psychological standpoint I can understand why select people like being a master and others gravitate toward being a slave. When one is a slave, he surrenders thinking and decisions. That could feasibly erase worry and mental burdens and haunts. He may feel a safety under direction of a master. Some very wealthy, powerful gay men are rumored to occasionally enjoy being chained and dominated, which relaxes them by relieving the burden of being constantly in charge with so much at stake.

YOUNG, GAY & RESTLESS

Several of my lovers were total tops, and I let them fuck me on occasion. We tried to do other things since I preferred oral. They consented to oral.

* 41: **HOME SWEET FOREST**

Instead of taking the road toward Mary's, the dogs and I took the long way, through the winding forest, by the low creek with the bear warnings. It had been 30 years since I had a cowboy hat, but I found one at Walmart that fit nicely and wore it every time I ventured out. On winter mornings, the sun shone on that deep mountain path like a warm heavenly tunnel of light. The new fallen leaves crunched beneath my hiking boots. Goliath tried to attack a squirrel, so I pulled his leash back, and David followed happily wagging his tail. I glanced back at my rental home.



Somehow, I'd lucked into this affordable property next to a forest owned by a man who never used it, so I pretended his land was mine. The dogs and I trespassed through it up to seven times a day. The thousand oak trees, evergreens and pines surrounded us like unearthly guardians. When it rained I felt the exhilaration of the trees and explained to the dogs, "The. Trees. Like. Water. Rain. Is. Nice."

It began to snow, and I wondered how much would come. When it was heavy, it appeared a Yosemite postcard with my 17 upstairs windows overlooking Ansel Adams-esque views. Shoveling was nowhere near as difficult as I'd anticipated. I had even shoveled the decks naked. Oh, the thrills we recluses sought when we escaped the city.

Having given up my Hollywood dream, with so much time to reflect, I

realized that my new goals were very simple. All I wanted was to be safe, beautiful and funny. And in the right lighting, I was those things.

Weird that I'd made exactly the average American income the prior year of \$42,000 but chose to forgo expensive health insurance because I did not need it. Still, how is it that I'd made the income most people did, but I lived in Heaven, while the majority hated their apartments and employment and relationships and lives? Fortunately, I was in perfect health, and had no allergies or asthma as a vegan—as long as it was just me and the dogs. Alone, I had little anxiety. Alone, I had no breath loss. Alone, I had no gonorrhoea. The best thing about living alone sexless for years is that you know the occasional burning sensation in your dick is just Dollar Store shampoo.

Insomnia still plagued me. Often, I got stuck on nagging thoughts that froze me awake all night. However, I had discovered that my mind wandered away to sleep when I played YouTube lectures on low volume through the night. YouTube research also revealed a 1970s technique that helped me sleep at times: Rapid Eye Movement Desensitization. In short, I darted eyes back and forth, and that forced my brain to file “stuck” information.

At my maturing age, I could not deny that I was a neurotic, indulgent, self-centered man, but I also would not hurt a flea, so if everyone on Earth were like me, we would indeed know peace here. I had never struck another man. I caught spiders to release them free outside, and I did not kill or eat animals. I was a wonderful father to my dogs, and often as I lay awake at night I zeroed in on their love for me and mine for them. In the right lighting, they, too, were safe, beautiful and funny.

I had perfect health because I believed I deserved perfect health (and probably being away from incessant pharmaceutical commercials helped). The oldest healing remedy was urine therapy and it made sense to me that we were created with the answers inside us. I drank my pee occasionally like Indian yogis, Buddhist monks and many

shamans had for thousands of years. Did that keep me in perfect health? Or, was it my belief in that which kept me in perfect health? I did not know.

Even if I could not afford the dentist (for procedures THEY said were needed but my teeth seemed fine to me; no pain), I lived in paradise because I believed I deserved to. Aside from social anxiety, which I avoided, my days were almost completely pleasurable because I believed I, and everyone else, deserved constant pleasure. My homemade foods—even pancakes and cookies—added little fat to me. All day I ate what I wanted, however, my will was not tested at home where I only kept healthy ingredients. If I were at parties and restaurants I would have had a hard time resisting indulgent foods like cheesy pizza.

My dogs brought me immense pleasure throughout the day, as did masturbation about 10 AM. When I was stroking my cock to porn it was like an anesthetic injected into my brain. It's true that when I masturbated my body relaxed most, my breathing became slow and tantric.

The only non-pleasurable thing in my new mountain life was not having a steady job to pay rent; however, portrait clients thankfully came in just as I needed them. Too often I had my rent only one day before I needed it, but I managed. The chances of me always getting rent exactly when I needed it decade after decade substantiated my belief in the universe supplying our energies with what we have emanated. Of course I still played the lottery and even the free Publisher's Clearing House email, too. Each day I acknowledged that I co-created my paradise, and a perfect life for myself, so I imagined that my good fortune would continue if the majority of my vibrations stayed positive and grateful.

Coming out of the forest I waved my hat to Mary by her car, still looking for the keys she'd lost weeks ago. The one advantage perhaps of sleeping outside your home is you don't need a key to open your

door. What concerned her, though, was losing her key to her storage facility because she had new possessions to tuck away.

She whispered quietly about her neighbor, "I asked Patricia if I could put these bags full of new storage on her side of the fence just until the charity people left, and she said no."

There were over a dozen bags. What I wanted to say was, "I would've said no as well. You don't need that stuff. Throw it away." I did not say that. Once again, I was reminded that when we expected others to act a certain way, we could get disappointed or angry; so, it served everyone to have no expectation. I tried to share that with Mary again, to save her upset.

Over the last month Mary had filled out some form for a charity that did home repairs, and since she had many things to be repaired, she was asked to complete a list of priorities. She thought about canceling because she was embarrassed at the condition of her property, but she did not, and told me they'd come yesterday to meet with her.

Mary was deflated, almost in tears, because she'd assumed they would help her, but they left telling her it was unlikely because they had 22 more people to consider.

Mary was pissed, "They asked me how my house got so much stuff! I told them that this is what happens when you move from a large house to a small one!"

I wondered if she really believed that. *Didn't she know people threw away belongings when they down-sized? She had lived here 30 years.*

Didn't she know she had the answer to her own problems? All she had to do was throw half her things in the dump and there'd finally be room for her in her own house.

She opened a small can and offered me one.

"What is this? Juice?"

“Daiquiri.”

“Oh,” I laughed. “Naw. Thanks, though. I only drink at parties or crowds.”

She whispered, “One of the charity men asked me my feeling about God and I wanted to scream! Why should that matter?” Her soft eyes darted around, as if taking inventory of her hundreds of potted trees and four hoses—oh wait, six now—and excess lawn furniture, umbrellas, mystery bags and boxes.

I said, “Look! It’s snowing! I have an empty room if you need it. To stay dry.”

“I know,” she smiled. “If I really need it, I’ll come there.”

“And usually my bathroom is yours if you need it, you know.”

It had been six days since I had bathed. I was shitting in a bucket. My toilet and bathtub were clogged, and I left a note on the car of the cute plumber up the street who came up only on weekends. Mary said he’d come up the day before. Damn. Since he did not call, I dismissed that delusional romance and called my regular fix-it guy instead, who said he’d be over that night with his plumber snake.

I didn’t mind being grimy really. No one saw me but Mary, or Becky at the post office.

* 42: **NEW SUCCESSES**

California had been in a serious drought the five years I resided in Lake Arrowhead, but the winter of 2016 / 2017 remedied that. Much needed precipitation came in rain, ice and snow, which was an absolute scenic pleasure for me since I painted portraits from home and did not need to venture on icy roads. Many times a day I exclaimed my gratitude for living in such a winter wonderland that was even prettier than my childhood in flat Kenosha, Wisconsin, because the home I was renting was at 5200 feet elevation with vast views of the forest.



In January, 2017, I was in my SUV driving to Los Angeles for a large event where I'd be one of dozens of where-are-they-now celebs. There was no pay, but we were told we'd make money posing for photos with fans. My plan was to hand everyone a business card and establish new portrait clients. Rain hit the highway about the same time my dashboard went crazy with blinking lights and suddenly my car, going 70, died. Fortunately I avoided an accident and maneuvered my car to the right shoulder before the wheels stopped turning. The good news was I was not hurt nor in danger. The bad news was my engine was fried and it would be thousands of dollars to fix—money I did not have. So, I became carless for the first time since sixteen. Sure, I could have gotten depressed about not having a car nor health insurance, nor rent money 24 hours before I needed it in my mid-50's. But because I had no social life (ecstasy!), being carless was not a big

inconvenience. Instead of buying frames and art supplies down the mountain once a month, I paid a few bucks more to buy them online and shipped. Since I painted from home anyway, I never had to be anywhere else, and my nearest neighbor, Debbie, who owned the town's religious bookstore, gave me a ride to the post office when I had paintings to ship. Once a month she also drove me home from the grocery store when I stocked up on heavy items like dog food, but other than that I walked half an hour through the wild forest to the grocery store every couple of days to get ripe fruits and vegetables, feeling enormously grateful for the surrounding beauty. *What percentage of humans had this pristine nature at their fingertips? 1%?*

Suddenly David and Goliath on my upper deck went nuts, barking and crying, so I knew that meant Mary was in the driveway 40 feet below.

"I just got back from the post office! I picked up your mail!" she said, waving up at me with a handful of letters.

"Do you want to come up and visit? Lunch? I have that MMS natural pain mineral here that fixed my teeth! It's here for you but I want you to watch the YouTube videos on it!"

"No, I can't stay! I have to dogsit elsewhere today!"

"Okay. Just leave the mail down there. I'll come down and get it. I know you're in pain and don't like these 43 stairs!"

The dogs, who rarely saw other humans, went nuts crying for her, so, the pretty old woman slowly climbed up the steep stairs, relying largely on the railing. We met her on the lower deck.

"I had to come see my David and Goliath," she glowed, sitting on one of the log chairs the Air Force sergeant and I had built.

"Thanks for getting my mail. A letter from Dad – he went to see Troy last week..."



I continued, fingering my mail, “And eight bills. Oh, guess what? I sold a \$5,000 painting this week—and now I can afford to fix my car and maybe fly to see Troy again.”

“\$5,000??”

“My painting of Jeanne Cooper. A man in Australia bought it for his lover. They are both soap fans.”

“Your pet portraits are so much cheaper!”

“My portraits of pets are like \$500, but my best work are the 100 Blue X expressionism paintings I priced at \$5,000 each. This is the second of that series that sold! If they all sold that’d be half a million bucks!”

“So, this \$5,000 sale will mean you’ll have a car again?”

I nodded, then stopped smiling. The idea of having a working vehicle made me anxious for some reason.

She read my mind, mumbling, “A car forces you to be around people and you prefer being alone in the trees like the squirrel that you are.”

She was right. When I had a car, I dealt with humans, and often came home hating myself for thinking I'd hurt their feelings by looking disapproving or scared of them. The rest of the day, and night, I felt bad and guilty. My carless months meant I'd avoided that drama almost completely.

My eyes closed, hating my anxiety, I flung them open and looked around my idyllic porch with chopped firewood and high views of a thousand pines and oaks.

"No car meant you also could not date, right? Now you have to," she giggled. "I am thrilled I am too old to be dating anymore."

True that I had entertained the idea of meeting a fantastic man and spending a quiet life together in the woods. But it was nice being carless, so I did not have to leave my comfortable nest and comfort zone and put myself out there in the dating scene. While it's possible I could have simply invited strangers to my home, I was too paranoid to do that again. What if they turned out to be psycho?

"Oh, Mary, these nights I lay in bed at 9 PM with the dogs and watch old black and white movies. I have dated so much in my life. I do not need to yet. You have no idea how many men."

"How is your sex book coming along?"

"All the big publishers turned it down. It's not commercial they said. It sounds like it's the same reason my gay soap opera character never even had a gay kiss. Not commercial. But why do *Days Of Our Lives* and *General Hospital* have gay romances?"

"You don't care if the world sees your dirty laundry in your book?"

"Not at all. What anyone thinks of me is none of my business. Now that I wrote out my entire sex journey, from when I thought girls had penises, to strip poker at 11 with sixth grade Jerry fucking Paul Haugle, me at 17 almost dying from yellow-sperm sex with Guido's meat

cutter, bartending in gay bars jealous of my hairy muscular cowboy, escaping Jeffrey Dahmer, laying naked and petrified under a Village Person, to my Hollywood romances, bishops and billionaires, giants and Cubans with razors shaving my butthole, storybook love with TV stars and waiters, I have great clarity, insight—and humor about it. I can vomit this out in a book, rid myself of all the emotions and memories, then become a whole new me. Maybe from now on...someone entirely different. It's so freeing to review everything, lay it out in order. Mary! My mind—was a hoarder—all these jammed memories and stifled feelings... I am freed of it! You need to throw all your things away, too, and be free of what imprisons you."

My epiphany did not alter the distant look on her face.

I continued, "This book is a great blessing to have this new perspective of how I've created my life. THAT life. The before life which is over now. There's nothing in my past I need to hold onto anymore. I am free of everything. All the men. All the desire. All the neeeeeed. Jealousy, unrequited lusts. Clumsy break-ups. Regrets. Even my drive to be a movie star. Even my social anxiety! I can throw away everything now."

"But if you threw everything away, you'd have nothing," she looked pained.

"Yes! Exactly!" I said, excited.

"What would you do?"

"Be a brand new me."

She shrugged.

"And there's interest in a couple more projects of mine," I continued. "A TV show, *Evil Lives Here*, on crime is coming here next month to interview me about *Forgiving Troy*, which could mean good publicity for book sales and more painting commissions. There is a working TV

director interested in *Forgiving Troy* for a cable channel movie he says. Also, 10 years ago, I created a sizzle reel for a TV show titled *Portrait of a Scandal*, where I would ask famous people who have endured scandals: “How has America painted you?” And then paint them how they want instead. My old contact said he has a network interested now. We’d film in Vegas and I’d make \$11,000 an episode.”

“\$11,000?!”

“Come with me. We can play slot machines!”

“Vegas would be the exact opposite to this quiet Mayberry porch. How would you feel being around people everywhere?”

“Timeline. I just cue myself with that word—timeline. And then I pretend my life in Hollywood was different and that I only knew success and I switch into the extroverted soap star in front of a crowd. I just have to forget that anxiety won and ruled me for so long. I just will pretend my life was different—with my cue word ‘timeline’ I am Ryan Seacrest-friendly. Shazam!”

“Well, I hope it happens.”

“I’d never want to live in a city again. I’d just go there to work, you know, as a job, to make sure I had money to pay bills, so I could afford to live somewhere in the woods, in 10 years, when I am 65...”

“You look 35, not 55!”

“At 65 I’ll get an AFTRA and SAG pension, from my acting career—about \$2,000 a month—so I could almost live on that if I had to, even in a trailer somewhere—and hopefully Medicare would still be around cuz at 65, I’d get free health coverage if I needed it. So, I really just need to worry about staying perfectly healthy and making rent the next 10 years.”

Other than the dogs climbing on her, it was quiet for a long minute.

“People like us,” she said, “We’ve had it all before. The money and homes and jobs and society, but we are happier without those...trappings.”

This was strange to hear from a hoarder, and I wondered if she meant what she said.

It was also strange that the six months without a car were the happiest in my life. The less I had it seemed the happier I was because there was less to worry about. I chuckled, “Now that I’ve deposited \$5,000, I check my bank balance three times a day to make sure no hacker takes it. When I only had the funds needed for my bills, I never worried it’d be stolen. I was so grateful to live my fantastic life and eat my ideal foods. Day to day. Grateful each minute...”

She interrupted me, “You were not grateful the times Goliath broke out and was missing and you searched the neighborhood, frantic that he may have hurt someone and that you’d be sued.”

“True. Without a car, I could not get these dogs to a vet if something happened to them.”

“I’d drive you.”

I smiled, but her car was so full of bags, window visibility was cut 80% and I’d never want to be her passenger.

“You’re still young,” she said. “You should have a boyfriend. Or even a husband, right? In this new age where boys marry boys.”

“Maybe someday,” I said. “I wouldn’t mind the company. The dogs would love it.”

“Maybe you’ll find a cowboy with two dogs of his own. Then you’ll have four.”

“David would love it. Not sure about Goliath.”

“What about you? Would you love it?”

“Mary, to tell you the truth, I am so used to having everything my way in this lodge I’d probably be more irritated at another body in my space than happy about it.” But a grin overtook me and with a twinkle in my eye, I exhaled, “Maybe when I have a working car, and go to the city, this handsome man will catch my eye at the dollar store and he’ll smile and we’ll run into each other again a few minutes later in Walmart when we’re both reaching for pecans and I’ll say ‘I love nuts’ and he’ll blush. We’ll joke with each other and I’ll throw stuff in his cart to be funny—like Tampax or hemorrhoid cream—and I’ll be checking out his biceps the whole time. In the parking lot I’ll ask for his number and turns out he writes music and he’ll be the man who can bring life to the lyrics which flow from my head hour by hour, so we’ll write songs and raise animals, but not eat them. We’ll grow organic vegetables, put up a porch swing, and a bedroom sling, and after incredible sex with blindfolds and roleplay we’ll watch black and white movies—when we’re not in Vegas for my TV show if it happens, or walking on a beach...”

Mary raised her eyebrows, “That all sounds nice, but didn’t you give me quite a few lectures on ‘expectations’?”

I laughed, “You got me there. Yup. If I do meet a man, and we do share some intimate time, I think it’s best if we don’t burden ourselves with heavy expectations—probably be best to take things a day at a time.”

“Or a minute at a time.”

“How’d you get to be such a wise woman, Mary?” I asked.

She glowed, feeling proud, comfortable in her sagging skin, looking radiant in the sun, “Guess I just lived a long time.”

“And you have had your share of men?”

“How many have you had?” she asked.

“Sex with? Hmmm—sexually active almost 40 years... Maybe five a year... I guess about 200 maybe? In love with? Maybe 20. At least 20,” I smiled, “At least 25. Fantastic guys. Amazing. How about you? How many men have you been with?”

“A woman doesn’t tell. But I married five of them.”

“Five?! You were married five times?”

“Shh.”

“Are you still in love with any of them?” I wondered, studying her face, her eyes, her mouth.

“Oh heavens no.” She paused, “Why would I be? No, no, no. Are YOU still in love with any of the men you were in love with?”

“Every one. Absolutely,” I said, completely honest. “I am still in love with all of them.”

“But if you’re in love with them, why aren’t you still with them?”

“I never stopped loving any of them. If my neurosis or dysfunction or fears or paranoia or asthma instigated me to break up with them, so I’d feel safe and alone, that never meant I stopped loving them. I never stopped loving any of them. Even the few who broke my heart—I never stopped loving them. I am just loving them now from...a distance.”

“I don’t understand. Even thinking of my exes makes my skin crawl. If they were bugs I’d squash them over and over.”

“They never did anything bad to me which gave me a reason not to like them, and I never did anything bad to them, besides saying I needed space. So, maybe they hate me? I don’t know. My intentions were to love. Myself first, and then them. And I do love me. And I do love them. Some of them that I have not seen in years I am trying to get a hold of, to ask their permission to use their photos or names in

THOM BIERDZ

this book. Like the construction worker in Village People? The band? I hear he lives in Palm Springs but I can't locate him. Mark Lee is a common name – hard to find on FB.”

Mary frowned as she petted David, then looked off into the sky. I closed my eyes, enjoying the stillness and silence.

I breathed deep—very deep—slowly filling my lungs with the electric air of a thousand evergreens.



* 43: **EVIL LIVES HERE, GRATEFUL LIVES HERE**

Not surprisingly, Mary's hoarder over-packed car obstructed her view while driving the mountain highway and she suffered a horrible accident. Her car was totaled, she was now in a body cast, and insisted to me this had been the other driver's fault, despite the police report blaming Mary and confiscating her driver's license.

Anyone who ever saw her car windows piled with objects knew this would happen. Yet she was in denial, and worse, pain. What a powerful lesson to take a self-analysis and investigate if my mental hoarding was also a crippling accident waiting to happen. Was the nervous breakdown I avoided in Hollywood around the corner in a mountain grocery store?

No, I think I have healed my 50 years of social anxiety, or at least re-categorized it to be hypersensitivity. Making ridiculous YouTube videos with comical characters this year has taught me I could entertain like Robin Williams at a party, hiding behind accents and jokes—as opposed to standing there petrified like a deer caught in the headlights.

As a student of the law of attraction, my favorite quote was from Jane Roberts channeling Seth: “You get what you concentrate upon. There is no other main rule.” Certainly, I tried to concentrate upon positive things, and living in the mountains that was easy for me. Recalling my social anxiety in the city where all day I felt bad I may have hurt people's feelings, since I never saw people anymore, I could now easily instead focus on the picturesque beauty around me. No longer did I walk the dogs around the neighborhood stuck in memories of how in Hollywood I was not enough / faulty / broken / brittle / haunted by anxiety. It was surprisingly healing to reinvent one's whole social history, if only in one's mind, pretending it was different. Young YouTube guru Bentinho Massaro explained how one can change their past, and indeed, I have, by interrupting negative memories with more

productive invented ones. (Who's to stop me?)

In 2018 I made a few YouTube videos playing outrageous characters in quirky skits. Fans wrote, "I wish the soap would put you back on since you seem to want to act again" but they didn't understand I'd rather be doing my bizarre, offbeat videos here.

At 56, one has enough info to recognize their life path. It is clear that in this incarnation, born Thomas Alexander Bierdz Junior in 1962, my core issues have been bucking tradition and refusing to be limited. Perhaps it is fortunate that my 78-year-old father keeps that conversation current. He cannot fathom why I'd want to expose my sex life in a book, or who would want to read it. This I do not condemn; it makes perfect sense to me he would feel that. I would bet most straight men would not want to read a book on their gay son's sex life. But I wonder if they wouldn't enjoy a book on their straight son's sex life? I don't know. I do think Gregg was Dad's favorite, though. Not long ago Dad told me over dinner when he was visiting me, "My life hasn't been easy. Three sons. One killed his mom, one killed himself and one is gay." I just laughed at the absurdity that a homosexual child was such a tragedy. However, as much as I love him, and I do, it doesn't matter to me what he thinks. It does not matter because I know what I think.

Money was a huge reason I ventured on publishing this sex book; I have bills and rent to pay. A vast majority of celebrities would turn down millions of dollars to expose they'd peed on a girl's shrimp, had sex for a waiter job, was sexually assaulted by a bar boss and an L.A. photographer, was tied-up and spermed willingly in the basement of Mr. International Leather, had fat injected in their dick, waved their erection at a hot-tubbing soap opera fan, stuffed their dick in a beer cup of a first date at a party, frequented free clinics for gonorrhea and mental help, engaged in gym sex and golden showers, masturbated to their dead mother and beat off daily to incest porn.

To use Andy Warhol's favorite saying: "So what?"

I refuse to be shamed for my sex, any of it. It's fucking hilarious. I didn't hurt anyone. I didn't hurt anyone. I did not hurt anyone. And I refuse anyone to shame YOU for any of your sex (as long as you didn't intentionally hurt anyone). We will not be embarrassed.

Sex can be joked about, laughed about, and while many of you were brought up with that freedom, I was not. I was greatly inhibited. This is new to me to be so blunt about sex.

While I doubt it was destined for me to write two very embarrassing memoirs, I now see it as very consistent with my life path: questioning tradition and societal norms / fences / prisons. Does it sound fair that others decide my boundaries? Or does it make more sense that I define mine? Is it fair that society defines your boundaries? Or should YOU define yours?

I hope you got that each time I wrote "no limits" that was meant for all of us. We are made of the same constructs: consciousness and light. I sincerely believe you have no limits and that you can do anything in the world. I refuse to buy into the stereotypes of how men my age are old, damaged or less than, so I often share inspiring FB stories of 80-year-old bodybuilders and 100-year-old pilots and active 120 year-old Tibetan monks.

Regularly, people comment that men my age do not act so silly in videos or post what I do on FB: "It's too cold to masturbate." "Ew my finger went through the toilet paper." "Wait—people calling each other names—is cocksucker a bad thing?" Admittedly, being a self-indulgent Hollywood actor for so long and having no children there was never a requirement for me to mature. When men marry wives, they (traditionally) become "the man" and take on huge responsibilities be it breadwinner or head-of-family or toilet-fixer or mechanic. I never did that. When men have children, they transform into a superhero and work extreme hours to overcome debts to provide, as well as gather life lessons so they can be the answer-man to their adoring offsprings. I never did that. I never had to, the

exception being a forgiving big brother on prison visits to help Troy and sending him checks every year on his birthday and Christmas.

In this lifetime I have not learned the devotion, commitment or sacrifice that parents and grandparents learn. I do admire those of you who have. I would, if I had to, but I'm relieved I never had to, because it seems like so much effort. While many of you delight in the pitter patter of grandchildren visiting, I find peace knowing my 43 outdoor stairs discourage all trick-or-treaters.



Decades ago, with my grandparents. Both grandfathers labored hard in factories until retirement.

The Evil Lives Here crew filmed me for three days in Lake Arrowhead, and although the hour-long top-rated Investigation Discovery episode “The Soap Star’s Secret” had six million views, they condensed the story points considerably. Even though thousands of mostly female viewers FB messaged me with accolades for my willingness to forgive Troy after he killed Mom, and my emotional retelling on the air, there was no way I could accept this story as having been delivered accurately enough. It needed to be a movie, I still insisted, and as this book closes, it is still being considered by Hollywood players, though not green-lit as of yet regardless of me trying nearly 30 years. (You really have to read the book to understand what a fantastic movie it’ll make.)

It was sobering to admit my brother killed our mom as long as 29 years ago, and some close to me and some not, chastised me to “Let it go and move on.” I suppose there was growth in finally not caring what my sister or father felt about me dragging our worst years into the spotlight as I seemed to do every five or ten years. I love my sister and father very much, but decades ago I would and did change my behavior to lessen their discomfort, and now I would not. If that sounds selfish, to me it sounds more authentic. Remember, few people live so isolated, determinedly free of obligations.

Certainly, the attention of thousands of female fans FB messaging me after *Evil Lives Here* reminded me of doing personal mall appearances decades ago. Who could deny how good it feels to be adored by strangers? It inflated my ego but also humbled me. I was hardly deserving of the praise they bestowed.

Still, does it really even matter what other people think of us? That being said, thank God for filler injected in my face to raise my cheeks where they used to be, so I can deny my age in the mirror. True, I could feed starving children with the thousands of dollars this will cost to keep up, but I prefer to think if I cross paths with starving kids they’d understand.

Can I point out the distinction between selfish and self-centered? I make no apologies as I am the latter, but whatever operates me: the ego / ID / soul / what have you, has one specific body to operate / monitor / incorporate / exist, so it makes sense to be centered in that.

What good would I be to myself, or others, if I was: uncentered / crippled / broken / inoperable / fixed / partial / expired / unfueled?

A self-centered man creates the life he wants and creates a world where he can afford his pleasures and extravagances. That's me. Conversely, a selfish man would take the food away from starving children and sell it to pay for his pleasures. That sounds like many politicians. I'd never do that.

I DO NOT WANT TO HARM ANYONE. That remains my biggest fear. In fact, as I toss in my nightly insomnia, my most frequent prayer to spirits is, "Show me how I can help people." Nothing would please me more than being a John Edward or *Long Island Medium* and delivering healing messages from dead loved ones.

I do not live in the real world, so I do not have to take it seriously. But if the world were full of me's, we'd have no bloodshed (besides what's absolutely required in cosmetic surgeries).

Oh, I don't mind joking about my attention to self, but would you rather your children be like me when they're middle-age, or have them be an average Joe working 40 hours a week, half in love, overburdened, angry / resentful / blaming, on six medications? I wish your children to have the life and freedom and gratitude that I have. To be accountable for all they create and to be happy and unbothered. When young people make what seems like a small decision to start a family and have a kid, do they really know the lifelong sacrifice that entails? My mom did not. Why not get the young couple a puppy instead? My wariness to commit has managed to keep me relatively free of responsibilities. True, I have dogs and need to paint portraits to pay bills, which I do at my leisure, and yes

www.AmericanArtAwards.com demands overtime from me in certain months of the year, but mostly not. And maybe in future years my art or American Art Awards will turn into extreme income for little work. Reminds me of this affirmation song I wrote that I hum when walking the dogs:

*The world's at war but I am at peace. I created this from my dream.
Live in the most beautiful place I've ever seen. I created this from my dream.*

In perfect health from my head to my feet. I created this from my dream.

My work is simple; my income extreme.

Some folks they starving, I got more than I need.

Each day I help humanity.

I created this. I create my life. I created this from my dream.

My rescue dogs actually listen to me.

Strong sexy partner in love with me...

Okay. Those last two lines have not happened, but they will. With over a dozen romantic relationships under my belt, pun intended, will I be more willing to compromise when I meet a great guy—or will I treat him like my property to boss around and use at my will? Most guys wouldn't mind being ordered around sexually, and I will train him that when he hears my car enter the driveway to strip to his socks and lay on his hairy back with his legs in the air and plead "Fuck me, Daddy" when I open the front door. Aside from roleplay, it is possible that perhaps next time a partner appears I can lower my guard and open my mind more, open my heart more, open my legs more.

I did make strides to socialize the past winter, with a specific goal to attract high-minded friends. I hung out with a sweet gay guy in Big Bear, as friends. He was on a TV show as a psychic and through him I also met a famous female TV psychic. I took my camera and filmed all

of us in Vegas and Sedona. Because they had both wowed a grieving mom by communicating to her dead son, a mom who happened to be a big TV producer, she wanted to create a TV show for them. They couldn't come up with a concept for a whole year, so I created a sizzle reel starring them, and inserted myself.

The premise is a reality show on all three of us—as two great psychics and one (me), a funny, bad psychic. Truth is I did impress one stranger with a name and a psychic message to the point of her tears, but TV viewers would probably rather see two good psychics and one bad one than three good ones. For me to be their apprentice who clumsily misses could bring comic relief to such a heavy show. I'm not sure what will happen to our project. Stay tuned.

No one in Sedona knew I used to be a soap actor, had a social anxiety problem or was a real blond for that matter (thought blond would hide my gray better but did not). Since I was not the main attraction and instead in an agreeably supportive role as cameraman, strangers' eyes were pleasantly not on me to scrutinize. It was extremely liberating, and I was surprisingly comfortable in crowds to be Robin to his Batman, Jughead to his Archie, Lewis to his Martin, Rhoda to his Mary, Mary Ann to his Ginger. Of course, my mind was in my usual creative-project mode occupied with future edits and camera angles, but I would not have had fun if I were not working because my artistic drive would be nagging me to produce content, as it seems I do daily. I love to be working on a project, and always am.



What a welcome surprise to play second fiddle, meet the psychic's friends and admirers, have little to no anxiety, and when returning home create an impressive 35-minute sizzle reel. Loved it and got to take the dogs.

Once back home the dogs and I got to know the gregarious neighbor man up the street, Jose. Over the years of near daily friendly waves I noticed him go from 400lbs to 200lbs cutting wood and offering it for sale. When I told him he was welcome to the trees cut down by my home, he occasionally came in to talk and pet the dogs. He saw my paintings and books and only when he saw a picture of me decades ago on *The Young and the Restless* did he blush and stare glassy-eyed, "Were you Phillip Chancellor?! I watched you in high school!" It amused me that my face has changed so much over the years from when I was most famous that I am unrecognizable to people. The up side was that this jolly, humble Mexican was also the most grateful man I have ever met in my life. He cried many times telling me his dead family would be so proud to see him and I as friends. Maybe I attracted being friends with the most grateful man on the planet because I, too, had become the most grateful man on the planet? Much in the same way I had attracted the most wounded man, Biff, in Hollywood when I also may have been the most wounded man?

* 44: **BACK ON DATING SITES**

BLOOM

2018. Mid-April in Lake Arrowhead initiated the blooming of a million dogwood blossoms. What a stunning place to live. I was surprised to get a call from Mary since she had been down the mountain for six months. She asked if I had a crescent wrench to help her remove some hoses. I said sure.

David and Goliath were literally roaring to see her, and tangled us in their leashes running as they circled us. I brought a couple wrenches because I wasn't sure what a crescent wrench was. Not a fix-it guy myself and had no idea why she was removing four hoses from one four-faucet adapter to put on a different four-faucet adapter a few feet away... had something to do with her recently crawling under her house to turn back on the water.

That was not an easy feat as she was still wearing her body brace, and explained lethargically that her back fractures were not healing. She was not looking for sympathy because she knew I was not the type of friend to give sympathy; I was the kind of friend to say, "You create your life. Heal yourself with natural foods and positive thoughts and avoid eating toxins and vibrating sickness or lack. I am god. You are god. I want you to be whole and happy – but YOU need to do that yourself." This I did not say, but it may have been evident in my stare.

This over-analysis I learned from my psychotherapist father and my over-accountability I had learned from my mother. Mom loved us as much as any parent could but she never let us get away feeling victimized. When I came home crying, "Buddy Brikstein says I have a green and yellow polka dot weenie!," she simply asked, "Well, do you?" I stopped crying. If I came home and said, "Uma punched me at recess," she'd ask, "What did you do to Uma to make her punch

you?" Mom was strict and expected us to over-achieve, and I did, and I expected others, especially those I deeply cared about like my friends, to do the same - for their own good.

I loved Mary, but I saw how she herself had created / existed in such a world of dread and lack, and personally I did not want to become Mary in my later years. I followed her shuffling bent body over the creek and up a bit to her house exterior where the hoses were. We laughed trying to figure out which way to turn the thick silver fasteners to unscrew the hoses. Having over 130 years living experience between us, we should have known. Eventually she told me to take my wrench and turn the hose washer counterclockwise because she did not have the strength. It was tough at first but then the hose grip relaxed, but I was still very confused because unscrewing the hose as she instructed twisted the first few inches to a near-breaking point. Luckily the hose did not rip, but some small plastic thing in her four-faucet contraption did, and she sighed deeply, whispering we ruined a \$50 hose.

If this had been something I had initiated I would have felt guilty, but it was clear I was only offering a set of strong hands, moving them exactly as she directed. Although I did less work on the second hose, the same thing happened, and she frowned announcing we ruined \$100 of hoses. This did not upset me at all because my 2018 vibration had been at such a high place that my life was attracting even more incredible things than just my continuance in paradise. I was now out of debt and had a decent chunk of money in the bank from my American Art Awards business. It was clear to me I did not have a pattern of breaking people's things, and also obvious Mary was attracting hardship after hardship. Today's misfortune was her doing, not mine.

As I untangled the dog leashes stepping over her numerous terra cotta pots as if in a game of *Twister*, I asked her if she were back to stay now. She said only another day, to do needed yardwork, then her friend would retrieve her down the mountain. She explained her

daughter invited her to Oregon but she felt she'd be a bother there. "Besides, I couldn't leave this place and come back like in six to eight months," she said.

"Why? You were just gone six months staying with friends," I said, not understanding.

"But I had to come back every once in a while to water plants."

No, she did not have to. Many homes in the area just had deciduous plants and trees that needed no watering. She really did not need to have a hundred potted plants.

She continued, "And I had to clean up."

That also made no sense to me. *Clean up what?* It was a hoarder house when she came and she left. Nothing looked different.

She further clarified, "I also had to make it look like there was a body here. To protect the house from thieves or riffraff."

Again, I was speechless. *Protect what?* Her entire house interior was piled in bags of seemingly useless items and she lived under the outside stairs. Did she think a gang would get lost up here and try to jack her mini fridge or electric blanket?

As I hugged her briefly and parted, telling her to call me if she needed anything, I told myself I was not going to give her \$100 for the hoses she felt we broke. That would be enabling a hoarder. She did not ask. I refused to be a participant in her poverty consciousness.

Later it occurred to me that I was not having an issue with Mary, rather I was having an issue with the old me. In my sweet, frail, weak, old friend, I saw the old me in Hollywood who entered an audition with a defeated attitude and left entirely wounded; a quicksand energy sinking my stardom chances never allowing casting people to see the confident me. In Mary's expectation of doom I saw the old gay-closeted me crippled by industry homophobia fully expecting more

and more gay-hate. In Mary's coughing, I heard the old asthmatic me, grasping through my drawer of breathalyzers to find a working one. As she steadied herself against her rotted wood home, I flashed on the old doughy me riding my bike through West Hollywood with bad hair dye and shorts too short, coughing on a mint and falling into a bush, desperate for Mr. Right to rescue me and make me feel beautiful / attractive / worthwhile.

I did not want to be around Mary's energy. Mainly, I did not want to be around the old me. Almost every day as I painted portraits the new me listened to YouTube videos on high consciousness, even psychic workshops. On April 11 a voice said to me, "Follow Mark." This voice woke me from a dream which I did not remember, but it made such an impression I wrote it down to consider afterwards. But I knew no Mark. *Was this a career lead, a guru, what? No idea.* The new me also listened to constant videos on self-improvement and law-of-attraction stuff.

Filling my mind and heart with affirmations was a daily practice - that was working. Walking the dogs hours a day gave me ample time to concentrate on positive thinking and be grateful for my ideal life. I remained in perfect health and was successful in my routine business efforts. Recently I had also started to create the space for a dream man, not only in my head, but a very detailed visualization which included seeing him, smelling him, hearing him, touching him, fucking him. New age phenomenon Esther Hicks says you cannot attract something to you that is a different vibration to what you are. That meant I could not attract a perfect loving partner if I was blocked or reticent or suspicious or feeling inadequate. Only similar vibrations attracted - so I had to exude the vibration of already being in love to actually attract love. I had to be fully functional to attract a fully functional partner. Fake it, pretend, convince myself he was already here - and that fulfilled energy would attract the same.

Having not had sex for four years, I decided to join 5 dating sites. Okay - sex sites. I mean I did try the unsexual Plenty Of Fish but I was getting

much more attention on BigMusclebear, Bear411, Adam4Adam and Manhunt. I put the same description on all my profiles:

5'9" 165lb. Hey Guys, I love my life. Am a retired actor, now artist in a secluded mountain rental by the forest, with rescue dogs - lookin for a great guy - into hairy, masc guys my height.



And even though I really had not worked out with weights for a couple years, I put some older pics up where I looked pretty muscular. I could realistically get back to that shape relatively soon if I worked out, if I were motivated, which I was not – but unfortunately I'd given up the hope of ever having fashionable abs or a flat stomach.

I even put my real name and real age more so because I had to (celebrities can't lie about birthdates because of internet bios) than because I wanted to be forthcoming. 56 felt like a lie to me. It was unfathomable to me. I mused how on these same dating sites ten and twenty years ago I'd never date someone 56. It was a new experience this year that getting back on these hook-up sites I was not needy for a date or sex or a relationship and had no problem if guys felt I was too old. The shock was few did and hundreds wanted to meet me – but no one I was attracted to lived near. But at last I was complete as a single man and so blissfully happy at times I thought perhaps I had died and gone to Heaven. If money were gambled on it, I'd bet that having a man around the house would irritate me more than bring me joy – still at least an hour a day I craved a companion to laugh with me, ideally someone so beautiful my heart and dick would be aflutter.

But then again, online dating in the past brought out the obsessive hunter in me – so maybe I was better off without that? True I had many talents but playing well with others was really not one of them, and compromising as foreign to me as performing a tracheotomy blindfolded and on stilts. Hmmm – maybe a companion would not be a good fit at this time?

Well, I did have heart space and physical room for a new love, at least part time, and was curious if and how I had matured in that area. When I lived in Hollywood I could find a lover one locker or shower away, and a hook-up or date would require only a ten minute journey. Living in Lake Arrowhead however would require probably four hours travel time, and I was not willing to travel two hours to Palm Springs (very gay) or Los Angeles to meet a guy, so the romantic interest would have to drive to me. That was asking a great deal, especially if it turned out there was no chemistry in person and one of us was no longer interested. I was fickle for my health, too – didn't want to force sex and maybe catch a disease when I was without health insurance. So even if someone drove two hours I certainly did not want to invite a stranger to my home for sex who could later rob me or God knows. I was too paranoid to do that - so we'd have to meet in a public place.

Being on FB every day I had mutual crushes on about 10 of my 10,000 friends but not like any of them lived near. The 40 year-old hairy, handsome Australian ex-sex-worker, Ethan, private messaged me a few times to tell me he wanted a change in his life, and did not know where to move. He was not only my macho type; he was a fan, and that only increased the potential of a possible relationship. Still, could an Australian fly across the world to take a chance that we'd click? Nah – too much pressure on both of us.

Gillero, 52, in Mexico on Bear411 was my type, and very humble. He was also a fan of mine and could not believe I'd be attracted to him, but I sure was. At night I hugged my pillows pretending it was him, allowing me to feel the exhilaration of Brian Bloom puppy love again – so I could BE that vibration in order to attract that. *Maybe in a few*

months I could afford to fly Gillero here?

A middle-eastern man, 40, from Las Vegas messaged me on Adam4Adam, and unlocked his nude pics. My interest was captured and I wrote, "If ever in Lake Arrowhead, let me know." He replied, "Here now." Setting a world-record for typing speed I asked, "You are in Lake Arrowhead?" That thrilled me, however it was 9PM, amusingly past my bed time and this insomniac was exhausted. Few people spent as much time in bed as I did, but I still only grabbed two to four hours sleep a night, in like one hour segments at most.

In the morning I read his message that he was indeed in town, so I invited him to meet me when I walked the dogs in the village. I honestly was not expecting anything much since his online bio said NSA: no strings attached.

Just as the dogs and I walked the lake road past the unopen shops and got to the peninsula park area, a man jogged up to us in a gray outfit. I had a treat in my pocket for him to give to the dogs so they'd trust him. He was much better looking than his pics and probably older than 40. I am not even sure it was him in those pics. Photos were very bland, but here in my reach was a sexy man my perfect height with a movie-star smile and huge calves. I could see his hairy chest as he tied his shoe.

I immediately affirmed aloud my attraction to him, and he was reciprocal, grinning. In friendly conversation I pointed to where I lived, across the bay, a twenty minute walk. He shared his name was Muhammad, he was Turkish visiting with a large family this trip and gets here often, is a contractor. He asked for my email and I handed him my painter card with email and number.

As we chatted more and walked the dogs past the rose garden and miniature golf course, I said, "Hey, come in here a minute," and pulled him in the public men's room for a quick kiss. He was very uncomfortable even though no other humans were anywhere near

and ended it as soon as he could. He also looked a bit awkward when I handed him one dog leash, to prevent the leashes from crossing and tangling. Confused, I asked, "Your family knows you're gay, right?" He assured me they did, but seemed afraid we'd run into them. He asked if we could go to my place. I said sure and led him through the magical woods as the sun promised another warm day in paradise. As usual, Goliath pulled far ahead barking at squirrels and David lagged behind, smelling areas where animals had peed. Muhammad seemed to enjoy my being pulled in several directions at once.

Goliath found a bone of some animal, salivated over it, and like always, instead of eating it, his instincts made him find a spot that David could not get to, then Goliath buried the bone, then growled at David so he would stay away from it. If, perhaps, Goliath ever returned and retrieved his buried bones, this may have made sense. But he never did. His actions seemed as dysfunctional as Mary's hoarding. But Goliath seemed unable to reason. He operated on pure (defunct?) instinct.

Out of breath, sweating, up the stairs and inside my house, I showed the perspiring muscular hairy Turk the great views, but he did not seem impressed like other visitors who had gawked at this rare find. I wondered if he was very successful and maybe had a much better view from a mansion on the lake. I did not ask. What money men had never mattered to me.

Even though the dogs excitedly barked to have a visitor, M and I kissed a bit over them, then started to undress - dropping pants first. He was uncomfortable with my open windows but I explained no one could possibly see inside. Still, he suggested we go to the downstairs bedroom, without the barking dogs.

He kept nervously checking his watch as we tried to blow each other's half-hard dicks (his did not look like the one in his profile, but he was not hard yet so maybe it was), then we both agreed he should go and come back another time when we were not so rushed.

I was disappointed he did not contact me the following day, but actually fine if we never saw each other again because I had no interest in forcing anyone's interest. Nevertheless I was quite irritated that my sexless streak of over a thousand days could possibly be officially over because of a squelched, hurried, flaccid spermless sex attempt.

In any event I did not want to subject him to nagging messages. Truth is I received a great deal of attention daily on the 5 sites, enough flattery to coast through the day without HAVING TO find a date. In fact, on my next bimonthly trip to get art supplies in Redlands, I had tentative appointments to get a massage by a 58 year-old Indian physician (whose profile age said 36), meet a cute 32 year-old Native-American, a 52 year-old (looks older) Mexican, a 53 year-old Latino (real sweet guy) and 37 year-old with dad / son fantasies (but looking for a son, not a dad). Those were all on Adam4Adam. On Manhunt a six foot much endowed soldier from Connecticut asked to see me when he arrived in Lake Arrowhead in 10 days. I usually shied away from tall guys, but the picking was very slim in the mountains, so I said I'd love to meet him (in public) and see if there was chemistry. He then replied he was undetectable. I made a joke, "But I see you right there," then thanked him for sharing his HIV status and assured him if we had chemistry we'd play safe.

APRIL 21, 2018

After making my oat-nut cookies and checking my emails, my morning routine was to walk the dogs through the forest to the lake. Passing a BEWARE OF BEARS sign, I heard a girl's voice. She sounded happy - I assumed maybe she was playing with her dog - and worried her dog may be off the leash - in which case it could run to Goliath and Goliath would attack, as he did to all dogs except David - so I pulled my dogs

faster and away from the girl's voice. Running down a hill we saw it was not a girl, but Mary. Not only was she not shuffling, she was walking like a normal person. Her body brace was removed and her hair was out and brushed and she was in make-up. She explained she heard there were sweet strawberries at the market. My assumption was she did not want locals to see her as a victim but in good shape; the pretty and healthy woman she was / had been / could be.

She pet the dogs as they jumped all over her, then we walked through the forest and town to the store while she explained the histories of the small cottages we passed.

APRIL 22, 2018

Walking the dogs the next day past Mary's house, she put down a new plant and greeted us with dog treats. I asked how many grocery bags she got the day prior, musing that whenever I went in for one item I came out with twenty. She said she bought four bags full, and it took her four hours to make the 20 minute walk back because she had to sit and rest every couple feet to alleviate her crippling back pain. When I asked what she bought, because she needed little since her friend was picking her up again tomorrow to drive her down the mountain, she explained she bought fruit, many sodas, juices and a few potted plants. *Plants??* Of course, it hit me, she's a hoarder. She can't resist buying things she does not need. But did she realize it was her own doing that caused her four hours of pain carrying those heavy bags yesterday? And who was going to water her new plants? Again, she was inadvertently a great teacher to me: a perfect example to show me the extra unnecessary work I put myself through many times – for naught - at my own doing as well.

Humans very often created extra work, and drama, instead of turning the other cheek and walking away. In Mary's recent episode, she said

yes to new plants, when they became an instant burden, and I wondered if having babies when she was a teenager could be another example of this. Far too often, in my opinion, parents welcomed a new baby, and later regretted it – and consequently created extra work for the rest of their lives. Certainly my schizophrenic brother killing our mom soured my views on children, and as a gay man I never had to seriously consider aborting a fetus... nevertheless, I credit my decisions to cut off drama and forms of dependents to having my burden-free nirvana.

APRIL 23, 2018

Got an email from Leon Accord, writer / producer of *Old Dogs New Tricks*, asking me back for another episode. Sure, I said. They only paid \$12 an hour but it was a funny, well-received show and many gay guys loved it. Any press always helped me sell paintings.

Went to Facebook and this cracked me up, so I reposted it: A man is at the optometrist getting his eyes checked. "You need to stop masturbating so much," the optometrist says. "Why?" asks the man. "Is it going to make me go blind?" The optometrist looks around and says "no, but it's making the other patients very uncomfortable."

Muhammad messaged me on a sex site:

MUHAMMAD: Hey handsome, I may be back up on Thursday. Are you available?

ME: yup. you got a great smile BTW

ME: great everything really

MUHAMMAD: Thanks, you too. I'm looking forward to hanging out when I have more time

MUHAMMAD: I thought you were a handsome guy!

ME: duh [my humor attempt]

Four days later:

ME: where'd you go?

MUHAMMAD: Sorry handsome, I had to work. I will be back up there this week.

Two days later:

MUHAMMAD: Hi Thom, are you available tomorrow late afternoon or early evening if I come up?

ME: yup

MUHAMMAD: Awesome. :-)

MUHAMMAD: I will let you know when I'm on the road tomorrow. Did you say you wanted to fuck me? Lol

ME: I want to fuck you

MUHAMMAD: Awesome! I'm looking forward to it

MUHAMMAD: I'm planning on being in Arrowhead around 12-1:00 PM today. How is 2:00PM? I will need your address. Not sure if I remember how to get back,

ME: Your ass is no longer YOUR ass. It is now MY pussy. Bring me your clean whore pussy about 2 and I am gonna watch my handsome self

fuck you in front of my bathroom mirror. [address].Hard to find.....
[directions]

MUHAMMAD: See you then. Go easy on me at first stud. Got to get my hole open. Do you like to use your fingers?

MUHAMMAD: I love assplay btw. I love to get my hole stretched. I like to have my limits pushed a bit.

MUHAMMAD: Just got in. I'm going to hit the shower now. I can be at 1:45

ME: clean that manpussey for me to shove my big hairy cok inside

MUHAMMAD: I'll text when I'm on my way

MUHAMMAD: I'm heading over now

Okay, I can look handsome from a distance in the right lighting, but seeing so many new wrinkles pissed me off and revived old insecurities. But at least as I aged my body was widening a bit – and for me – that was good news. My shoulders and arms were slightly bigger, and my chest was okay in good lighting, otherwise a bit flabby. If this was a blind date, I'd be real nervous, but we had already met and he reiterated he found me attractive – so what was I panicked about? But I was. I could not get an erection the last time – bizarre for me – but I NEEDED one today – so I put on porn as I cleaned the house... however that did not quite get me hard as it always did daily. As I scrubbed the tub on my knees with my naked ass out like a hooker, I sucked on a dildo – but that still did not get me erect. I opened a bottle of tequila in my cupboard and poured my first drink in years. Then I sat in front of the porn awhile and Vaseline'd my cock up – until I had an erection. But I lost it as Muhammad knocked on the door at exactly 2 PM.

I answered the door in my sweat pants and T-shirt – and he looked

hotter than ever – got a real short masculine haircut as butch as the black leather jacket he wore. I handed him treats to give to Goliath so Goliath would not bite him, and M came upstairs to my main floor. He noticed the porn on my TV and said, “Nice,” but I do not know if he meant it. If this were a date I would not be playing porn – but this was just sex. NSA, right? – his rule?

He declined a drink and I pulled him in the bathroom, to dominate him from behind, but truth be told I worried I was not getting hard though I tried for five minutes. Eventually we went to the downstairs bed – and I still could not get hard. He was very erect and enjoying me ordering him around. I kissed him, massaged him, shoved my limp dick in his face, held his legs in the air and when I could not get hard, fucked him with a dildo. He was loving it – and almost came many times – but I kept saying not to, to wait – believing I would get hard.

I even tried to fuck my Fleshlight fake vagina between pillows as I blew him and fingered his asshole – but – oy – my dick stayed flimsy. My sex actions were being repeated on him almost methodically, from my brain and not my heart or gonads, and time seemed to be going too slow, and he said he had to leave at 4, and checked his watch. It was only 3:20.

I went up to pee, and when I returned he had his jeans on and said he had to pee and went upstairs. I lay in bed a little cold and pulled the covers up. After he used the bathroom he came down and dressed, saying, “Why don’t you show me your art?”

I understood our sex was finished and hated myself for being impotent for the second time. Upstairs on the computer I showed him my BLUE X paintings, and my American Art Awards site, explaining that with my correspondence with the best museums and galleries in America, they may possibly someday buy my 100 BLUE X paintings for \$5,000 each, contingent on new fame coming, like maybe a new book or something.

He smiled appreciatively, "You have a plan."

"I'm an artist – we always have plans. But we're used to plans changing... Are you an artist? No, you're a contractor, right?"

"Yes. I have to get going."

It was only 3:30. I knew he had until 4. This was awkward. "Okay. Thanks for coming over."

"I had a really good time. I hope you did."

"Are you serious? Even with my floppy dick?"

"Yes," he kissed me, then looked away, "I am kind of discreet, so if you see me around town..."

"Right. You're married? Or have a boyfriend?"

"A relationship. We've been together 13 years but we don't have sex anymore."

I chuckled, shrugged, "That's so common it's predictable, right? I have never been in a relationship that long. Maybe if you guys saw a counselor?"

"We are so talked out. The sad part is that he does not have sex with me, but will not allow me to have sex with anyone else - probably afraid I will fall in love with someone else."

I quickly looked away, "So... you guys are not only a couple, you're in business together?"

"Major company, yes. He's my best friend. I can't imagine being without him."

I smiled, sincerely. I was happy he had a great companion.

"I'd like to see you again," he said, "But I don't know if you had a good

time?”

I locked eyes with him, then held onto him, tight. I took a deep breath, confessing, “I had a great time. I needed this. I have not had sex in 4 years, I have not HELD anyone in four years.... I’m a neurotic - much anxiety - very independent.”

He returned my tight embrace, nodding. “I haven’t been held in a long time either.”

It felt amazing to be held, and to hold. After a long minute I stepped back, smiled. Damn, he was handsome. He was exactly my perfect type. How could he have a lover that did not touch him?? I later messaged him on Adam4Adam.com to let him know how desirable he was:

ME: you are SO beautiful, stud

MOHAMMAD: :-) thank you

As the day replayed in my head, I thought maybe my tentative plans for sex hook-ups with others in Redlands were no longer a good idea - because I may not get hard. If I really wanted sex my dick would be erect – guess I really wanted to fall in love, and hold another man I cared about.

I did want to see Muhammad again, and was not under any false hope that he was my Prince Charming on a white horse. Maybe his semi-availability was actually a vibrational match for what I was: semi-available? *Was he the part-time man I fantasized about? I did not know.*

* 45: **OLD ROMANCE WITH A CELEBRITY REKINDLED**

HOW HONEST IS TOO HONEST?

The days after being with sexy Mohammad, of course I thought about him – but not in an obsessive way... not like me at 21 after the Key West one night stand with Mark Lee of The Village People, where I lay looking up at his hairy god-body motionless, afraid to tell him what turned me on – impotent in speech (although not in cock, which could not have been harder).

Mohammad messaged me on Adam4Adam:

MOHAMMAD: How are you doing handsome?

ME: powerless? LOL they shut off power all day to put up a telephone pole - so the dogs and I did laundry, grocery, walked a lot... but I cannot sit still,,, never could - always doing something... now I am back to being POWERfull baby ;) how are you?

MOHAMMAD: That sucks to be powerless. I've had a good day, long day, going to bed now. Good night:-)

Felt good for him to again message me the next day:

MOHAMMAD: I hope to see you soon, Mister. Want to hang out again?

ME: that would be a yes,

MOHAMMAD: Excellent. I will let you know when I plan to be up

I did not want to pine for him like a love-struck puppy, but was hoping he would message me the next day, Sunday, but on Monday I hoped he wouldn't. Our unsuccessful sex left me very confused. After being impotent with him, the next day I masturbated at my usual time, after

the long morning dog walk. More relief came from me returning to full erection (*whew!*) than the actual ejaculation. But after I proved to myself that even at my maturing age my equipment worked well, I had to concede my brain may not. *Oh the neurotic overthinking that went on inside my skull!*

Did my daily whacking to endless internet porn screw up my romantic potential? Who could measure up? Years ago my dick would be hard before I dropped my jeans at the very idea of masturbation, but in these past months it took weirder and weirder porn to get me at half-mast. X-tube offered extreme real life situations, like exhibitionists, which turned me on. Loved guys, especially truckers, sliming their manpoles in parking lots, or streaking through malls, or brazen dudes approaching strangers in public places for sex: beaches, parks, restrooms. There was even some Asian guy that daily posted strangers pissing on him as he lay naked next to urinals in public restrooms. That got me rock hard a few weeks, but as time went on, I needed something more extreme.

Thank god for 'family dick' porn site. Go ahead and quote me. I refuse to be shamed. If there is a god I truly thank Him for the father / son (legal age) roleplaying that is my most reliable orgasm, but categories that also never disappoint were hairy macho men.

My daily dolphin-waxing I considered healthy – until Mohammad. After that I wondered if any man could actually compete with me viewing on-screen sex, flipping through 15 fantasy scenes in half an hour.

MAY 11, 2018

It had been almost a week since I masturbated. That was extremely unusual - only twice before had I stopped for a week – both times due

to surgery recovery when it was impossible for me to shake my groove thing. For the first few days my plan was to save up my arousal for Mohammad, but he hadn't messaged in six days, and I had not messaged him. New stuff had happened...

Before I get to romantic matters, can we discuss how bizarre dating and sex sites are? While my profile was totally upfront, showing my recent face in many pics with my honest outreach for a partner, many guys showed only a penis picture. I personally have never pursued an independent penis nor hooked up with someone whose face I did not previously see, but it is not my place to judge. I do not think it's nuts [pun intended] to arrange sex from a penis photo, or have oral sex through a glory hole, although I never acted out on those common fantasies. However I do find it so weird when penis pictures contact me at a dating site and say "Hi, how are you?" *How does one respond to the small talk of a body part?* Keep in mind I am a celebrity, and try to avoid making enemies who could hate me eternally and say, to trash me to others, "I wrote to him at Adam4Adam and he never wrote back! Thinks he's too good, the old has-been queen!" So usually I tried to be nice back, and have written, "Hello penis. How do you TYPE??"

"A very big keyboard" was the funniest response.

Mohammad helped me realize I wanted a devoted partner. Being on five sites, I regularly had message exchanges with gorgeous guys who also wanted a relationship, therefore many of these past nights I drifted to sleep hugging a pillow imagining it to be the welder in Scotland or the policeman in Detroit or the ER nurse in Pennsylvania or the horse trainer in Arizona. Gillero from Mexico and I messaged on occasion – I was shocked to hear he was still afraid to come out to his family at 52. I did not follow up on the six foot marine who contacted me on Manhunt, nor did I meet any of the guys in Redlands when I went to do errands.

Nor did I want to see the married bisexual songwriter that I was falling

in love with ten years ago. He recently emailed me to say he finally told his wife he was into men, and she was fine with it, and he inherited five million bucks from his dad. He wrote saying he'd like to commission a painting (he never did) and write music again (but never did even after I sent him new lyrics and melodies). The photo he sent of himself was unrecognizable and I did not have old feelings for him anymore so when he stated he'd like to come up, I just ignored it.

Perhaps the most authentic and raw conversations I have shared were on FB with Ethan from Australia, the hairy handsome former sex worker. As a rule I did not allow myself crushes to foreign men unlikely to cross my path, and he was one of the many dozens of FB friends who willingly shared their own stories of sex abuse when I mentioned I was beginning to write this book, in 2016. At that point I had intended to include their riveting sex histories, but by 2017 realized that a book compilation of anonymous men's sexual abuse would have to stand on its own because my personal memoir sponged up hundreds more pages than I expected. Who would have guessed that I'd find myself so interesting? LOL

Ethan and I may have been friends for many years – I did not recall – but when he volunteered several years ago that one of his johns offered him \$10,000 to kill him in a surprise attack, I took note. Thankfully Ethan refused the money and over the years we opened up to each other, both having dealt with sex shaming and social anxiety. Neither of us put on airs or our best selves because we were not trying to impress each other as dates would – he was just a nice guy on the other side of the world. He was the NICEST guy – never made FB enemies or drama to my knowledge, and I enjoyed his realness on the electric pages of an otherwise world of posers, myself included.

When he shared he needed a life change and admired my secluded life, and confessed he was a longtime fan of mine, a small piece of my brain began to fantasize I could in fact import this sexy brawny beast. My mail-order dream man. Not only was he rugged with a hairy chest and a forest of treasure trail hair, he was incredibly honest, self-

effacing, funny, easy, and his greatest ambition was to heal people – as he did with his presence alone. Neither of us were prone to premature commitments, but over the weeks he shared he was ready for a new chapter in his life, open to coming here, and we could just share space or whatever comes up. Agreeing to meet and explore our vibes organically, I explained if he paid to get here, we'd share inspiring YouTube videos on consciousness, he could have my guest room for weeks (dogs would love company!) and I'd pay for food – and introduce him to vegan. Most beefy studs would dodge that, but he surprised me with, "Cool. My mom and her husband have been vegan 30 years. I was raised on it and would like to try it again."

Daily we shared more and more in messages and I was shocked at the secrets I would reveal to him – and him alone. He was the only person I confided my Mohammad experience to – because he was so open and nonjudgmental. That was when I told him I was not looking or sex, but for love. When Ethan posted a video of him (he was great but adorably self-conscious) and a Chinese girl singing (horribly) an Abba tune, I wrote I was officially in love with him.

He and I both knew I meant he was entirely loveable, not that I would stalk him nor concentrate solely on him.

Many times on the dating sites guys would hit on me, and there was probably a new guy every 24 hours I could envision as a possible mate – not because I was a crazy, needy stalker – but because I always lived in new possibilities.

On the morning of May 11 a really hairy guy caught my attention on Bear411, and we exchanged compliments, but further checking each other out, we weren't exactly the matches we wanted. I was 20 years older than he, which concerned him. But for a few hours it seemed love was near because he actually lived in Highland, CA – half an hour away.

On the same site, I got a message with a simple compliment saying:

HIM: handsome man...

The picture was an absolutely devastatingly handsome man in shorts. Bald with a very hairy muscular body. Looked like a super hero. His profile had about a dozen other images, all as flattering. He was about fifty I guessed. I read his words on his profile:



Relationship oriented and would truly like to meet someone to spend my life with. Consider myself to be an honest, upbeat guy. Straightforward with an open mind and affectionate heart. Looking to meet some nice guys with similar qualities. Looking for single men only. (Also not looking for total bottoms.) I work on trying to be a man for all seasons....to be interested in science as well as music, keeping the body fit as well as learning to expand the mind, and appreciate the arts. Lastly, to be a man of kindness and tolerance in this walk of life. Also a total romantic. Last of all.....if you're not into taking the next step and meeting for coffee, after we've chatted for a while and got to know each other a bit....let's not waste each other's time (for pity

sake...it's just coffee guys....not a marriage proposal!) P.S-if you are a gay Republican, move on

After he contacted me with “handsome”, I wrote back:

ME: damn dude - you're just my type... loved your profile... congrats on that extraordinary body - and rugged hawt face... versatile here... ever get to Arrowhead? how tall are you? - Thom

HIM: I know that's an issue for you as your profile says... I am 5-11. Haven't been up the hill for years but it's not that far away.

ME: here's the thing - I don't think big guys would find me sexy... I have been with lovers 5'11"... that does not turn me off to you... but I'm not built... not big-boned... In shape but smaller... but cock 7 and thick... but feel free to check me out - FB Thom Bierdz II... I post pics every day. you are VERY SEXY... def my type from your pics here [but I think your pics are evry man's type!]

HIM: FB Thom Bierdz II... where is this to look up? And height has nothing to do with attraction and chemistry and just being a good man... which I'm sure you are all of

ME: FB = facebook. go to FB and search for Thom Bierdz II

HIM: I'm not on FB and it will not let you see pics unless you are signed up

ME: really? you sure? hmmm..ok... and my FB is so impressive LOL shows me a celeb and all that... well, you can see my history at <https://www.americanartawards.com/>... that is my business... check out the THOM BIERDZ page -- but hey it's fluff and career promo stuff... I can email you pics - email me at [deleted].com :) or send me your email

HIM: sorry for the delay... i am doing errands... try to email you soon... marklee[deleted].com

(CUE "NADIA'S THEME" DAMN IT!!!) OH MY GOD!!!!!!!!!!!!!! This man messaging me was Mark Lee!!!! (Let that golden soap opera theme song rip wild - BANG those fuckin keys!!!) Mark FUCKIN Lee from THE VILLAGE PEOPLE that I had a brief sex encounter with in Key West when I was 21!! 35 years ago!! I never forgot how incredible every inch of his perfectly sculpted body was, but of course he would have no recall of me, a skinny Hollywood-bound boy in a partial mustache and cowboy hat. I typed, "MARK LEE!!! OMG !! WE..." then I deleted it. Why remind the world's sexiest faux construction worker I was a one-night stand that sadly disappointed him by laying between his hairy legs, afraid to tell him what I was into when he asked, a pathetic meebly mouse spineless skinny sex-shamed nothing. He must have had hundreds of dynamic studs over the years and thousands to choose from now, so do I expose our awkward past and risk losing his endearment? For 35 years I memorized his perfect body and wished for a second chance with him, believing I was out of his league. But here he was, a tender sweetheart of a man, looking for a "good" partner, not interested in just sex nor married guys, seemingly interested in ME, even though I was already listing reasons he should not be. If I answered his honesty with mine, I'd only reinforce how pathetic and forgettable I was. Right? I did not know what to do. A couple hours later he wrote:

HIM: impressive... now fair play... google... mark lee - village people

DUH, I know! Hmmm. I wanted to be honest but still hold my cards close to my chest, so I responded with only a few carefully chosen words:

ME: wow... you could say I'm a big fan... you have gotten even better looking with age... if that's possible

The idea of us actually meeting panicked me. Once a date gets to know me, he falls in love with me (ask my exes) but my tight scared face and neurotic eyes sometimes break my chances of romance with a stranger on first meet. I immediately rushed to the bathroom and

looked at my face. I looked old. As old as my birth certificate. My beard and mustache aged me, extending my nose and covering my soap opera face angles with gray stubble under dark beard dye. Needing to look better, I shaved my mustache off and my soul patch under my lip, leaving thick lambchop sideburns that met in a chin beard. That maybe erased some years. My cutting my own hair while trying to grow a pony tail also made me look younger – like eight years-old. *Hmmm. Not attractive.* As I took pics to post on FB, I spontaneously hit the video record and said a 30 second hello to Mark on my upper deck.

Emailing Mark the video, and messaging him at the site telling him I was emailing it, I was anxious for a response. None came. *Sometimes we cabin hermits forget other people have full lives; work places, families, social outings, etc..* By the next morning I had convinced myself my physical looks in the video which were different than my mustache and beard pics online turned him off completely, and he was ducking out, as I had done numerous times to men on these sites. Disappointed was an understatement – he was the perfect man – especially to me. FOR me, I even concluded. Nevertheless, my energy was needy – like when I auditioned for movie roles I never won.

Walking the dogs and shifting to my affirmations, I of course saw my life was great with or without him. In four days, I told myself, I'd send a note following up and suggesting we become only friends. I'd be fine with that.

By afternoon though there were three messages from Mark on the site, saying my video never went through and to try again. Relieved, I reshot the video to try to impress him more, but then decided the original take the previous night was best, so just messaged him the same video info.

While it was unusual for me to be neurotic about dating because of my years being blissfully single, it was typical for me to obsess about mindless details of many things as the clock ticked away. If someone

had read a screenplay of mine and saw potential in it, my brain would work overtime with excitement and anxiety of the most grandiose scenarios; the reason for my lifelong insomnia. *Yes, excitement teamed with anxiety were perhaps my most constant companions through my Hollywood decades, because around every corner came an opportunity for me to overthink, be it an audition or potential date or script sale or art sale or music lead, and on and on. Since I was an over-achiever and had many creative irons in the fire, getting a small role meant then B could happen then C could happen and then D would happen and then E, F, G, etc... Because this was so ingrained in my life experience as an artist living month to month, I did not mind my rampant overanalysis when it set in this time regarding Mark: was actually rare not to be excited and anxious about SOMETHING. He became my new obsession.*

Now it should be clear why leaving Hollywood for a secluded cabin felt like an actual death and ascension to a peaceful heaven: suddenly 95% of my overthink ceased upon arriving in the mountains. That being said I'd like to think my pattern of intensity regarding attaining objects of my dreams was not dysfunctional, rather productive in the sense I was an enterprising man who very often got what he wanted. *Maybe part of my Earth journey plan was the whole CAN YOU GET WHAT YOU WANT game?*

I wanted Mark. But if I were Mark, I wouldn't want me. I'd want a taller, more muscular hairier macho stud.

As hours passed with no message from him, useless scenarios of what he might be thinking of me polluted my typical high-minded thinking. In visualizing what our life could be like together, I tried to imagine how he could possibly find me sexy enough to want a monogamous relationship. All my exes did – and they were gorgeous men. Most were better looking than I was, yet I was routinely the one who broke it off, worried they were getting too attached and I grew paranoid I'd hurt them more later if we continued. *It seems they were in love with my personality, believe it or not, as much as my physical self. All my*

boyfriends loved my drive, my commitment to my creative projects, which often included them if they wished, my strong ideas, dominant psyche, perpetual honesty, kindness to animals and underdogs, and most of all my sense of humor and roleplay in bed. They were turned on by my unconventional artist choices. They were stimulated by my freedom living in my own world, on my own terms. They were invigorated along with me with the promise of one of my writing projects selling, as there was usually interest in *Forgiving Troy* as a movie...

How did my typical mountain days of 99% pleasure suddenly become filled with self-doubt – *was this to be expected in the dating scene?* Instead of feeling I was a great man with an easy secluded life, totally fulfilled, I suddenly switched into a man who felt he was not good enough for a sixty year-old Village Person. It should be stated that my competitive drive set early on, in my teens, and friends commented that no one else enjoyed pursuing jackpots as much as I. *Was I getting all hyped up on Mark because to me the chase was more exciting than the win? Or would a psychotherapist discover a buried need to rekindle a 35 year-old flame? Or to impress a bigger-than-life idol I disappointed?*

Oy - I had plenty of time to obsess in my leisurely days as I painted portraits of people's dogs and grandmas, but if Mark were to firmly reject me to a point I believed I had no chance, I'd find another superman to fantasize about within minutes. That's exactly how I was when on dating sites years ago. Rejected? No big deal, find another lead. As in my past, it took one to get over one. Being a spiritual seeker who endured nearly 30 years of Hollywood rejection, I never sulked when I hit a brick wall. I simply walked around it and set a new fantastical plan.

So I was in a dysfunctional pickle (familiar to millions of people): I was mad that this muscular stranger's body would not like my flawed body, because I myself did not like my body. After much analyzation, there seemed to be three ways out: avoid strangers, learn to love the

body I had, or change the body I had.

Between dog walks, I lifted weights harder than I had in years. Initially it was out of pathetic desperation, like a nerd fearing he'd be made fun of in the school showers, I was cringing at the thought of Mark's hard muscles rubbing against my soft parts. But in affirmations I repeated things about myself he could find sexy, and my confidence inched back.

MAY 14, 2018

After several days I started to believe I could actually have a perfect man like Mark be attracted to my 56 year-old countenance. But it was when my pull-ups and shoulder lifts drastically increased due to my adrenalin, that a wonderful thing happened. After lifting weights 40 years, my shoulder muscles finally looked like a man's, not a boy's. My concentration on being with Mark's body snapped me into a better body in just days, and for the first time in years my work-outs didn't drain me. I liked them. Suddenly I became Mark – and saw the distinct possibility that I could be hard-bodied and muscular, with a lover actually drooling over me, despite the lies of ageism in mainstream media. “No 56 year-old has a perfect body,” I could say – but it would be a lie—because Mark was older and he did. What was my excuse for not being as sexy as I could be? There's a million excuses out there. But hey – I was in perfect health. I had time to work out... I just had not been INSPIRED to. Until now.

Please do not misinterpret that I am saying the answer is muscles. The answer is realizing I do not have to covet another body – I have the ability to create it for myself. Certainly this is another rung in the ladder of lessons in my particular life journey teaching me nothing is out of my reach (as I believe the same for everyone). Who am I to preach on FB that we have no limits, when I myself bought into my 50

year-old idea that I was less than other men?

Mark wrote back that my hello video to him was “sweet.” To be described with an adjective fitting a boy scout deflated me a bit; I was hoping he’d say, “You’re sexy. Let’s marry.” *This is nuts to want to marry a man! I only asked one man in my life to marry me – a hairy porn star after a one-night stand. And I meant it. And I mean it today I’d marry Mark. This is crazy.*

I wrote back saying I’d like to meet him in person, maybe for a lunch, to feel if there’s chemistry, and to discuss a creative project I am working on that could in fact benefit him. I did not mention it was sex memoir, where he captures my heart at 21 and now again. Reading articles on him today I see he and I share many past circumstances, early fame to declining fame, sexual assaults (his from the Village People producer), music making. And his comments on those subjects could be added to this book, and possibly widen his audience, or perhaps initiate a sex memoir of his own.

His re-emergence approaching me out of thin air was a wake-up call for me to grow – be all I can be. If I were not strangely and suddenly obsessed with him, I would not have pushed myself into a place where I see a greater self in me. This was needed because now I can enter the best years of my life in better condition than ever before (with him or without him).

Perusing my emails I came across one from a month ago noting a voice that woke me up from a dream said to “Follow Mark” !! *Was this about Mark Lee? Follow him?? How??*

If he and I meet and fall in love then the last chapter of this book becomes an unpredictable and inspiring romantic tale, perhaps destined for decades since our first eye-contact 35 years-ago in a Key West disco, *that at least one of us remembers*. If he and I become only friends, maybe even participate in a book tour, it’s still a powerful coming-of-age piece where I stand my own against a godlike idol, no

longer the pathetic sex-shamed being I was at 21.

To the reader the disparate endings matter, as it delivers different levels of intrigue and pay-off. Please understand there is no bitterness when I tell you to me it does not matter at all. Not because he isn't a dream man, but because the lesson here is I am a dream man, and that I do not need another to fix or fill me. My heart is excited to share this with you – so you, too, know that you are absolutely complete without plugging into another body. We are born in separate bodies and learn the joys of love and attachment in relationships to other bodies, and that is intended and paramount in this journey on Earth. In my opinion too often people cling to others for disturbing and dysfunctional reasons, of need and desperation, which essentially can sink both of them. How wonderful when an adult is whole and not in need of outside love. Then they can love without expectation.

Oh I am ready for a boyfriend, and will pursue Mark, but if he's not interested I'll pursue another great man. But until he contacted me this past week I would have settled for men that did not wow me to this extent.

Do you see this is not all about me, but an inspiration for you to do the same? My blunt sharing puts me at risk of being analyzed as an eccentric out-of-touch hermit but I am a seeker first, a dog-dad second, an artist third, an actor fourth and a single gay man fifth. In my understanding of the universe, we create our worlds by our vibrational energy and actions. In the same way my lifelong dream to be a movie-star was only realized by me alone making a movie by myself to prove it, Mark and I do not have to really marry for me to know how that feels. *It is a brand new reality that I created and it feels great.* Now that I have had this new enlightenment, it stays with my consciousness, whether he in physical form will or not.

People get old and die when they stop creating exciting experiences. That choice is theirs. In no way am I ready to die or even get old.

Neither is Cowboy Gary, now in his seventies, who calls me from his ranch in Wisconsin time to time, and we share old memories, new philosophies and psychic breakthroughs.

MAY 15, 2018

Wished my dad a Happy Birthday, and Doug (tomorrow) as well.

Energy and productive action. It wasn't easy, but so far this year I have gotten over 50 articles written promoting the www.AmericanArtAwards.com galleries and museums. Last year, a press outlet backed out because we had a personal difference in political views, and Huffington Post stopped accepting contributor writers altogether, so I was challenged to find alternative sources of promotion in a hurried deadline. Working overtime, but from home, I did it. The galleries and museums are thrilled, and it was not appropriate to tell them the hurdles I overcame, but I share that here, as another example for you to see it is key to focus on the positive. You can do anything. You MUST focus on the goal attained, so you can be that vibration in a pretend state to attract it to a "real" state.

Abraham-Hicks: "What you are living is always an exact replication of your vibrational patterns of thought."

Got back from walking the dogs. This day I was carrying a concealed weapon and felt quite guilty about it – and my scary energy attracted frightening consequences. It was only a pair of scissors, hidden in a plastic bag, so I doubt I could've been busted for transporting this, but being a neurotic with paranoid tendencies my face and walking demeanor looked suspicious. As usual Goliath yanked me through the forest as I pulled David behind. We saw garbage bags ripped open on a hill above a condominium complex. A bear must have been around.

We cut through the lot and around the bend a bit and took the scenic treed street toward the lake. This area was so charming the road

should have been cobblestone – but the feel was there nonetheless. A friendly man my age was directing Mexican workers to build a stone wall, but the rest of the holiday estates were vacant as usual, so I trespassed the dogs through one yard and to the lake, where the object of my theft awaited.

Between two private piers, it was the only enormous Ponderosa Pine in the whole area with reachable low branches of pollen. Goliath's leash was chained to my waist, and I put David's on the grass, and with both hands free took out my scissors and chopped off maybe 50 ripe clusters of pine pollen catkins. This was not only one of the most concentrated super foods, if made into a tincture it was a phenomenal source of testosterone for men my age. This would be enough for the entire year. I wondered if I did have health insurance if I would opt for pills or lotions – but getting it straight from nature seemed much more organic.



Between worries that I could be arrested, I recalled a sex dream last night. I was fucking Mark, and then my beloved late Chihuahua Deen appeared in my arms. Just like three days after he died, I felt he actually visited me in spirit again, and the love of my life delighted in me petting him and our hearts beating as one. The proximity to the dream of Mark, a symbol for a potential new romance, was not lost on me (*Was I finally ready / willing to combine sex with LOVE?*)... I also noted seven days without ejaculating probably instigated a sex

release in my dream (but no semen).

Once my bag was filled with pine pollen, the dogs and I continued our normal walk around the Lake Arrowhead peninsula, passing the shops yet to open and admiring the ducks, geese and jumping fish. Before 8 AM the sound system played oldies, and today I heard my favorite song of all time, "I Like Dreamin," reminding me of my exciting young crushes when I first entered gay bars. Still, my guilt of stealing pollen stayed with me as we passed the rose garden and my low energy attracted Goliath and another large dog snapping at each other ferociously. Fortunately both were restrained and unable to make contact.

Only ten minutes later though, after I was questioned by a suspicious home owner why I walked by his house each day, the dogs and I continued the isolated forest path to home, ducking under monstrous blooming dogwood trees. Goliath went nuts barking at a black creature hidden in brush! Was it a bear?! I reached for the pepper spray on my key chain which wasn't easy as I was already holding a bag and two leashes. What emerged slowly from between branches was a large black dog. He inched forward as Goliath exposed his teeth and snapped to attack. I screamed "NO!" to the animal to keep him away from Goliath's bite as I tried to tug my dogs home, but the wild stray followed, so I clumsily grabbed a branch and threw it his way. He persisted, so I threw a bigger branch, hitting his leg, and he relented and ran away. Although twice on the street strays have approached us and Goliath got into violent fights, this close call on our wooded trail had never happened in seven years. I attributed it to the power of my current guilt energy, which, mind you, was daily aligned to deliberately create circumstances, more often than not with pleasant results.

Was my guilt affiliated with stealing testosterone in any way a metaphor for the guilt I grew up with regarding stealing Mom's Playgirl magazine and the porn from Dad's basement and the guilt of stealing homosexual sex and affection from men who supposedly my-

childhood-God wanted to be hetero? As this book closes written with the intent to resolve a life of sex-shaming – have I fully - or am I shamed to the core?

Within a couple hundred yards I saw a Mexican man cleaning garbage by the condominium lot and I waved my bag of pine catkins and yelled, “I just wanted you to know I did not drag that garbage even though I walk there - I live up there on that hill- but I never go through your garbage.”

“I know it wasn’t you,” he said. “My mother’s worked here twenty years. I know it’s the bears. But be careful – I just saw three coyotes up there!”

“Where?”

He pointed toward my house. “Looks like your dog’s smelling them.”

“Okay – thanks! I’ll take the dogs another way home.”

Using all my strength I pulled ballistic Goliath away from coyote scents and up a different trail. David followed quickly as I instructed him to. Passing Mary’s shambled house I reached into my pocket, suddenly aware it was empty.

Fuck, my fucking keys are lost!

My four-legged children and I retraced our steps back to the black dog incident and after kicking dirt up for what seemed like forever, I was able to see my pepper spray key ring.

Maybe it’s best to end this chapter with “Like so many men before me, I found my keys in the forest.”

*** 46: POSING NUDE, HOLY FATHER, MARY MOTHER OF STORAGE**

AUGUST 2018

The \$11,000 weekly painting reality series did not happen (but hey, it's the thought that counts, and for decades I got high on thoughts of huge success that did not fruit – that's okay with me – I still like the possibilities). Speaking of possibilities, though we never met, FB friend and Canadian singer/songwriter, James Collins, along with David Celia, co-wrote a song with me: "Gentle Road Back Home," inspired by lyrics pertaining to my brother Troy – so – who knows – maybe it'll be a hit! Made good money on www.americanartawards.com so I could actually afford the dentist now but not about to put \$7,000 to dental work that may not really be needed. I am investing however \$6,000 on book publicist Harlan Boll, so we'll see what happens.

All the major publishers turned down this book. A minor publisher said yes, and I was thrilled until discovering all he was offering was a very reputable house. His firm would not edit or get permissions for photos or content or take any liability with content. I was required to do all that on my own. I was shocked to hear he also does not get books in bookstores, and mainly sells through Amazon.com. Since the only other thing he offered was a professional book design (that he'd charge me for), I decided to self-publish this on Amazon and make 5 times what I would per book than if I did it under his brand.

Since we live two hours away, Mark Lee and I have not met yet, but he still expresses the desire to come here at some point, and I am also pursuing other guys – but no one special in my area yet. Been working out a lot since May, so how could I possibly pass up the opportunity to do a nude lay-out here, since I always wanted to do one, but was turned down twice by *Playgirl*? (Make that three times – last week I just emailed the editor the following pics to see if I could be featured in their mag to promote my *Young, Gay & Restless* memoir and they did not respond.) I don't think *Playgirl* gets to decide if I pose nude or not. LOL I think that decision is mine. (Most of these photos by my

sexy air force sergeant ex, Ron, who drove up to shoot these...)



Hair dye: \$9

Yard sale black cowboy hat: \$10

Walmart cowboy hat: \$12

56 year-old who thinks he should be in *Playgirl*: PRICELESS.

YOUNG, GAY & RESTLESS



As a skinny sex-shamed kid in the 1960's and 1970's, I craved to be masculine, strong and proud. I want all people to feel proud of who they are and for each of us to experience ultimate freedom.

THOM BIERDZ





Phillip enters the living room, fully exposed, vulnerable

...the week before I turned 18, I wrote a letter to God asking him to kill me before I was 18 if being gay was bad, because I felt I would grow up to be an important man...



If you think I am defacing the soap with nudity here you must think nudity is naughty. My intention is to compliment them with my pride and freedom.



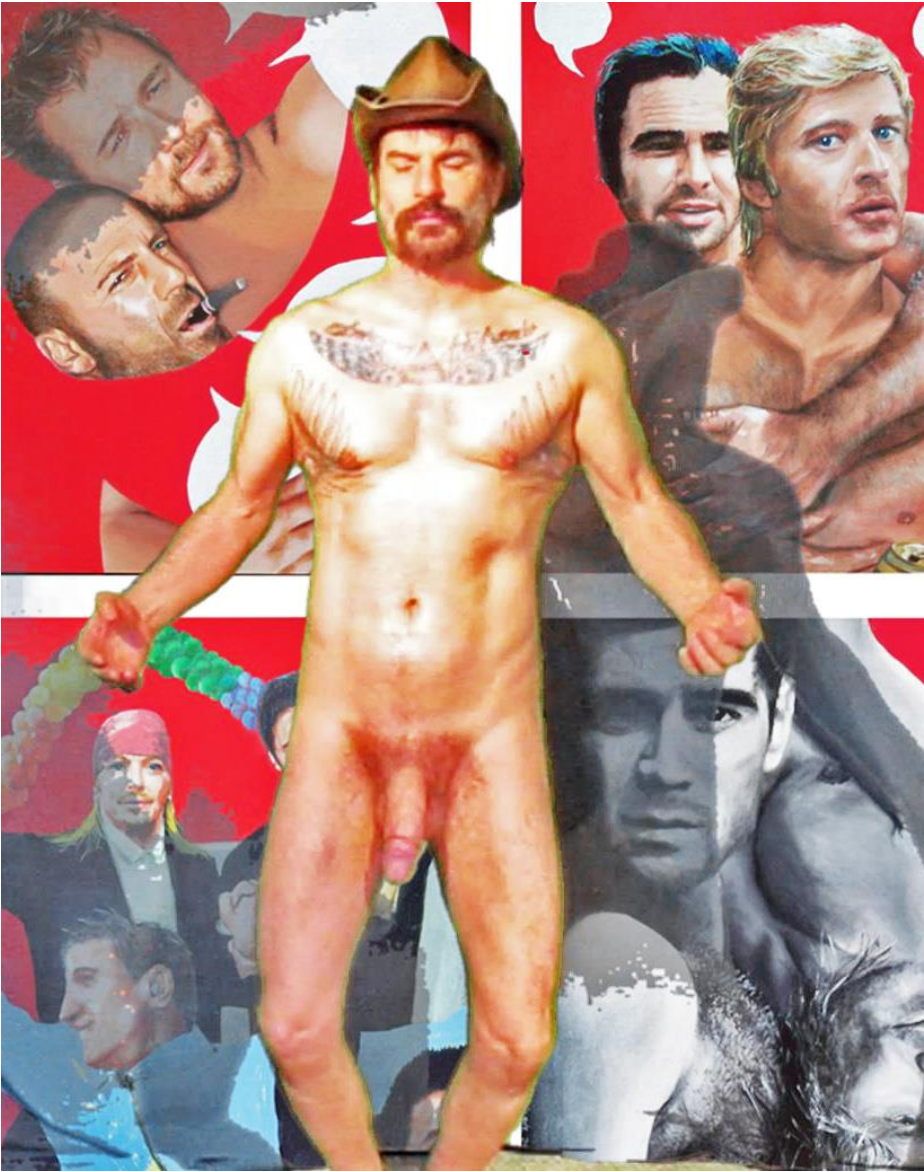
YOUNG, GAY & RESTLESS



**IS
SEX
STILL
NAUGHTY ?**

THOM BIERDZ





“I didn’t want to OUT any movie stars, so I painted straight ones as if they were gay. I realized I could give people a visual of the inevitable future when gay movie stars can come out and get married. I wanted people to see it’s sweet, not scary.”

THOM BIERDZ





(There are many more tasteful nudes in my new companion piece to this book, titled *The Erotic Photos And Paintings Of Thom Bierdz*, also available at Amazon.)

I made my life exciting and I was attracting success and consequently my vibration did not connect to Mary for months, who was in a rut.

When walking my dogs I did finally see her watering outside her house, and shared my good news, and suggested for her to focus on something positive to attract breakthroughs.

She let a tear fall, "But you don't understand. There is nothing positive in my life." She looked around in complete frustration.

She OWNED a house whereas I did not. It'd been 30 years since I owned a house! I wish I did. I asked, "Are you sorry to be here and not staying with your friends any longer?"

"Not on your life! I would get up at 2 sometimes and start cleaning... washing this.... cooking... I worked like a slave..."

"They made you do that?"

"They didn't make me, but I felt I should... but it was nonstop - they didn't lift a finger... and at one point she said I didn't ask you to come here and I said yes you did - 3 times!! You begged me to stay here - and to move in for good!"

My phone rang. I explained, "It's my dad. He sent me an email. I'll get it at home. What was your dad like? I know your mom was abusive but I don't ever remember you mentioning your dad?"

She smiled to the side, "When I was a baby he used to throw me in the air."

"Oh how fun."

"He didn't always catch me. Once time I was unconscious two days. He beat my mother so she'd lose her next five children. After they divorced, I hear he married 12 other women."

"Oh wow. So sorry. You didn't deserve any of that abuse."

"I wish I had a car. When I got the Capri I was in such peace. Only one other time I felt that peace."

"When was that?"

"1980. Met the perfect man. I married him - but 30 days later he said he wanted to go back to his wife."

“Damn. What did you do?”

“I slugged him.”

“Oh.”

“You dating?”

“I did have a short hairy middle-eastern guy come up a few days ago. Beautiful! My type! The good news is he brought his Boston Terrier puppy – and Goliath did not kill it, or eat it. After five minutes of Goliath’s maniac barking, he let the puppy get near him, even lick his face!! The bad news is even though I thought I’d want a completely submissive partner, and this guy wanted to be only submissive longterm, I think I’d be bored with a guy who is only following my orders, so I doubt I’ll see him again. I want a guy who is versatile.”

She coughed, “I don’t know who’s going to drive me down the mountain to pick up my new stuff.”

“You got more stuff?”

“The incredible deals I got when I was down the hill. I need someone with a truck to drive down with me and retrieve it all.”

I went decidedly mute. If I offered, I would resent placating her to get stuff that is only burdensome, and maybe my sour energy would create an accident or something. “Where will you put it? In storage?” I asked.

“I can’t. My storage down the mountain is costing me \$80 a month and cannot fit anything else. My storage up here on the mountain by Rim Valley is almost full but \$220 a month so I can’t afford to get a bigger one.”

“Oh my god. If you got rid of that, you could buy or lease a car.”

“I have \$250,000 of valuables. The most beautiful things. You have no idea. Treasures I collected over a lifetime.”

“Okay,” I said, “Do you want me to pick up your mail at the post office? I’ll drive there tomorrow morning if you want me to? I can drive you to the grocery store any time.”

“Oh, yes on the mail, please.”

I smiled and walked the dogs up the hill. We stopped and talked to Jose a bit as he took a break from chopping wood. On the way back, the dogs and I saw Mary again. She gave them treats then started quickly, “I think you’re right about getting rid of my bigger storage up here. Maybe I should throw some out, give most away and squeeze the rest in my smaller storage? The lady at storage says if I want they’ll get rid of anything I leave outside my unit and dump it.”

“That sounds great! I’ll drive you to clean it out.”

“Oh you will! That’s be fantastic! Thank you. I can probably do it all in one month, like 30 trips.”

“30 trips??”

She nodded.

“I’ll drop you off and pick you up three times at storage if you want,” I said, clarifying, to later avoid a misunderstanding. Since it would only take me one day to do the task, I figured giving her three was fair enough, and would concentrate her on the job at hand.

“Oh,” she looked down, then away. “So that’s three times each way or...”

“Yes. Three times I’ll drop you off, you can throw out stuff and call me to pick you up. Any three mornings. And I’ll come get you three times in the afternoons and drive stuff anywhere you want.”

She hugged me and then excitedly ran around playing with the dogs.

When I got home I opened Dad’s email, in response to me telling him I am hiring a book publicist and asking how much he paid for each paperback he gave to critics.

Dad: “I don't want to burst your bubble, but why do you think people would be interested in your sexcapades? I don't think there would be many buyers for Brad Pitt or Tom Cruise either.”

After making the dogs and I lunch, I emailed back: “My first reaction is you are 78 and I am 56. Why are you still trying to limit me? LOL You

told me I was not tall or good-looking enough to be a movie-star at 18 but nonetheless it was a dream glued to my soul I had to pursue. Were you right because I did not become Tom Cruise (who is my height) – or was I right because I almost did? And did have substantial acting success for a while?...

“I wonder if you think I would have been happier if I never left Kenosha and worked in an architectural firm - or became a priest like Mom wanted me to? Nah – I would not have been happy not following my dreams. I am not offended in any way that you do not see my potential with this book because I am used to us thinking differently by now. I support your writing, as you do mine for the most part, though I do not see why anyone would read your books only because I myself would never read a fiction book. Besides the new-age Jonathon Livingston Seagull and *The Alchemist* (and your books because you asked me to) I never have read fiction. But I would never say to anyone, “Why do you think people would be interested in your ____ book?” although I understand your intent is to help me.

“I have no idea if people will be interested in my sex memoir. I have been writing books since I was in my early twenties – but the only one people have been interested in is Troy killing Mom and that journey (which you told me no one would be interested to read). Although I wrote a dozen screenplays the only one people were interested in as well is *Forgiving Troy* – had several movie people interested, as you know. So – even though my others were never read, do I regret writing them? No. I loved every minute of the process – sitting in Hollywood coffee shops scribbling feverish notes, shaping, the poetic inferences, the self-analysis, the daily dreaming of the optimum potential – what a high! Ultimately, if no one cares about this new book, then I clearly did this for me alone, which is fair enough. No denying how self-indulgent I am, right? This fervent examination of my sexual past has been cathartic and informative for me, and I would recommend it to everyone. My self-indulgence does not hurt anyone – in fact, I still get daily messages how my earlier memoir has helped people – as I expect this one can.

“The book publicist I mentioned has put feelers out and said there is substantial interest in this book, so we’ll see. Brad Pitt and Tom Cruise could not write as honestly as I have. They have too much to lose. I

have nothing to lose. I live alone in the woods, deliriously happy, with dogs and squirrels.

“I don’t see my book being a great turn-on to people, as a book by Cruise or Pitt would be, mine is more of a funny neurotic guy who almost became a movie star. Which is why I also made my own movie a few years back – to prove to myself I could be. That’s enough. No one else has to confer. LOL I live for me, I write for me. A life of privilege for sure!

“I have 4 more books I’ll self-publish soon. Other men’s true accounts of sexual abuse, other people’s spiritual encounters, my vegan cookbook I’ll retitle something like *How To Be Healthy If You Can’t Afford Health Insurance*, and my Conscious Cards (Tarot-like cards).

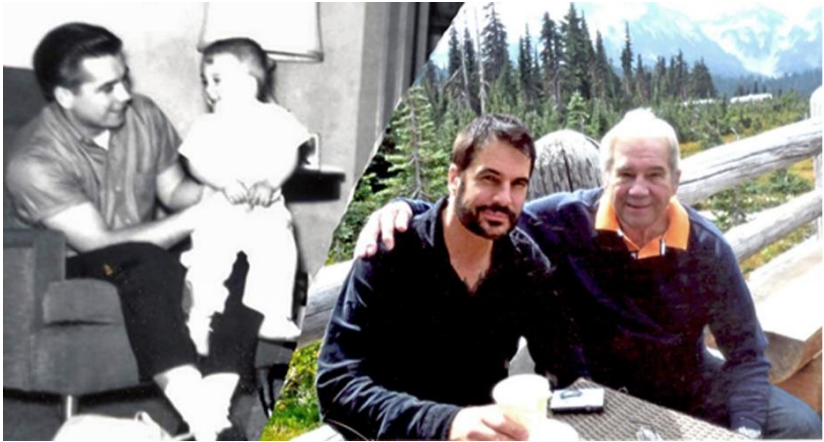
“I am hoping this sex memoir closes the door on my neurotic sex life, and currently I wish for an amazing partner to share my life and dreams with. Now that my sex life is organized and filed, I want to pursue my spiritual dream of being a medium and giving people messages from the dead. We’ll see what happens... I doubt WANTING this really bad is enough to make it happen LOL --- maybe other entities need to take charge? Oh well - I am willing – to be a great man(of message?) – no limits – for any of us. ☺”

As I emailed dad the response, I wondered if my persistent sexual father-figure fantasy is a subconscious yearning for a father to love me more? My dad is a great guy, very nice, patient, respectful (and a better dad than I would have been), but he never doted on me like mom did. Dad never said “You’re SUCH a great student! Or you’re so NICE to everyone. Or you’re SO good-looking – or SO talented – or SO kind – or SO interesting – or SO successful – or SO admirable. I am SO proud of you! So very proud to have YOU as a son!!” Of course, his parents never told him those things either.

Perhaps there are millions of men in my shoes looking for that facsimile in porn? I am just wondering, for the first time, if dad had said things like that, or believed them, if I’d be hunting for that paternal validation elsewhere? I wonder if as a soul lesson, it was paramount that I myself believe those complimentary things about myself this lifetime – that my beginning circumstances set up the challenge for me to defy limits set upon me from the outside? This sex

memoir certainly defies the sex-shaming era of my childhood - growing up gay and Catholic in the mid-west in the 1960's / 70's, when gays like me were belittled, beaten, murdered or killed themselves or deeply shamed, even marrying women under false pretenses, then hating them and ruining their lives. I shifted that persecution possibility into becoming the first openly gay actor in a soap opera principle role. Been a long journey and I went from hating me to loving me, and watching American gays go from being hated to being loved.

After I did my sit-ups, I checked my email for Dad's reply:



Dad: "If I ever said you weren't tall enough or good-looking enough to be a movie star, I apologize. I don't remember that, but these are things you would remember. You've proven you have been.

"No, I've never thought you shouldn't follow your dreams. I urged you to go to CA. I resent the fact that I didn't have the courage to do it myself. So I applaud you.

"I'm 80 by the way and I appreciate your self-exploration and your fortitude. I never hear you complain. I find that admirable.

"I'd rather be supportive and not critical. I never opened your sex memoir so I don't know the focus and I don't want to know your personal experiences. I just don't think there is a market for it and I don't want you to be hurt.

"I love you."

I wrote back: "... and I love you too"

THE END

IS SEX STILL NAUGHTY ? ...

When I first started writing this book my three goals were:

- 1) Pay rent.
- 2) Combat sex shaming.
- 3) See if I have really overcome my personal childhood sex shaming / issues.

While it's possible readers will not like me, be disgusted by me, look down on my alternative choices and perhaps name syndromes after me, do I regret writing this? Naw. A second-cousin just proofed it and messaged me, "WOW! I wish I could be that honest!" It is indeed freeing and healing to share; especially the things we are embarrassed about. How few people can be as honest as I can be? Can you imagine how freed and healed I feel?

Looking back, I could have stayed on the soap opera and been on it 32

consecutive years by now (my legacy character, Phillip Chancellor III, was in one of the four central families and connected to all the other main characters). There's a gay-closeted actor on the show (who I like a great deal) and perhaps we share emotions with the characters in the movie *The Turning Point* (Anne Bancroft and Shirley MacLaine played dancers who forked off very different lives, and envied each other). I know this actor envies my unabashed, rebellious gay-activist freedom, and in turn I envy his talent, his Emmys, his bank account and mostly his confidence. I would not be socially anxious today if I had lived his schedule these past decades because comfort in groups for introverts is a muscle to be grown. However, if I had stayed with the show I would have been bored. I've never stayed with anything that long. Being fixed or stable is not a good thing or a bad thing, it's just not who I am.

Because my history has been a roller-coaster ride, does that indicate an unpredictable, exciting future as well?

I love life and what it promises.

Peace –

Thom

THANK YOU for reading of my sexual liberations – on-screen and off! (This is also a 430 page paperback with black and white interior, available at Amazon.)

Message me at Facebook Thom Bierdz and let me know if this was liberating for you in any way. ☺

Feel free to follow me on FB or at www.ThomBierdz.com (I can paint for you) or if you're a fine artist, at www.AmericanArtAwards.com where I may be able to send your work to America's best galleries.

Other books by Thom Bierdz:

THOM BIERDZ

(NEW) *The Erotic Photos And Paintings Of Thom Bierdz* (check Amazon)

Forgiving Troy, A True Story of Murder, Mental Illness and Recovery.

Other books ready to be published by Thom Bierdz:

Easy Vegan Recipes...

They Want to Help Us; A Collection Of Spirit Guide Accounts

Conscious Cards (book and deck of Tarot-like cards)

Anonymous True Accounts From Male Victims Of Sexual Assaults