

Cosmic Chronicles

Part 2

1976--1982

SEDUCTION IN SANTA MONICA

It was the fall of 1976, and Michael was watching Los Angeles crumble down around him. There was no earthquake, and the city's light-dotted monoliths and freeways, seemingly sculpted by the hand of a giant, stood firm as ever. But his personal L. A. was disintegrating.

His ex-wife had moved, with his help, back to her home town of Lee's Summit, Missouri. The Corinne affair had dwindled gradually to a memory. Andrea, the young sexy blonde who had brightened up his life for a time, suddenly split back to Erie, Pennsylvania, leaving only a note and a phone call from down the road.

Financially, things were nearly as bleak. A real-estate con-man named Bill Reilly had disappeared, leaving Michael holding a bag full of loans and two lost mortgages. He still had his job at the adult bookstore on Hollywood and Wilton, a Datsun pickup that the bank wanted to repossess, and a 1969 Honda 350. He needed a place to live. He could have rented a small apartment, but he needed to save all the money he could.

So, when John, one of his best friends, offered him a room in the 2-bedroom house that John and his girlfriend Terri rented in Santa Monica, he gladly accepted. John's personality was quite different from Michael's. John was a tall, muscular Texan whose voice filled any room with his drawl. He was outgoing and usually became the center of attention. He loved to drink beer, shoot pool, darts, and pinball and chase women-- a great guy to go to a bar with. John was sure of himself; the kind of a guy you assume that women would prefer. John did get some good women. He had been living with Terri, a pretty, intelligent Jewish girl with nice breasts and a mischievous smile, for several months. She seemed to adore him.

John was a cook. He was good at it, and fast, as he would not hesitate to tell you. He had just landed a better job with a restaurant chain that had a branch in the Bay Area. He had been assigned to work there for a few months before returning to work in L. A. It was convenient, then, that Michael would be there to watch out for Terri while he was away. Michael saw no problem with that. He had no inkling that, even if he wanted to bed his best friend's girlfriend, he'd even have the slightest chance with her.

For a few days after John left there was no problem. Terri, aware that Michael had no current woman, offered to introduce him to a friend of hers. Diane turned out to be a short, cute very Jewish girl who seemed like fun. He made a date with her for the next weekend.

Meanwhile, one evening Michael and Terri went out for dinner as they did occasionally because Terri was a vegetarian and a reluctant cook. Over her vegetables, his meat, and a couple of beers she said, "*Michael, I'm in love with you.*"

He may have choked on his beer, or dropped his fork, or both. He said what any intelligent person would say in that situation: "*Huh?? Say WHAT??*" He was totally surprised. After a moment of thought he managed to say, "*Terri, you're a very attractive woman, and I'm highly complimented that you could feel that way about me...but I thought you loved John, and he's my friend.*"

She said, "*Yes, I know, and I thought you'd be loyal to him, but I just had to tell you.*" And she smiled, not exactly the sad smile of an unrequited lover, but almost a mischievous smile that said, "*This story isn't over yet.*"

Michael felt uneasy. It was rare enough for a woman to love him out of the blue, but for that woman to be, by his standards of friendship, one he must refuse, was an entirely new experience, and not a pleasant one. There was a boost to his confidence, but it was outweighed by the frustration of having to say "*no*" to a desirable woman who wanted him. He resolved to do the right thing by his friend, and hoped that Diane would turn out to make it easier to stand the strain.

At first the matter seemed to be settled. Terri talked no more of love, and Michael's date with Diane was only a few days away. Besides, John was coming back for a weekend soon. In casual, joking conversations, Terri would mention that Michael hadn't been laid in weeks, which was already foremost in his mind. As he sat and watched television she would occasionally touch him-- nothing overt, just a brief brush on the arm; a fingernail on the ear. Perhaps her long brown hair would tickle his shoulder in passing. She would sit near him, usually on the floor by his feet. At unexpected touches he would jump as if stung. If he saw one coming, he'd still have to take a deep breath. She knew intuitively that his whole body had become an erogenous zone. He was a loaded sexual cannon with a hair trigger.

At first he endured this exquisite torture, because to mention it would be to openly acknowledge his pent-up desire. Finally he said softly, "*You're going to have to stop doing that.*"

She grinned mischievously, and a bit triumphantly. "*You ARE hot, aren't you?*" She sat in front of him on a footstool, gazing at him while he tried to concentrate on the TV program. Then, without a word she took his hand, pulled it gently toward her, and sucked sensuously on his middle finger. The effect was intense, though she did it only for a moment. His resistance was down to zero, but she did nothing more then. When he stood up to go to his room he was shaking slightly, and sweating despite the cool evening breeze. He needed desperately to get in bed and take the situation in hand. He undressed and slid between the cool sheets. Just as he began to try to relax, the door handle turned. He turned over on his stomach and propped himself on his elbows. As she walked into the room she said something like "*Do you need an extra blanket?*" She sat down on the bed, and before he knew it she was touching him with her

hand, then with her lips, and almost before he knew it, he was coming and she was swallowing.

They looked at one another for some moments, both recovering from the sudden intensity of the experience. They had crossed the invisible barrier into the forbidden zone, and there was no going back; no more resisting. Finally he said, "*Well, now that we're here...*" leaving the sentence unfinished as he slipped off her panties, kissed her soft inner thighs, and began returning the pleasure with interest.

After that night they enjoyed each other often, but resolved to do nothing to hurt John. He was not to know, and she would not leave him to be with Michael. When John returned to Santa Monica, things would go back to normal. Michael's date with Diane was coming up, as was John's visit. Terri no longer wanted Michael to see Diane; she wanted him all to herself, but she agreed that if Michael did go out with her it would keep John from being suspicious. (In such situations, the guilty do imagine being suspected, even if they give no reason to be). "*But, don't fuck her*" Terri said.

But Michael and Diane hit it off nicely, and they made love in his Datsun pickup; a bit cramped of course, but fun. One night they tried the roof of the apartment building where she lived with her parents, but it was too chilly and uncomfortable. John came and went, and Michael and Terri were again alone in the house. One night Michael went out with Diane, while Terri was working at her waitress job. He took Diane to his room at the house for some enthusiastic sex, took her home, picked up Terri at work, brought her home, and made love to her on the same spot. It was quite a satisfying night; it was the closest he had ever come to having two women at once, and each was equally exciting.

Michael felt no guilt about "*cheating*" on Terri. The notion was absurd-- he had already committed the ultimate betrayal of his friend for her, so the least she could do was share Michael with her best friend. Michael would like to have believed he had no hand in his own seduction, considering the passive role he played until it happened. But there are no victims of love; only volunteers. And as the ancient Romans knew: *Penis erectus non compos mentis*.

Although he was not one to make himself miserable with remorse, he knew that to remain in the house with Terri was only asking for trouble. It was December, not the best time to leave sunny Southern California, but there was nothing for him there but creditors he couldn't begin to pay. Besides, he thought, eight years was long enough to live anywhere. He traded his untitled pickup and the Honda for a camper trailer, bought Jim's faithful 1967 Falcon, and headed for Kansas City.

Terri later found out about the night he'd had both her and Diane, and she was furious. He hadn't meant to hurt her. He liked her, and hoped she'd understand. But the relationship, begun as it was, was probably best ended as it was.

Kansas City

September 1977

With his experience at Le Sex Shoppe, Michael got a job at an adult bookstore and arcade in downtown Kansas City. For a while he stayed with Kay in Lee's Summit, spending some pleasant time with her. They had stayed friends despite the divorce, and enjoyed one another. Neither of them, though, were quite inclined to simply resume the relationship they had in 8 years of marriage.

He had heard from his friends Jim Beckner and John George; they were both living in Charlottesville, Virginia and working as chefs. It sounded like an interesting place to live. Soon Michael loaded up the blue Falcon and headed east. It did seem pleasant there; it's a college town, a feature which usually raises the average level of intelligence, and not just any college, but the University of Virginia, founded by Thomas Jefferson himself, who firmly believed that a government of the people needed an educated electorate.

The first available job was in an insulation factory, where bales of old newspaper were ground up, mixed with fire retardant, and turned into a substance that could be blown into attics. The building was extremely hot, and the air was filled with newspaper dust. It was not pleasant, nor did it pay well.

The city was appealing, though. There were several casual taverns catering to college students, frequently featuring live music. The best one was called the West Virginian, located in a basement. At the time, Virginia prohibited bars from giving away salty snacks, considered an enticement to drink more, so this one provided unsalted peanuts in the shell. It was traditional there to drop the empty shells on the floor. By the end of the night it was covered in broken shells

The university was quite interesting. The old part was a red brick quadrangle. It contained a long row of tiny dormitory rooms, each with a narrow bed and a wooden desk and chair. They were barely big enough for one person. One of them was cordoned off and designated with a plaque: it was once assigned to Edgar Allen Poe. One might imagine poor Mr. Poe sitting on the wooden chair in the cramped austere room, writing his strange tales and poems, on a stark and dormy night.

Michael soon found better work as a cashier at the Lucky 7 convenience store, a friendly and cheerful place. In addition to the usual groceries and sundries, it sold hand-scooped ice cream.

The West Virginian was a good place to meet women. There was Cindy Land, and a small slim blonde named Michelle who called herself "Mike". They were casual relationships. But it was at the Lucky 7 that he met Susan Boze. She came in one evening, and Michael overheard her telling her friend that some treat was "tempting". He commented humorously, "We don't sell temptation in here." He didn't realize Susan was religious, and she thought that was very funny. She was very cute and shapely, and the two became friends, but not intimate. Though she was afflicted with religious belief, her rationality and her passion were struggling to be free. He was patient with her, but to no avail.

It was a surprise and disappointment to find that John had decided to go back to Texas, and that Susan had gone with him. Neither had said "goodbye".

A Damsel to Rescue

But a week or two later, Susan called to say they had parted ways and she was stranded in Lake Charles, Louisiana. Michael could seldom resist a damsel in need of rescue, so he fueled up the Falcon and headed southwest.

It was his first trip into the South, down through the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and finally Louisiana. It was nearly 1200 miles to Lake Charles. The trip was unremarkable except for one rest stop/tourist center in Alabama. Michael stopped to use the restroom, looking like he'd been driving all day with the window down in a car with no air conditioning. He wasn't expecting greeters in "southern belle" costumes, drawling "Welcome to Alabama" and handing out Pepsi and snacks. He marveled that the hospitality was unabated even by his scruffiness. It didn't occur to him then, but he had the benefit of white privilege.

He pulled into Lake Charles and called Susan. She was staying with a plump guy who drove around town in a 3-wheeled cart formerly owned by the Post Office, and lived with his mother. Susan had no definite preference for where to go next, but she had westward in mind, not back to Charlottesville. She had befriended a young man who wanted a ride to Denver to re-unite with a girlfriend there, so that would be the next stop.

In a day or two the three piled in the blue Falcon and set out, driving through miles and miles of Texas until turning north for Denver.

The girlfriend of the third passenger was Kyle, a young lady who danced at a nearby topless beer bar. She was pleasant and friendly, slim and cute, not the glamorous type that some dancers try to be. She shared the apartment with Steve, and it was never entirely clear whether they were sleeping together before the boyfriend came back. Both men seemed attracted to her, but they evidently formed a truce. Michael and Susan were invited to stay

Life in Denver was entertaining. Kyle's apartment was rather like a soap opera. Guest stars included a not-quite-serious motorcycle club called the Deadmen. They hung out at the topless bar that Kyle danced in, which served 3.2% beer for those aged 18 to 21. Steve and Michael got jobs at a shop that made wooden furniture for children. Winter came to Denver, but the city is quite efficient at clearing snow from the streets. Denver isn't a bad place.

One night music from the Airplane soared into the room with its message to lovers:

If only you believed as I believe, we'd get by

If only you believed in miracles, so would I

Michael turned it up. 'I like that song', he said. "It means something to me."

Susan looked surprised. She was thinking, "*Atheists don't believe in miracles. Only Christians do.*"

Miracles are not supernatural. Miracles are not wrought by deified ghosts, but by individuals who dare to believe in themselves and their own abilities. The realm of the possible has not yet been fully explored. The Great Pyramid, great works of art throughout the ages, incredible discoveries of science-- these are the true miracles, man-made by people unwilling to settle for the ordinary, and unafraid to strive for the ultimate.

Some of us are artists, and some are scientists, but we are all capable of creating the miracle of love, a love between two human beings, overcoming emotional and physical obstacles, ripping down barriers and coming together.

It is a work of art more than science, and though it exists only for the ecstasy of two, one miracle of love makes the universe a better place.

Michael was hoping for progress with Susan, but it didn't seem to be happening. She was sometimes affectionate, but only up to a point. Patience was wearing thin. One night in December in a snowstorm, Michael pointed the Falcon east on I-70. Alone on the road, alone in the car, he floated, fast and friction-free, to Kansas City.

*To flee from danger is no vice.
A change of scene is sometimes nice.
But one can't leave oneself behind;
To run won't cure a troubled mind.*

*Look behind you as you run.
Have you left a thing undone?
Do you fear a face? A name?
Or will your new fears be the same?*

*As you go, you may look back,
And think of what you're going to lack.
Sometimes that golden road ahead
When trod upon, will turn to lead.*

*It is within, from which you flee.
In darkness it is clear to see:
Running will not make you blind;
You cannot leave yourself behind.*

--Michael, June 22, 1978

Kansas City Again

4037 Warwick Blvd., Kansas City, MO

Not long after returning to Kansas City Michael met Robin Massey. She was tall and shapely and enjoyed sex. They saw each other frequently, and enjoyed one another. It was not exactly a romantic relationship, though it didn't occur to Michael at the time to notice whether it was or not.

"Making love" might be a misnomer. Love is given, may be accepted, and may be returned. But love is not MADE that way. It is shown and felt in warm caresses, if it is there, but it is made elsewhere; created somewhere in the mind. When a relationship is fun, affectionate, and pleasurable, it isn't always necessary to define it.

Not long before they met, Robin's brother was killed. There was a conflict between mafia

organizations, and he was evidently an involved victim.

It was one in a series of several murders in the feud between families. Here is the background:

May 4, 1978 -- Local hood, thief and Bonadonna-loyalist Michael (Minuteman Mike) Massey, Mancuso's partner-in-crime and an informant that got Kansas City mobster Anthony (Tiger) Cardarella busted for racketeering, is shot to death behind the wheel of his car.

The Kansas City mafia erupted into war in the late 1970s related to an internal dispute over control of the city's River Quay neighborhood, its then trendy nightlife and entertainment center. The unrest set off a near decade of violence and instability in the Civella crime family. On one side of the feud was ambitious and bloodthirsty Civella clan capo and street boss William (Willie the Rat) Cammisano, intent on turning the neighborhood into a red-light district. On the other, K. C. mob soldier David Bonadonna, his businessman son Freddy, who had spearheaded the real estate development and economic resurgence in the area, and their main muscle, the independent Spero brothers (Carl, Joe & Mike), upset with the Civellas for killing their older brother and underworld mentor Nick in 1973. The Bonadonna faction resisted the crusty Cammisano and his crew's move into the neighborhood and their desire to rebrand and tax local establishments for fear that it would drive consumers away, which it wound up doing.

[Key Of Death: The Kansas City Mob's Raucous River Quay War Murder Timeline](#)

Michael never met any of Robin's family. She didn't talk about them, other than a mention of her brother's assassination. She also didn't speak much about how she felt about it all. No doubt it was family business, not to be shared outside.

Oddly enough, the little bit he did know ended up costing him his job at the adult bookstore on Troost. He had been working there for several months, doing well and enjoying the job. The area manager seemed to be a nice guy, and they had friendly conversations when he came around. Mentioning Robin and her brother once was a mistake. Though he did not comment at the time, the owners in Atlanta were likely connected to a different family and did not tolerate even a casual connection to what might be a rival group. The manager didn't give a plausible reason for the termination, but it wasn't hard to figure out.

That turned into an opportunity-- he got a better job working for Yellow Cab of Kansas City, checking drivers in and out for their shifts and accounting for them. It paid more.

Susan Boze suddenly appeared in Kansas City with a virtual jar of peanut butter and a new point of view. She was deliciously perfect, but her timing was flawed. Had she come before Robin, or after Robin flew, they might have had many more nights.

Some weeks later, Michael and Robin broke up. Exactly why, he didn't know. He missed her.

July, 1978

Then there was Shelly, his first Jewish girl. She was a little bit neurotic, but had a quirky sense of humor. After a few weeks, she took a trip to Seattle. She sent a postcard saying "Seattle is cold. The Space Needle was nauseating. May kill myself." A second card said "Spent \$150 my first day here! I am already dining

out of trash cans (salmon tails aren't too bad) Plan to send myself home COD. Thinking about you."

He didn't hear from her again, though. Perhaps she stayed in Seattle.

LOOKING

My gaze pierces the night,
searching for the face.
Searching for the mind.
Searching for the future.
My eyes find only games to be played,
night-long games
programmed To end at sunrise.
So I rise, and go
where aloneness is what I expect.
Resign for the night from the race,
Only to hover near the track again tomorrow:
The beaten track. The well-worn rut.
Pit fear against desire;
see who wins and who loses.
Hang out like a bell clapper,
hoping to be tolled: 'Yes!'
--Michael, June 12, 1978

Michael would occasionally visit a tavern or two on weekend evenings. When, as was often the case, he was heading home alone, he stopped for coffee. One night an IHOP, open 24 hours, was convenient. He wasn't expecting that it would change his life for many years to come. His waitress was Jill Greenberg.

Jill

She was 18, cute, and energetic, but it didn't take too much conversation to reveal there was much more to her than that. Her sense of humor and quick wit were a match for Michael's. He was soon delighted by her. He drank coffee until she was done with her shift, and they went to his apartment. A relationship began that night that would last through several years and several cities. His attraction to her fun and sensual nature likely turned to romantic love the first time she played her guitar and sang for him. "Nights in White Satin". There was a certain strong emotional power to her voice and the way she used it.

It quickly became a nightly affair. Though younger, she had seen more of the world than he had. Born in Tom's River, New Jersey to parents who staffed American schools for the State Department in places like Tegucigalpa, Honduras and Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, she had grown up a world traveler. Her father had then settled in North Kansas City and started an import business, wholesaling cheap handmade trinkets he had found while traveling. Perhaps Barry Greenberg once had ideals as an educator, but he had turned to cynical commercialism.

Jill, however, had developed an appealing personality and talent for both graphic and musical art. She quit the restaurant for a job with Western Union, which specialized in singing telegrams delivered along with bunches of balloons on a stick. It suited her much better, a chance to perform, delight, and entertain people and get paid for it. In prior times she had once written and

performed an entire musical production celebrating the story of Moses for the Pesach Jewish holiday.

Not all of Jill's traveling had been with her parents. She had once set out on her own, ending up in Austin, Texas, making several lasting friends there. Austin, home of the university, has long been (and still may be) an island of intelligence, progressive attitudes, musicians, artists, and hippie culture, relative to the harsh conservatism found in most of the state. The city's ambition was to avoid being like Houston, the huge urban sprawl driven without restraint by commercialism and oil wealth. Austin has a wide variety of music-hosting taverns and night clubs, artists and handcrafters, a head shop called Oat Willie's, whose motto is "Onward Through the Fog", and Hippie Hollow, the only legal nude beach in Texas.

All things considered, Austin was a much more interesting place than bland Kansas City, and Jill had a hankering to go back there. She didn't press for Michael to move with her, knowing that he had a good steady job with Yellow Cab of Kansas City, but certainly he was welcome to follow her there if he chose. By that time he was sure that she should be in his future. Her name was actually on his right arm.

One day Jill had observed that Michael, despite his counter-cultural identity, did not have his left ear pierced. His thought on that was that it may be conforming to nonconformity, a self-contradictory act. He told her he'd rather get a tattoo. There was an artist nearby, so they made an appointment. A seagull flying through clouds over the ocean resulted, beneath which, at Michael's request, was inscribed "Jill". Whether or not that assured her of the permanence of his affection, it stimulated the direction of her art talent, which was later to become her destiny.

Of Her Guitar, she wrote:

When I bought her in the beginning, she was just a thing, not even a pet to be broken in. Just 6 strings, just a red wood thing. I was sad and bored with nothing to do. So, I decided to take up the guitar-- just something to do. So, I taught myself, don'tcha know.

Austin 1979

Americans are forever searching for love in forms it never takes, in places it can never be. It must have something to do with the vanished frontier.~~Kurt Vonnegut

Verus amicus est tamquam alter idem.

A true friend is like another me.

To Jill

Smooth as ice cream
Warm as the sun
Soft as clover
All in one
Perfect form
Round where you should be
Arms around me
Loving as you could be
Good as a goddess
I marvel at you
Offer you hot love

And tenderness too
Love when you feel me
Love when you come
Love when you tell me
I am the one.
The love's in our bodies
The love's in our souls
The oneness of us
Will never grow cold
The oneness in closeness
Grows more every day
But it hums like a wire
From miles away.
---July 28, 1979

Not long after Jill traveled to Austin, Michael resigned his taxi company job, gathered his belongings, and moved there too. Jill's friends in Austin were mostly involved with Alcoholics Anonymous. Though her status as an alcoholic was mostly a pretense, she found the group a source of emotional and psychological support, less formal than a therapist but more generally caring. They were good people in various stages of trying to be better ones.

Michael learned a great deal about the program, which seems to have helped a great many individuals. Its use of a generic "higher power" concept allows it to be useful to the religiously inclined, while open to loose interpretations of the term acceptable to nonbelievers as well.

Soon Michael found a job at a Christmas tree warehouse, which stored and shipped artificial trees of aluminum and plastic. It was repetitive work, unloading trucks, shelving cartons, unshelving them later to load them on different trucks. The boxes were light, but the work was not enjoyable nor well paid. They found a trailer for rent on the outskirts of town. The rent was reasonable, though when winter came, they discovered that the drain pipes would freeze up, a considerable annoyance.

There was a job opening for a projectionist at the State Theater. And Michael had experience with 16 millimeter projectors at the adult bookstore. He applied, and got the job. The 35 millimeter equipment was not only much larger, but very old. The twin machines dated back to the early 1940's. Built of solid cast iron and steel, firmly mounted on the concrete floor, they had functioned for decades, displaying thousands of films time and time again.

They were carbon-arc machines, illuminating the film and the screen beyond with the intense glow produced between two carbon rods connected to high voltage. Secured to the mechanism inside a chamber, they were started with momentary contact, then backed off to a narrow gap. As the film ran, the gap was maintained by the mechanism as the carbon slowly burned away. Between reels, fresh rods could be installed, ready to re-ignite when the time came.

There was a lot to learn about the operation and maintenance, but Michael quickly acquired the knowledge and skills necessary. He began to enjoy the work, and free movies to watch were an added perk. The State Theater, on Congress Avenue not far from the state capitol, had once been as fine a place as any presenter of Hollywood movies, but time, and the new multi-cinemas had

eclipsed it. Now it specialized in cheap tickets and third-run movies-- kung-fu action flicks, monster movies. Some of them were pretty good. They just had to have a budget rental price.

Michael and Jill found a better trailer. It was smaller, actually, but its plumbing was much better. Jill got a job too, at a place called the Brown School. It was a private institution that cared for and taught mostly pre-teens and adolescents with various levels of mental and/or emotional problems. Some of them were deaf, and Jill learned sign language to work with them. She was enthusiastic about having a meaningful job helping young people.

*Here, wind whistles and wishes when it blows as it has for all time.
It makes the tree branches scratch itches on the skin of our home.
Here, the power and beauty of creation surrounds us more than the sterile erections of man.
May it bring us peace.*

It was in Austin that Jill got her first tattoo, a tiny moon and stars on her wrist. And, Michael bought a Triumph 650, the third motorcycle he had owned. It was a step above the Honda 350, and the Honda 90 he had back in L. A. It was a used bike, but it ran and handled nicely. He called it the Lunar Cycle, inspired by Jill's affinity for the moon, and a song she wrote called "Lunar Woman".

Michael enjoyed working as a projectionist, but the State Theater, being a budget operation, couldn't afford to pay what union projectionists were making in the newer theaters. He applied at the Brown School for a mental health worker position, and was hired. It didn't require a formal degree or training, just a willingness to help and the intelligence to learn on the job. The staff there were all good, friendly people, remarkably easy and enjoyable to work with.

One of them was Bob Wayman, originally from Binghamton, New York. He lived with his girlfriend Robin and his young daughter. His ex-wife was back in New York. Bob's sense of humor and New York accent made him fun to be around. He was also an owner of a British motorcycle, a 3-cylinder BSA, made by the same company as Triumph.

Michael and Jill moved to an apartment, a nicer dwelling than the trailer, and in town, closer to everything. One evening, outside one of the many music venues, a young girl wearing what looked like a girl scout uniform, walking by, stopped and smiled at them. She offered to sell them hits of LSD, quite cheaply. It was the first time for both of them.

Jill was very good at playing guitar, singing, and writing songs. Michael encouraged her to try to perform on some of the "open mic" nights, and she did a few times. Though she enjoyed it, she did not seem so ambitious about going further, playing professionally.

Once Jill's father Barry was attending a trade show in Dallas. She and Michael rode the Lunar Cycle there. They arrived the evening before, and rode around town late at night, having done some LSD. The somewhat surreal experience was enjoyable. The next day at the trade show, her father introduced them to his girlfriend-- not announcing her as such, but Jill knew. A couple of months later, Jill felt the need to go to Kansas City to spend time with her parents. They may have pressured her, not approving of her life in Austin. She stayed several weeks. Michael was not quite sure she would return.

Vickie

Weeks passed. Michael was having a beer at a pleasant South Austin bar that had frequent live music. Some musicians that played with Willie Nelson often did gigs there. He'd ridden the bike that night, and as he often did, he wore a spiked leather wristband. It was just a style thing. As he

casually sipped his beer, the young lady next to him smiled and asked, "Do you hurt people?" He looked at her and grinned. "No...not physically, anyway."

She liked that answer. She laughed. She was slim and cute. They chatted for a few minutes, and she asked, "Your place or mine?" His was closer. Vicki was fun, limber, and liked sex in a variety of positions, which she assumed. She helped alleviate Michael's loneliness while Jill was away.

The Brown Schools

The Brown Schools were an interesting organization. It was private, and quite expensive. Fees were usually paid by insurance settlements or state governments. A few were paid by wealthy families. Ages varied from preteens to teens and 20's. A few were older, mentally handicapped by brain injuries. Some were developmentally disabled; others by emotional traumas. What they had in common was an inability to behave in the outside world independently. Some, with patient behavioral training, could learn to function outside. Many could be improved, but would never quite be normal. A few years later Michael met, and drove for, a Yellow Cab owner-operator who told him he was a "graduate" of the Brown Schools.

They were called "residents", not patients, and they were housed in pleasant dormitories, each supervised by a staff of 3 or 4 mental health workers, who would observe and document behavior, and redirect if necessary, with the phrase "You're behaving inappropriately". That was a useful expression, only minimally judgmental, spoken calmly, and it was often effective.

Occasionally a resident would act out physically and need to be restrained. This was done as gently and carefully as possible, by at least 2 staff members, immobilizing the resident without causing harm.

Periodically, groups of well-behaved residents were taken to movies or other activities in town. The campus was large, with grass and trees, and not walled. Many of the dorms were not locked; the atmosphere was not at all prison-like. A few residents sometimes tried to run away, but most were found and returned easily. Residents' attitudes toward staff were friendly more often than not, and they could be fun to work with. One boy had developed the ability to fart at will. They were people, after all, each with a unique problem and personality.

It was a surprise to learn that, years later, the Brown Schools company went bankrupt, likely due to a series of lawsuits brought because of the death of one of the patients. Out of the many thousand treated, a small number died, possibly due to staff mistakes. When a death occurs, someone has to pay. The Brown Schools were never considered a miracle cure, but most everyone they treated had decent care, and Michael had found the work fulfilling and enjoyable.

October 31, 1981
Sane and insane masquerade
Dress to look bizarre
One to seem what they are not
The other, what they are.

The difference between sane and insane is not so much the degree of acting according to reality, but the frequency of such acting.

Social Encounters

One night at a bar with a beer garden, Michael met a blonde woman. Amid their conversation, she took his hand and placed it on her warm soft breast beneath her loose blouse. It stimulated his interest, and he took her home with him. They had a pleasurable time. On the second round she requested he use her back door, and he complied. That was his first and only experience in that. He enjoyed it, but not more than the regular way.

Not long after that, Jill came back, and they resumed their lives together. One evening as they returned to the apartment after a night out, they encountered Vickie waiting outside. She hadn't heard from Michael for at least a week, and missing him, decided to come over. He introduced the two women, and all went inside. Jill understood Michael's need for a woman while she was away, and neither woman was hostile to the other. As the two became acquainted, it was somehow decided that sharing him might be the thing to do. Jill was bisexual, though Vickie was not, but the night was especially pleasurable for all of them. It was the only time it happened, but an experience he would never forget.

The Romance Advances

Michael had set the bird free, and she had flown back to his nest. That seemed to be a good sign. They began talking about marriage. Although it wasn't required, she still wanted her parents to approve, and the best path to that would be Michael's conversion to Judaism. Though he was agnostic tending toward atheism, he was not opposed to the idea. What he had learned about the religion, mostly from Jill, was that it avoided much of the hard-line dogma that was unacceptable about Christianity. Learning Hebrew is interesting, even if it was limited to basic ritual invocations. Gratitude for the existence of bread and wine was good to feel, and to express.

The Conservative Rabbi was a good teacher, and when the course ended and a ritual re-circumcision was done (only drawing a drop of blood to make it official), Michael became a certified Jew.

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Birth control is less like wearing rubbers in case it rains, as it is like wearing shoes because one never knows what one might step in.

* * * *

As long as the subconscious mind is in harmony with the conscious, there is no need for a second thought. There are at least two approaches to achieving this harmony if not there: various psychoanalytic techniques, which are ways to "take it out and play with it", and a spiritual approach, which is first to consciously assume a non-logical, non-intellectual positive feeling about the rightness of the universe, and allow that to seep in like a penetrating balm into the subconscious, providing a common ground for both. If the belief/attitude/philosophy is correctly attuned to the individual's nature, it provides an all-pervading feeling of the rightness of oneself, and of the people and things that compose one's universe, and of the possibility of operating productively in one's world environment.

Belfast, August 20, 1981

Michael Devine died today of a hunger strike. He was the tenth. A British soldier was shot in both legs. Several cars and trucks were hijacked and set afire. Five people were arrested at polling stations for impersonating eligible voters. Women in Londonderry and Belfast gathered in the streets to blow whistles and bang garbage can lids, a ritual commemorating the death of Michael Devine.

* * * *

US planes, in response to a Libyan attack, shot down two Libyan planes with heat-seeking missiles. The missiles soared right up the jets exhaust, exploding in a huge brilliant ball of fire, raining steel and flesh in a million pieces into the ocean below.

Meanwhile, in New York, the director of the Congress on Racial Equality was arrested for assaulting a man who was trying to break into his car.

Truth is stranger than fiction.

**We have to believe in free will.
We have no choice in the matter**

His Second Wife

A Love Poem

*When I'm near you, my love,
All the birds go 'chirp'
I want to eat you, my love,
Until I must burp.*

With the Mosaic seal of approval, they planned the wedding. In rings, Michael wanted to avoid gold or other symbols of wealth that distract from the simple union of love. They agreed on a silver band, designed by an Austin silversmith. The wedding was performed by a woman Justice of the Peace, outdoors under a symbolic canopy. The Jewish custom of breaking glass, stomped by Michael's booted foot, was fulfilled, having the meaning of a break from the past that could not be undone. They rode away home on the Lunar Cycle.

Neither of them desired to add to the world's population, though they fully enjoyed the act that often has that result. Some months before, Michael had gotten a vasectomy, which freed Jill from the pill. It also freed him from worry ever afterward, and he never regretted that decision.

He wrote:

Jill, you may sometimes wonder how I feel about marrying you. As you know, I have said many times that I want to marry you. In many ways, a wedding night may seem superfluous because we are, in fact, married for all practical purposes. But we are not speaking here of practical purposes. This ceremony, this public official spiritual union, is an affirmation, a confirmation, a celebration, both to one another and to the world, that our love has proven real and lasting. It is not only our gift to us, but our gift to the world.

Just as I have always been proud to have you by my side, proud and pleased that you love me, I am proud to say to you and to everyone that I choose to be with you always.

And, if there are some hassles and headaches involved in pulling off this ceremony, I reckon I can endure them, for I want our wedding as much as you do.

***Pink clouds portend pale fire
Fog shroud lift from the land
Night is dead
And another morning is born
Another mourning is borne
For dead night.***

Austin had become a comfortable home for both Michael and Jill. They had good jobs, good friends, and plentiful entertainment to enjoy. But the idea of new adventure in a bigger place had its appeal. They began talking about moving to Los Angeles. She had never been there; for Michael, the thought of a return to the paradise he had once lost was attractive.

They might have planned better and more thoroughly, but they were confident they could do as well there as they had in Austin, and too much caution means less spontaneity. Jill had found a way to fly free with a courier service, and Michael was to follow after preparing the Lunar Cycle for the trip.

You can have your liver, and eat it too.

--Portnoy

Women don't have to worry about getting balled.

--Jan Horne, Austin, Texas

The 650 Triumph had been dependable around Austin and the occasional out-of-town trip Michael tuned it up and reconfigured it to carry as much personal baggage as it could. In a week or two everything seemed ready. However, at Pole Number 14, 8 miles east of Harper, Texas, it quit running, and the problem couldn't be determined on the side of the road.

He was just outside a small town. Leaving the bike semi-hidden beside the road, he walked there. The town had one tavern-cafe, and since it was early evening several locals were congregated. Someone was scheduled to provide music later. Michael was able to phone for a rescue, someone with a van. He would have to wait until his friend was off work. Eventually he and the Lunar Cycle were back in Austin, the bike left at fellow British motorcycle owner Bob Wayman's house. He hoped the two of them could figure out the problem.

The repair would require professional help, and the cost was not in Michael's budget. Plan B was implemented- ride the Greyhound Bus to L. A. At last the happy couple was reunited. Jill had rented an apartment in Westwood, but the landlord was trying to extort sex as part of the rent. They needed a new place.

That turned out to be a small loft apartment in a building a block from Venice Beach. The bed was on a wooden platform above the couch. It did have a view of the ocean, and a location among artisans and artists that made it a pleasant environment.

The City of the Angels had become a much more expensive place to live since Michael left it several years ago. They needed to find work soon, and the Reagan recession was making that difficult. Michael's experience as a mental health worker was not enough-- people with psychology degrees were taking any such positions. He found a phone sales job selling Time-Life books. The pay was meager. Jill found work with an escort agency, which paid quite well.

They needed a vehicle, and that was a Volkswagen pickup, which was similar to the microbus, but with a truck-bed instead of an enclosed van. As if that wasn't unique enough, Michael painted the right side pink and the left side black. It looked like a different vehicle depending on which side was in view.

Life with Jill seldom failed to feel like an adventure. She designed Michael's next tattoo, a multicolored pyramid for his left forearm, applied by an artist on the Sunset Strip: Cliff Raven 8418 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood

Her interest in tattooing began to grow, both in being tattooed and becoming an artist herself. She got a winged woman on her upper back, and a beautifully colored peacock on her thigh.

Since the Lunar Cycle didn't make it, they bought a 1959 Sportster, 900 cc, with a magneto ignition. It was a solidly built bike. It was named the Minstrel Cycle.

Los Angeles, California is the city of Lights and dazzled I's; the city of a million answers looking for a question. Women dress to insulate themselves from the chill wind of the practiced line. Cocaine is a second currency, and rich impotent cokeheads call callgirls just to share their snow. It's the city of the absurdity of all logical extremes.

Insanity is there for the taking; fortunately, it is optional. Insanity provides income for the sane and enterprising. It provides insights and examples for the thoughtful student of society.

Whenever the logical extreme is visible, it hastens change; the search for a viable alternative. Like high voltage and atomic power, Los Angeles can be used for good as well as ill.

--March 15, 1982

Images

Do we make and project our own image, or do others do it for us? No matter what we project, the image will be altered by the mind of the receptor. So, we must create the image, and then try to correct it when it is misperceived. Perhaps this is a superfluous activity that stands in the way of real achievement.

"Thou shalt not make graven images." --God

What this advice may really mean is that individuals are constantly in flux; that the image, projected or self-held, that is valid one second may not be the next; that, rather than try to hold ourselves to a given self-concept with a set range of looks, action, and attitude, we should be willing to rethink at any moment what we are and what to do.

Naturally, there are constants about anyone. These tend to be very important traits, such as character, intelligence, talent, etc. But these do not stand in the way of flexibility.

Come to me, my melon-colored baby...

First Impressions of Cocaine

Interesting. I think I understand why someone doing coke might call an escort just for company. It does rather make one want to talk to somebody. But, all things considered, I'd still rather have the money it costs than the coke. It's pleasant, but it doesn't make me want to reach for my wallet and look for a dealer.

There are things I'd rather do, like make love. I don't find it easier to write while using it. In fact, it slows me down, and does nothing at all for the quality.

In response to rubber baby buggy bumpers

Alliterations manifold

Of bizarre and eerie kind

Might not trip the nimble tongue

But they may twist the mind.

--November 16, 1981

There was a night club in Santa Monica called Bullwinkles, inspired by the cartoon featuring a squirrel and a moose. It was a casual place, with live music on weekends. Jill got a job as a waitress there. She was relieved to be out of the escort business, and Michael was happy not to have to drive her to appointments. Bullwinkles was a good place. Most of the bands were not widely known, but on one occasion the Chambers Brothers appeared.

*Time has come today
Young hearts can go their way
Can't put it off another day
I don't care what others say
They say we don't listen anyway
Time has come today*

**Repetitious rhythm is the essence of the act of love,
which poetry is always, consciously or unconsciously,
trying to simulate.
--Yeats**

There was another bar, popular with independent bikers and other compatible people, on Venice Boulevard east of Venice. It specialized more in pool and pinball than music-- a casual, comfortable place. Jill and Michael enjoyed the atmosphere, a friendly place to meet interesting people. It was there that they met Terry Curry, a quiet, bearded computer systems analyst who worked for General Telephone, and his girlfriend Pat Cowles. He liked to tell the story of how they met at a convention: she was wearing a name-tag that said "Pat", so he patted her. Sometimes after closing, Jill and Michael stopped by his place where he showed them his computer video games, which were something novel in the early 80's. He was intelligent and interesting to talk with.

**Two men were on a train. "What's in the basket?" said one.
"A mongoose, to eat the snakes."
"What snakes?"
"When I drink a lot, I see snakes."
"But those are imaginary snakes."
"Yes, I know. And this is an imaginary mongoose."**

This is the essence of both psychiatry and religion.

Life in Los Angeles, adventuresome as it was, never approached the sustainable comfort that they had found in Austin, or that Michael had found during his previous time in L. A. The time to move back to Austin was approaching.

Before then, though, there was one more experience to be had. A couple Jill had met, both of them Harley enthusiasts, were planning to be married. He had a permanent leg injury from an accident. She was tall and slim, with a dominant, though usually pleasant personality. They had decided to have the wedding in a biker bar in downtown Bakersfield. The plan was to have a motorcycle as an altar inside the bar, and the guests would include the patrons already there as well as their friends. It was an appealing scenario.

They needed a minister who was compatible with this concept. As it happened, years before, Michael had become a minister in the Universal Life Church based in Modesto, California, which required only a request by mail and a small fee. It gave him the right to the title of Reverend, which may sometimes confer official respect, and the authorization to perform weddings. This was his first and only opportunity to use that.

So, on the wedding day, Michael, Jill, and the Minstrel Cycle joined the couple on a ride to Bakersfield, a town known mostly for its preference for country music. Enroute, they ingested some LSD to enhance the spirituality of the ceremony. Performing the ceremony, reading words he had written a few minutes before, was an intense experience for Michael. To call it "religious" would be an exaggeration, but it was something he would long remember.

***Eat me, said the bread.
Eat me, said the cheese.
So I ate until they were gone.
Eat me, said the woman.
So I ate until she came.
And then, the Universe said *Eat me*.
So I looked inside myself, and found that I had.
--cosmicrat***

***The best fins in the world would do a camel no good.
--Asimov***

Back in Venice, Jill and Michael began to prepare for the exodus. The VW pickup needed some work, and a wooden enclosure for their possessions, including the bike. The carpentry was done in the parking place just across Speedway from the apartment. The VW was intended for a lighter duty than they were asking of it, but they hoped that by taking it easy, they'd make it to Austin.

***Nobody sees the ordinary until it is too late.
--James Joyce***

Fate was not so kind to the old Volkswagen. About halfway between Los Angeles and Phoenix, a loud metallic clang rang out, the death knell of its old engine. Michael and Jill were stranded in the desert with all their possessions and no way to transport them. They had the Minstrel Cycle, of course. It could carry the two of them, but not much else.

Coincidentally, Jill's parents had moved from North Kansas City to Scottsdale. Neither Jill nor Michael wanted to ask for their help, but they had no choice. They were able to rescue most of their things, except for the furniture.

The Greenbergs lived on Larkspur near 62nd Street. It was a pleasant enough house, yet tolerable for only as long as it took for Michael and Jill to figure out what to do next. Money was limited. Riding the bike to Austin wasn't practical, but any other transportation option would leave the bike behind. Finally, they decided to try staying in Phoenix.

They found a small apartment on the grounds of a trailer park called Oregon Pines at 4570 Grand Avenue in Glendale. The rent was reasonable and the neighbors were an interesting assortment of people with casual lifestyles. The manager's name was Peacock.

Life is more like a river than a motorcycle. One can alter its course, or change its character, but the result will be unpredictable. A dam one place may cause a flood in another. We may affect it significantly, but the exact course it takes will be determined by the forces of nature.

--Michael, 11/16/1982

Before long Michael found a job at a place called the New Foundation, which seemed to resemble the Brown School-- a residential treatment center for adolescent boys. His experience got him hired there, and at first it seemed to be a promising opportunity. However, it was not nearly as well run as the Brown Schools had been, and they took a harsher attitude toward their residents. Michael's kinder, more understanding approach did not fit with that.

So, he began what was to become a rather long career in the transportation industry. He became a Yellow Cab driver. Jill, meanwhile, discovered an opportunity at a place called the Blue Moon.

Arizona bars can feature topless dancers (though with nipples concealed), but full nudity requires no alcohol. That was the Blue Moon's specialty. Without the costume restriction, it actually seems a more relaxed informal approach. Jill was a natural entertainer, and did well there.

You must take the bull by the tail and look the facts in the face.

--W.C. Fields

Say the magic word and the Duck will come down and give you \$100.

--Marx

Everything which is not compulsory is forbidden.

--The Mgt.

Americans are forever searching for love in forms it never takes, in places it can never be. It must have something to do with the vanished frontier. ~Kurt Vonnegut

The only truly maladaptive behavior is that which brings no joy.

Much that is enlightening is done in the dark.

I fell off a precipice into a preposition,
And found it was a 4-letter word.

The ultimate in self-fulfillment is coming into one's own.
--Onan

Continued