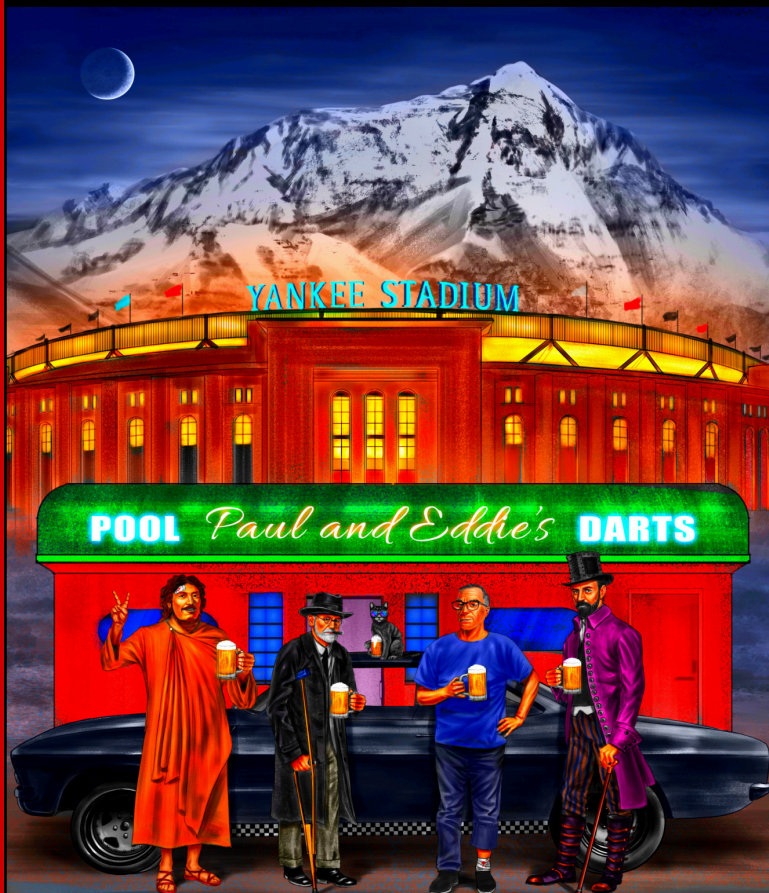


THE GAME *of* LIFE

A Book That Changes Lives



Z. Z. LE MANS

Self-Help ■ Philosophy ■ Spiritualism ■ Inspiration ■ Transformation

BASED ON A TRUE STORY

. . . a **WRITER** and his **CAT** embark on a wild mind-bending ride in a 1966 Corvair that will soon have you rethinking everything you thought you knew about life, reality, and everything in between. Buckle up and ride shotgun on this life-altering ride that begins in Silicon Valley, journeys to the summit of Mount Everest, has a dramatic conclusion at Yankee Stadium, and discover . . . *the **TRUE** Purpose of Life!*



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Proudly Presents

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Written & Edited by

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*For Lady, The One, The Professor, and
the promise I made in the Dome of Destiny*



PARTNERS IN CRIME

Z. Z. Le Mans here. That's me on the right. Behind me and to the left is my cat Lady Le Mans. Lady and I have been partners in crime for the past 19 years and for the past five years have been *homeless* and living in "*The Black Bat*" my ghostly super modified 1966 Corvair. Like Bonnie & Clyde we do what we gotta do to survive in this cruel world. And like Bonnie & Clyde they'll never take us alive.

This is our story . . .



VACANT LOT BASEBALL

I was born and raised in the “Monta Vista” section of Cupertino, California in the bygone days when Monta Vista was a poor blue-collar neighborhood dotted fruit orchards and vacant lots where all the poor Monta Vista kids played vacant lot baseball after school.

I was a pretty good ballplayer in those days and once led the vacant lot league in home runs. And each and every Saturday morning I watched Tony Kubek and Joe Garagiola call *The NBC Game of the Week* on channel 4.



Tony Kubek & Joe Garagiola

“Baseball is more than a game.
It’s like life played out on a field.”

- Juliana Hatfield



EXPELLED

I was a different kind of kid from the get go and was expelled from Catholic catechism at age eight.

SISTER MARGARET. God created the Heavens and the Earth in six days and rested on the seventh.

I raised my hand.

SISTER MARGARET. Yes, Z.

ME. Sister Margaret, last week you said God was all-powerful.

SISTER MARGARET. Yes, that's right, Z. God is all-powerful.

ME. Then why does he need to *rest*???

Everyone laughed except Sister Margaret.

One Year Later . . .

SISTER MARGARET. When you accept our Lord Jesus Christ as your “Savior” Jesus removes all your sins and makes you clean and whole again.

I raised my hand.

SISTER MARGARET. Yes, Z.

ME. Sister Margaret, how does Jesus remove our sins??? Does he put our sins in a brown paper lunch bag and then toss the bag into a dumpster or *what*?

My classmates laughed again.

Suffice it to say Sister Margaret and the parish priest came to regard me as a heretic and a bad influence on the other students and so I was *expelled* from Catholic catechism.

PRAISE GOD ! ! !

I wasn’t an *atheist*. Far from it. I believed in God or some incomprehensible *Higher Power* at work in the Universe, but I had a deep inner knowing that the Catholic Church had it all *wrong*. Where this deep inner knowing came from I had no clue, but that would be revealed to me decades later in *The Dome of Destiny*.

The Catholic Church believes in a God that needs to *rest*. The idea that God needs to rest is ludicrous and an *insult* to God.

ARCHANGEL MICHAEL. God! Come quick! We need your help! A Black Hole is about to swallow up nebula 176.295.932-7A.

GOD. I'm tired and my back's out. Addios nebula 176.295.932-7A. It was nice knowin' ya.

Fast Forward 7 years.

Despite being expelled from Catholic catechism my mother insisted I attend Catholic mass on Christmas and Easter. But by age 15 I had enough Catholic bullshit for one lifetime and decided to take a stand . . .

BANG!!! BANG!!! BANG!!!

That's my brainless stock clerk mother (BSCM) banging on my door.

BSCM. Get dressed Z! We're late for Easter mass!

ME. I'm not going.

BSCM. *What???*

ME. I'm not going.

BSCM. Whataya mean you're not going???

ME. I'm not going.

BSCM. You *have* to go.

ME. No, I don't.

BSCM. *Why don't you wanna go???*

ME. *The Catholic Church has it all wrong.*

BSCM. *But we're Catholic.*

ME. *I'm not.*

Long silence as my brainless stock clerk mother attempts to wrap her puny little indoctrinated mind and dogmatic beliefs around the existential, philosophical, ontological, theological challenge I have calmly and defiantly placed at the temple of her ignorance.

Then, in a voice laden with shock, surprise, defeat, confusion, bewilderment, and utter incomprehension, my brainless stock clerk mother replied,

BSCM. *Well...alright...if that's how you feel.*

That morning little 15-year-old Z. Z. Le Mans owned his Scorpio powers, grew balls of steel, stood up to his mother, rejected centuries of Catholic lies and misinformation, and in so doing freed his mind, body, soul, and spirit from the shackles, chains, and tyranny of the Catholic Church forever.

PRAISE GOD ! ! !



HIGH SCHOOL

Growing up in Monta Vista I naturally attended *Monta Vista High School* where I was a fringe member of the stoner clique all four years. I say fringe member because I was the only member of the stoner clique who didn't smoke weed. What bonded the stoner clique and I together was our mutual love of *Classic Rock*. I was a decent self-taught guitarist by then and entertained everyone by playing famous licks and riffs on my guitar which I often brought to school.

The stoners were glad to have me on board for entertainment value, but found me a bit *odd* because I didn't smoke weed and seemed *obsessed* with the BIG questions of LIFE.

Questions Like

Why are we here?

What is the meaning of life?

Is there a God?

Why is there evil in the world?

Is there life after death?

Do bad people go to Hell?

Is Heaven real?

Have we lived before?

Is there life on other planets?

To my shock and amazement *none* of my stoner friends were remotely interested in *any* of these questions and were only interested in bands, girls, cars, and weed.

My psychology and priorities were so different from my high school peers that they often joked I was from another planet.

On top of that I'm a *Scorpio* and for the past 4,000 years the greatest minds in history have tried to fathom the infinite mystery of the *Scorpio personality* and have failed miserably.



PHIL WOOD & COMPANY

After high school graduation the members of the stoner clique scattered to the four winds and I took a job as a robotics programmer at Phil Wood & Company and was trained by the great Phil Wood himself, the eccentric genius creator of radical bicycle part designs famous throughout the world.

Despite great pay and a great boss, working in *Robotics* didn't exactly "do it" for me and after a year I began to dread coming to work. Conversely, Phil Wood was the *happiest* man in the world.

"Phil, you're the *happiest* man in the world. What's your *secret*???" I asked.

Without hesitation Phil replied, “I love what I do. The secret to happiness is love what you do.”

“Hmmm,” I mused, “Then I guess I don’t love Robotics.”

“Then you have to find what you love and DO IT, or you will be miserable your entire life as so many people are.”

This was some Yoda level advice Phil was giving me and I took it to heart. I resigned from the company two weeks later with Phil’s blessing, warm handshake, and best wishes.


There aren’t many Phil Woods in this world, and this world *desperately* needs more Phil Woods.



THE UPSTART CROW INCIDENT


I was now unemployed and completely uncertain about my next move in life. Feeling restless and confused, I decided to visit a local bookstore called "*The Upstart Crow*." I wasn't there to buy a book. I wasn't there to look at books. I didn't even like books. I merely hoped a change in scenery would clear my mind and give me a clue about my next move in life.

But the two hours I spent roaming "*The Upstart Crow*" was no help at all and I still hadn't the foggiest clue what my next move in life should be. Feeling confused and defeated I began to walk toward the exit . . .



*When the student is ready
the master appears.*

- Buddhist Proverb



Just then an invisible *Force* gently (but firmly) took hold of me and began to steer my body this way and that way through the bookstore.

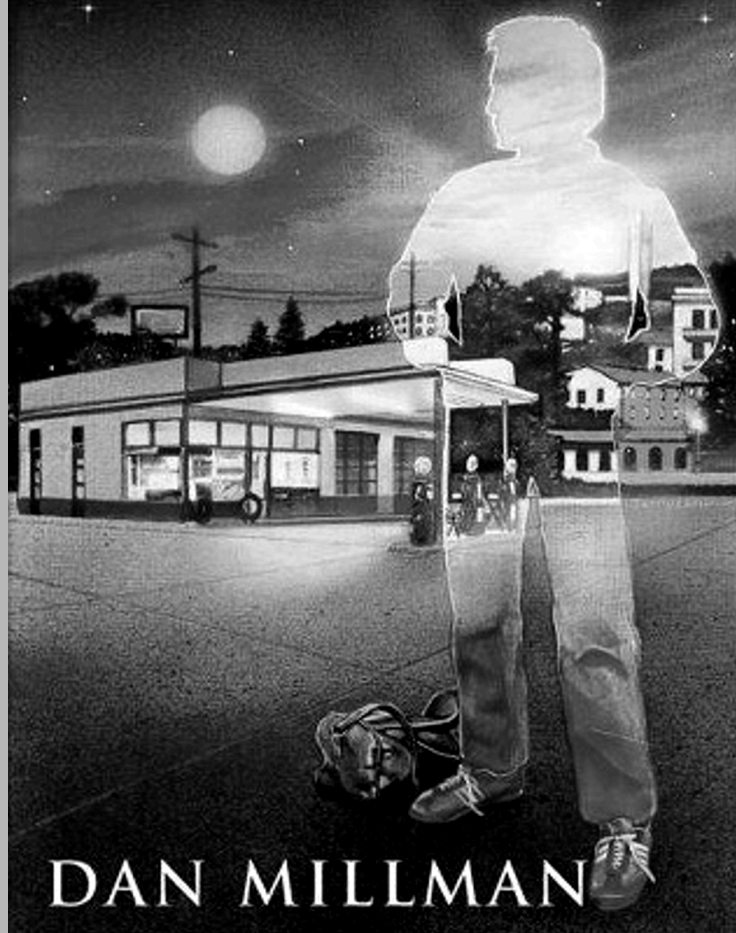
I was in *shock*, but this *Force* (whatever it was) immediately sent me a telepathic message, “*Don’t be afraid. I’m taking you to a book.*”

The voice was male, strong, clear, and *infinitely* wise. *Who* or *What* this male spirit was I had no clue, but I felt in supremely good hands and followed his lead without reservation.

The spirit led me to a particular book on a particular shelf. When I read the title of the book I got vertigo and almost fell over.

The book was . . .

WAY OF THE
PEACEFUL WARRIOR
A BOOK THAT CHANGES LIVES



That was the day I met *The Professor*.



I MEET THE BUDDHA

WAY of the PEACEFUL WARRIOR inspired me to study Buddhism. Not one to beat around the bush or study with incompetent fools I knocked on Buddha's door.

Knock. Knock. Knock.

The door opened.

BUDDHA. Greetings grasshopper. How can I help you?

ME. Greetings Master. If you please, I have a few questions about *Life* and *Buddhism*.

BUDDHA. No problem. I'm having a sale this week. \$10 per question.

ME. *Huh???*

BUDDHA. Just kidding. What are your questions?

ME. Master, what is the purpose of life?

BUDDHA. Self-Improvement.

ME. And what is the purpose of *Buddhism*?

BUDDHA. Self-Improvement.

ME. Master, how do Buddhists deal with the problem of sin?

BUDDHA. There is no sin in Buddhism.

ME. No *sin*???

BUDDHA. No. What other religions call "*Sin*" we call *mistakes*.

ME. That's *interesting*. So, how do Buddhists deal with the problem of *mistakes*?

BUDDHA. We teach to *learn* from your mistakes and do *better* next time.

ME. That's it???

BUDDHA. And *meditate*.

ME. Yeah, I heard about this *meditation* business. What's that all *about*???

BUDDHA. Meditation *clears* the mind so you can do better next time.

ME. I begin to see how *everything* in Buddhism relates to *Self-Improvement*.

BUDDHA. You learn *fast* grasshopper.

ME. Master, what happens when we die?

BUDDHA. When the body dies the soul returns to the *Spirit World* and receives a 3D holographic life review.

ME. What is the *purpose* of this 3D holographic life review?

BUDDHA. The purpose of the 3D holographic life review is to see the *mistakes* you made in life so you can do better next time.

ME. *Next time*???

BUDDHA. In your next life.

ME. Ahhhh, so Buddhists believe in *reincarnation*, is that it?

Buddha chuckled.

BUDDHA. Reincarnation is not a *belief* grasshopper; it is a *reality*.

ME. Thank you, Master. You have given me a great deal to think about.

BUDDHA. You are an very earnest young man, grasshopper.

ME. Yes, Master; from an early age I felt I had a great mission in life.

BUDDHA. Then you have a great mission in life.

ME. But Master, how shall I know the details of my mission?

BUDDHA. Fear not grasshopper; the gods will guide you; they always do.

ME. Thank you, Master. I have no more questions.

BUDDHA. Then go forth grasshopper and be brave, for the *Path of Truth* is the most difficult path of all, and you will encounter critics, saboteurs, naysayers, and cutthroats who oppose the *Truth* and all who bring forth the *Truth*. May the gods guide and protect you grasshopper.

And with that, Buddha smiled, flashed a peace sign, and closed the door.



DE ANZA COLLEGE

Thereafter, I devoted my life to endless “self-improvement” which began with a three year stint at De Anza College.

During my three year tenure at De Anza College I was a key player in the Theater Dept., Philosophy Dept., and school newspaper. I won leading roles in all the college plays, won a California State writing award for my work on the school newspaper, and penned “The greatest philosophy term paper in the history of De Anza College” according to Dr. Vician, Head of the Philosophy Dept., who said I should become a philosophy professor. But I had other plans; my dream was to be a Hollywood actor and screenwriter!

So, at the end of my three year stint at De Anza College I loaded up my clunker college car with my scant worldly possessions and drove to Hollywood with only \$400 in my pocket and BIG dreams in my head.



SHATTERED DREAMS

I arrived in Hollywood late due to some car trouble and checked into a cheap sleazy downtown motel right off Hollywood Blvd.

To wind down from the long stressful drive I decided to take a stroll along Hollywood Blvd. and do some Hollywood sightseeing. I walked along Hollywood Blvd. and took in all the famous names in stars and was *literally* living the lyrics to "Celluloid Heroes" by The Kinks...

“You can see all the stars as you walk down Hollywood Boulevard. Some that you recognize. Some that you’ve hardly even heard of. People who worked and suffered and struggled for fame. Some who succeeded and some who suffered in vain.”

It was fun. I was having a blast. I felt on top of the world. I was sure I would succeed in Hollywood. Suddenly, I received a telepathic warning from The Professor regarding a sketchy young black man walking in the opposite direction along Hollywood Blvd. The Professor’s warning was vague, but seemed to be something along the lines of *“Watch out for this guy.”* I looked the young man over, but despite his sketchy appearance I didn’t see any real danger. If he started a fight I could probably take him, but as he drew near he said nothing to me and it seemed like we would pass without incident. But when we got side-by-side he quickly sucker punched me in the head as hard as he could and I fell hard on the sidewalk. I was now fully disabled and barely conscious. I thought he might lay into me some more as I lay there defenseless on the ground but to my surprise he just kept on walking.

I was treated at *Hollywood Presbyterian Hospital* and given bad news. I had two skull fractures, a fractured cheek bone, and a 1-inch cut under my left eye which would require stitches, and a throbbing concussion.

I couldn't believe it. I had only been in Hollywood for four hours and already my Hollywood dreams had gone up in smoke !!!

I returned home for a long and painful four month recovery. The incident had a profoundly negative effect on me and thereafter I had NO desire to return to Hollywood ever again.




I FALL INTO ADDICTION

After the **DEATH** of my Hollywood dream I supported myself with a long series of meaningless *unfulfilling* jobs that left me depressed, miserable, melancholy, and I soon sought relief from my pain in a smoky haze of sex, alcohol, and cigarettes. And before long I was heavily *addicted* to all three.

The next ten years of my life were lost to addiction and during those years my creative output as a writer, actor, and musician was **ZERO**. I literally flushed **ALL** my talent down the toilet in favor of a cocktail of sex, alcohol, and cigarettes that left me feeling *numb* and *half alive* for ten years.

During those ten years I didn't see or hear from *The Professor* at all and I began to think that maybe I had only imagined *The Professor* and that he really didn't exist.



"I sent my soul through the
invisible, some letter of that
Afterlife to spell, and by
and by my soul returned to
me and answered, "I myself
am Heaven and Hell."

Omar Khayyam





A STRANGE ENCOUNTER

The summer of 2004 was the apex of my addiction years and one day in the summer of 2004 I came home with a big bag of beer, wine, and cigarettes in preparation for another week of dubious *self-therapy*. As I reached for my keys to unlock the door to my cottage I noticed an exquisitely colored gray cat sitting atop my tool shed as if she were the *Egyptian Sphinx*.

I hated cats my entire life because when I was five years old my friend's cat scratched my face for no reason and the incident left a lasting scar on my psyche. Thereafter, cats were my sworn enemy and whenever I saw a cat I would

chase it off. But the encounter with *this* cat was different and the cat elicited three feelings in me *simultaneously* . . .

- 1) I felt no desire to chase the cat off, which was weird.
- 2) I had the strange feeling the cat liked me, which was really weird.
- 3) And I had the bizarre feeling that I liked the cat, which was freaky ass weird.

The cat had deep green *kaleidoscope* eyes and had me under some strange *hypnotic* spell with her steady piercing gaze. I was frozen in place and couldn't move. Then the strangest thing happened. The cat spoke to me *telepathically* . . .

"Hello, Mr. Man."

WTF??? The feeling was *otherworldly*. I suddenly felt dizzy, off-balance, and my body began to sway gently like a palm tree in the wind. Something very strange was happening between me and this cat and I just couldn't be in the presence of this mysterious cat anymore. And so I walked into my cottage, lied down on my bed, closed my eyes, and tried to forget what had just happened. I then fell into a very relaxing quasi sleep for 30 minutes after which I rose from my bed and sheepishly looked out the window to see if the cat was still there. *The cat was gone and I breathed a sigh of relief.*

A week later I returned from the store and froze in my tracks. The same mysterious cat was perched atop my blue recycling bin. The sight of the cat unnerved me again, but not as much as the first time.

"Hello Mr. Man."

The cat had the voice of a little girl.

After saying “Hello” the cat just gazed at me placidly and I gazed back. We just stood there gazing at each other for a while, not in an awkward way, but in a warm friendly way. The cat clearly liked me and wanted to be friends. This was a *first* because cats usually sense that I don’t like them and run away.

Nevertheless, I still felt awkward and queasy about this whole cat situation. It didn’t make sense. And it put me in a psychological funk that didn’t feel good. And there were so many unanswered questions. *Who did this cat belong to??? Was it a stray cat??? Why was the cat coming to me??? Why was I into this cat when I don’t like cats???*

This cat was a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma. Well, at the moment I didn’t have time for *riddles—or cats!* I was in the middle of opening my parapsychology practice and still had tons of work to do. So, I waved goodbye to the cat and walked into my cottage to resume work.

Thereafter, the cat returned every few days—usually appearing out of nowhere—or so it seemed. And little by little, visit by visit, the cat and I became better acquainted. And after a few weeks of playing “Now You See Me, Now You Don’t” the cat began to rub up against my leg and purr affectionately! To my shock and amazement I bent down and pet the cat while my mind screamed, *What the hell are you doing!!! You’re petting a cat!!!*

None of this made any sense. I hate cats. I mean, I used to. And there were plenty of “Cat Lovers” in the neighborhood. *Why was she coming me???*

After a few minutes of petting and purring I stood up and the cat quietly sashayed off into the distance and out of sight. What a *strange* cat. As time marched on I began to look forward to these random encounters with the mysterious cat.

Thereafter, I didn't see the cat for two weeks and when I did she looked *thinner*. I concluded she was a stray cat and wasn't finding much food, so I decided to feed her. All I had on hand was a bag of potato chips and so I pulled a potato chip from the bag and held in front of her mouth. She stared at the potato chip *quizzically* (as if to say, "What the fuck is this???), licked the potato chip tentatively, made a sour face, and gently turned her head away. I got the *message*. Potato chips *aren't* her thing. Then she said to me telepathically,

"Don't you have any cat food???"

Then as a *test* I attempted to answer the cat *telepathically* by simply *thinking* the words in my head and see if it worked.

"No. I don't."

"Isn't there a store around here?"

It worked ! ! !

"Yeah, there's a store right over..." Oh my god! Do you see what she's *doing*??? She wants me to go to the store and get her some cat food. But if I go to the store and get her some cat food she'll think I adopted her and I'm her *Daddy!!!*

Okay. Look. It didn't want the cat to starve to death, but I also didn't want to be a cat Dad! I knew there were "Cat Lovers" in the neighborhood; where in the hell were they??? This

whole situation was a cat lover's wet dream. C'mon, cat lovers!!! We got a cat in *need* here!!! Step up to the plate and do your cat lover *duties*!!! Chop-Chop!!!

Nothin'. Not a cat lover in sight.

So, I said to the cat, "I'm sorry. That's all the food I have. Don't worry. You're cute. Some cat lover is gonna scoop you up and make you their own. Just hang in there . . ."

The cat lowered her head sadly and I walked into my cottage feeling queasy and confused about my relationship with this cat. When I looked out the window 20-minutes later the cat was gone and I felt a mixture of relief and sorrow.

I didn't see the cat for another two weeks and when I did she was *deathly* thin and it didn't look like she would live more than a week and her face looked extremely depressed and despondent.

Right then and there something came over me and I made a monumental decision of galactic magnitude that would alter my life *forever* . . .

I looked her square in the eye and said, "Okay listen. Listen to me. Listen up! You live here now. You live here *now*! Understand??? You live *here* now. Don't move. Stay right *there*. Don't go anywhere. I'm going to the store to get you some cat food. I'm going right now. I'll be right back. Don't go anywhere."

I returned from the store with a bag of dry cat food and the cat was sitting demurely on the porch like Cleopatra waiting for her man servant to serve lunch on a silver plate.

I opened the bag of dry cat food, poured some into a bowl, and placed the bowl in front of the cat. Her razor sharp fangs attacked the dry cat food like a ravenous shark. But after just a few bites the cat abruptly stopped and looked at me disappointed.

"What's wrong???" I asked.

"I prefer canned cat food," she said.

"You prefer canned cat food?"

"Yeah."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"You didn't ask."

The cat was starving, but still finicky, and I was now getting a crash course in "Cat Psychology." So, I went back to the store and returned with some canned cat food, opened a can, and placed the can in front of her. Her razor sharp fangs attacked the food like before, and just like before she abruptly stopped eating after just a few bites and gave me another disappointed look.

"What now???" I asked.

"I don't like this one."

"You don't like this one???"

"No."

"What's wrong with it???"

"It tastes like *barf*."

"It tastes like *barf*???"

"*Barf* or poop; it's hard to tell."

I sighed heavily. Feeding a cat was a lot harder than I thought it would be.

"Alright. Just tell me *exactly* what you want and I'll get some."

"I don't know *exactly* what I want, Mr. Man. Just bring home a dozen different kinds of canned cat food and I'll pick out the winners."

"Just bring home a dozen different kinds of canned cat food and you'll pick out the winners???"

"Yeah. And you don't have to repeat everything I say."

SASSY ! ! !

I could see this cat was gonna be a handful and I already regretted my decision. It was only our first day together and I already wanted to return her. But return her *where*??? Anyway, it was too late. I said, "You live here now." I couldn't go back on my word. For better or worse I now had a cat!

I went back to the store and returned with a dozen different kinds of canned cat food and "Miss Finicky" picked out a few cans she liked.

Late that first evening the cat yawned with a full belly and said, "I see you only have only one bed, Mr. Man."

"Yeah???"

"Where're you gonna sleep???"

"We're gonna be *bunkmates*," I smiled.

Miss Sassy Pants replied, "Mr. Man, in human years I'm a 12-year-old girl. I don't think it would be proper for us to be *bunkmates*. You can sleep on the *floor*."

WTF ? ? ?

It was time to put Miss Sassy Pants in her place.

"Look here little lady; this here's my home, and I'm captain of the ship. So, unless you wanna be homeless again we're gonna be *bunkmates*, *understand???*"

"Well, since you put it that way, Mr. Man, I suppose we could be *bunkmates*—provided you mind your *manners*."

"I always mind my *manners*. Can you mind yours???"

"I'll try," she quipped.

At this point I still had no name for this sassy little *lady*, which gave me an idea—I'll call her *Lady*. And maybe the name will remind her she's a *lady* and improve her *manners* some???

Time will tell . . .

As the days and weeks passed *Lady* and I quickly developed a fun, zippy, banter-filled relationship and were as happy as could be. I was truly surprised and amazed at how much joy and pleasure this starving stray cat had brought to my life.

Then one day there came three ominous knocks upon the door...

Knock. Knock. Knock.

I opened the door and beheld a woman I had never seen before.

"Do you have our cat?" she asked.

"Your cat???" I gasped. "A cat moved in here about six weeks ago. Was that your cat???"

"May I see the cat?"

I called out to Lady and Lady slowly sashayed into the room. Upon seeing the cat the woman said,

"Yes, that's our cat Gracie."

I couldn't argue. I had no idea where Lady came from, so most likely the woman was telling the truth and Lady was her cat. I was heartbroken. I had already become attached to Lady. And now this strange woman was coming to take Lady away forever. Well, there was nothing I could do about it. It was what it was. I pet Lady goodbye and fought back my tears.

What happened next was like the climactic scene in a "Feel Good" movie. Lady wouldn't go with the woman and hid behind my legs!!!

An awkward silence befell the room.

"Hmmm. That's interesting," the woman muse. "Gracie seems to like it here better with you."

More awkward silence.

"Hmmm. Well, we have two other cats. Would you like to keep Gracie???"

I could hardly contain my excitement. "Yes, I would. I will take care of Gracie better than I take care of myself. Gracie will be in good hands. You have nothing to worry about."

The woman smiled, "Okay then. Gracie is now your cat." And with that the woman left never to be seen ever again.

"Whew. That was a close one, Mr. Man."

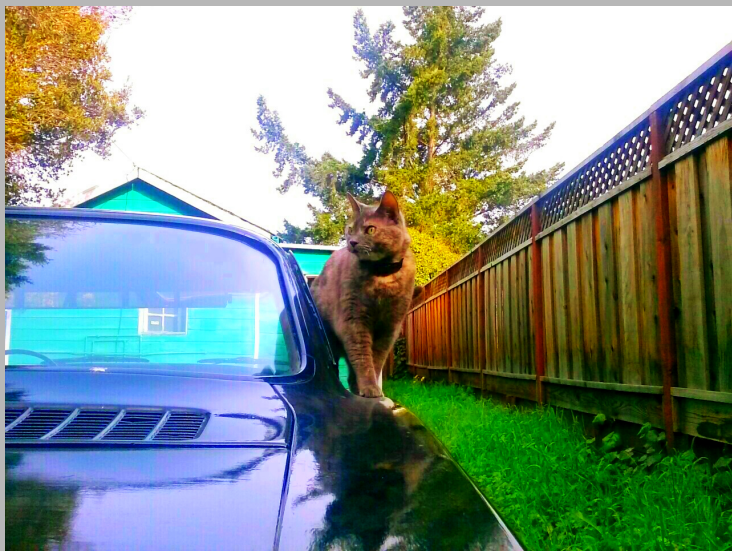
"You didn't tell me you were a teenage runaway."

"You didn't ask. Besides, I'm not a teenager; I'm 12."

I kept thinking about Lady's former name and it was all I could do to keep from bustin' a gut.

"Gracie???"

"Shut up."



EVICTED

Lady and I enjoyed 14 happy years in that old rustic cottage I rented in Cupertino (*pictured above with Lady walking along my car, something she very often did*).

Then, in late December 2018, Lady and I received an eviction letter from the landlords. The landlords had decided to tear down that old rustic cottage and sell the land to developers. Thus, Lady and I had to move out of the cottage by March 1, 2019.



THE BLACK BAT

At the time of our eviction I had been unemployed for the past two years, during which time I wrote the Pilot and Bible for an original dramatic TV Series titled “Moscato” which is loosely based on my career as a *parapsychologist*. The show is named after the main character *Mike Moscato*.

At the time of our eviction “Moscato” was still unsold and I had very little money left in the bank. Further, *who* would rent to a man who had been unemployed for the past two years and was *still* unemployed???

I knew the answer to that.

Thus, on March 1, 2019 Lady and I were forced to begin living in *The Black Bat* my super modified 1966 Corvair which has been my ride for the past 30 years!

[AUTHOR'S NOTE. I aced two years of Auto Shop in high school, am a lifelong 1960's car buff, and for a time was a speed shop machinist at ACTION AUTO MACHINE SHOP in Santa Clara, CA]



The Black Bat in front of historic “Paul & Eddie’s” dive bar, Cupertino, California. My grandfather and his cement plant coworkers often came here for a drink after work in the 1940’s and 1950’s. Sadly, Cupertino has completely changed since then and today “Paul & Eddie’s” is the only landmark left from my childhood.



A ROUGH FIRST NIGHT

Our first night sleeping in the car was rough—almost impossible.

LADY. Scoot over Mr. Man.

ME. Huh?

LADY. Scoot over.

ME. Huh??? What???

LADY. Scoot your butt over.

ME. Why???

LADY. I can't stretch out my legs.

ME. I can't stretch out my legs either. It's a small car.

LADY. I can't sleep with my legs scrunched up like this. It's uncomfortable.

ME. My legs are scrunched up too.

LADY. But you're a man, Mr. Man. You're tough. You can take it. I'm a little girl. Show some *chivalry*.

I scoot over a little.

ME. There.

LADY. A little more.

I scoot over a little more.

ME. Okay?

LADY. A tad more.

I scoot over a tad more.

LADY. A little more . . .

I sigh heavily and scoot over a little more.

LADY. Just a tad more.

I scoot over a tad more.

LADY. That was *half* a tad. Gimme a *whole* tad.

I grunt and scoot over a tad more.

ME. Okay now?

Silence.

ME. Okay now??

Silence.

ME. Okay now???

I look over.

Lady is asleep.



Sleeping on the streets was tough, so we decided to relocate to “Blackberry Farm”—a wild nature preserve just a few blocks away.

It was very *dark* and very *quiet* in the Blackberry Farm parking lot. Perfect for sleeping in the car.

Our first night at Blackberry Farm—10:56pm.

“Mr. Man?”

“Yeah?”

“I gotta pee.”

“You gotta pee?”

“Yeah. Maybe #2 also.”

"Ahhh. Okay. Umm. I'll open the door and you do your kitty business outside and come right back."

"Sounds good."

I opened the driver door and Lady stepped out into the pitch black night.

"Don't go too far. Stay close to the car."

"Yes, Dad," Lady quipped.

I was tired, groggy, and had two mini bottles of chardonnay earlier, the combination of which made me sleepy and I fell asleep at the wheel while Lady was out doing her kitty business.

When I woke up I checked the time on my cellphone and freaked out. It was 12 midnight!!! I was asleep for an hour!!! I quickly rolled down the driver window and called out to Lady.

LADY !!! LADY !!!

Nothing. No sight or sound of Lady. Then I jumped out of the car with my flashlight and looked around for Lady. It was pitch black outside and difficult to see even with the flashlight. And to make matters worse it had begun to rain and a strong wind begun to eerily howl. I called out to Lady again and again . . .

LADY !!! LADY !!!

No sign of Lady.

The rain and wind suddenly grew much stronger and I realized there was nothing more I could do tonight. The best I could do now was go to bed, get some sleep, and search for Lady in the morning . . .



LADY IS LOST

The next morning I awoke at dawn and searched for Lady for an hour or more. *No sight or sound of Lady.* My heart got heavy and a queasy feeling entered my stomach. This was a worst case scenario. Lady was lost in a wild Nature Preserve full of mountain lions, bobcats, rattle snakes, coyotes, and god knows what else. I became consumed with self-loathing and blamed myself for falling asleep at the wheel while Lady was out doing her kitty business. Then I started to panic. How am I ever going to find Lady in the vast Nature Preserve??? It's huge. It will be like searching for a needle in a haystack. My head began to spin and I got vertigo.

At this point in time Lady and I had been together 15 years and were a *Dynamic Duo*. We went together like blue and sky. Together we were *amazing*. Apart we were *nothing*.

So right then and there I felt like *nothing* and I know Lady must be feeling the same way too if—gulp—she was still alive!

Some things cannot and should not *ever* be *separated* and Lady and I fall into that rare category. When Lady and I are separated the Universe loses its equilibrium, *Time* and *Space* feel out of phase, and God is nowhere to be found.

With utter dread and anguish I realized that Lady might be lost *forever*—or even worse—*DEAD*.



THE CAT DETECTIVE

I searched the Blackberry Farm nature preserve for Lady for five *long* days and nights.

No sign of Lady.

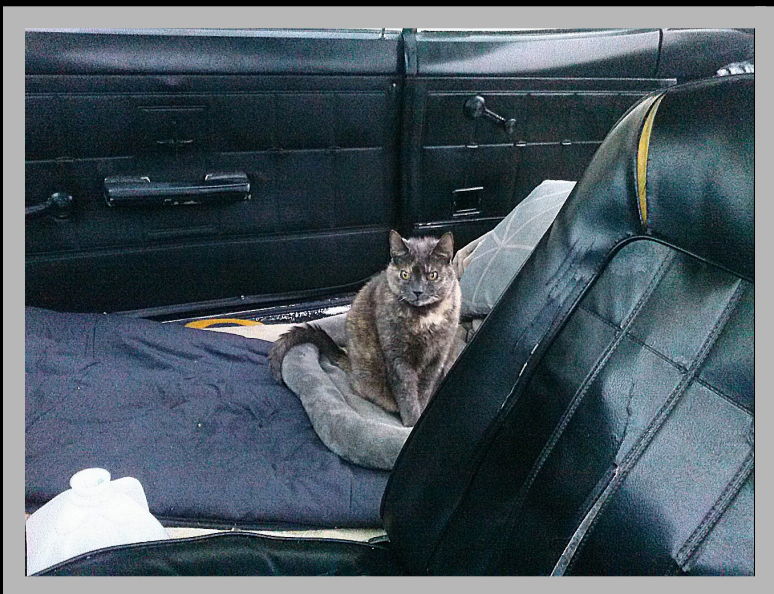
I felt tired, depressed, defeated, and way in over my head. I didn't know how to find a cat and I had no idea what I was doing.

It finally occurred to me that their might be help online so I typed "How to Find a Lost Cat" in the Google search bar and hit ENTER. This popped up . . .

KIM FREEMAN ♦ CAT DETECTIVE
"Professional Lost Cat Finder"
www.lostcatfinder.com

Holy shit!!! I found the Sherlock Holmes of lost cats!!! Kim was in Atlanta Georgia but for a reasonable fee Kim provided me with her 100-Page "Lost Cat" ebook and a little phone assistance.

Sure enough, according to Kim's ebook I was doing everything wrong and had literally wasted the first five days of my search for Lady. The lost five days were costly. Lady could literally be miles away by now in any direction. Finding Lady now would be like finding a needle in a haystack.



THE DOOR AJAR TECHNIQUE

Kim suggested we start with what she called “The Door Ajar Technique.”

KIM. Park exactly where you lost Lady and sleep with your door ajar six inches. Place some of Lady’s favorite food at the foot of the door. This will lure Lady back and into the car.

I thought this was a great idea but had a few reservations.

ME. Sounds good, but the last five nights have been a rainy 37 degrees. I’ll probably freeze to death with the door ajar and sleeping all night with an open door in a dark Nature

Preserve is a serial killer's "wet dream," not to mention the mountain lions who regard a man sleeping with his car door open as their all night "Burger King."

Long silence on the phone.

I don't think Kim got my sense of humor.

Then, with a tone of admonishment she replied,

KIM. *Well, do you want your cat back???*



THE NIGHT WALKER

The 13th day of the search for Lady began ominously with 37 degree freezing rain, a howling wind, and that creepy number 13.

I knew Lady wouldn't come out in this freezing windy rain, but I left the door ajar anyway because that's what I was told to do.

Each night I made every effort to stay awake so that if Lady, a mountain lion, or a serial killer approached I would be ready. However, most nights I fell asleep about 1AM and this night was no different.

Later on, at about 3AM, I was awoken by some strange sounds. I didn't know what the sounds were at first but they were getting closer. As the sounds grew closer it sounded more and more like people talking. My first thought was, *Who would be conversing in this cold rainy Nature Preserve at 3AM???* Only one answer came to mind . . .

Twisted Fuck Serial killers ! ! !

As I wiped the sleep from my eyes and looked around, their conversation grew louder and closer. I instantly went into "*Fight or Flight*" mode but had no weapons other than my bare hands and these twisted fuck serial killers no doubt had guns and knives and I figured I was about to exit this world, but god-damn-it, I was gonna give those Satanic bitches one hell of a fight before they killed me!

Their voices were loud and nearly upon me now. In a moment I would see them. My heart raced. Suddenly, out of the dark cold rainy abyss appeared a man wearing a *black* trench coat, a *black* fedora hat, and holding a *black* umbrella.

He looked like the Angel of Death.

But what happened to the other men??? Where did they go??? The first man kept right on talking without missing a beat. I then realized to my shock and horror that this twisted fuck *Angel of Death* was all alone and vocalizing all parts of the conversations *himself!!!*

This was beyond creepy. This was creepy on steroids. This was creepy on acid. This was creepy on DMT. This was alternate universe dark matter creepy ass shit from Hell!!!

Yeah, well, I didn't need any creepy ass shit in my life right now; I'm here looking for my cat!!!

Then something caught my attention. I suddenly realized I didn't recognize the language he was speaking. I'm not even sure it was a language. It sounded like he was speaking in tongues!!! And multiple tongues at that!!!

I WAS TRAPPED IN AN INTERDIMENSIONAL VORTEX OF WEIRDNESS !!!

One thing was sure. He would be on me soon and mortal combat would be imminent. I was prepared to fight to the death, but to my shock and amazement he just walked right past me without so much as a glance in my direction.

WTF??? He must have seen me. He must have seen the car. How could he not see me??? I became confused. If he's not a twisted fuck serial killer what the hell is he doing walking in the freezing cold rain in a Nature Preserve at 3AM??? It didn't make sense. Nothing about this guy made any sense and I felt like I was in the middle of a "Twilight Zone" episode.

Well, whatever his motives, he was gone now, and a sense of relief washed over me. I tried to go back to sleep and forget the whole thing. But five minutes later I heard his psycho babble approaching again!!!

Noooooooooo !!!

What is up with this dude??? Why is he back??? Did he decide to kill me afterall??? I rose up from my makeshift bed and prepared for mortal battle with this dude, whatever he

was. But just like before, *The Night Walker* passed by without so much as a glance in my direction and disappeared once more into the cold rainy blackness of the Nature Preserve.

What the hell is going on here ? ? ?

I couldn't sleep for fear *The Night Walker* would return and return he did five minutes later, and the same exact pattern played out again as it had on the two previous encounters. Then I understood what he was doing . . .

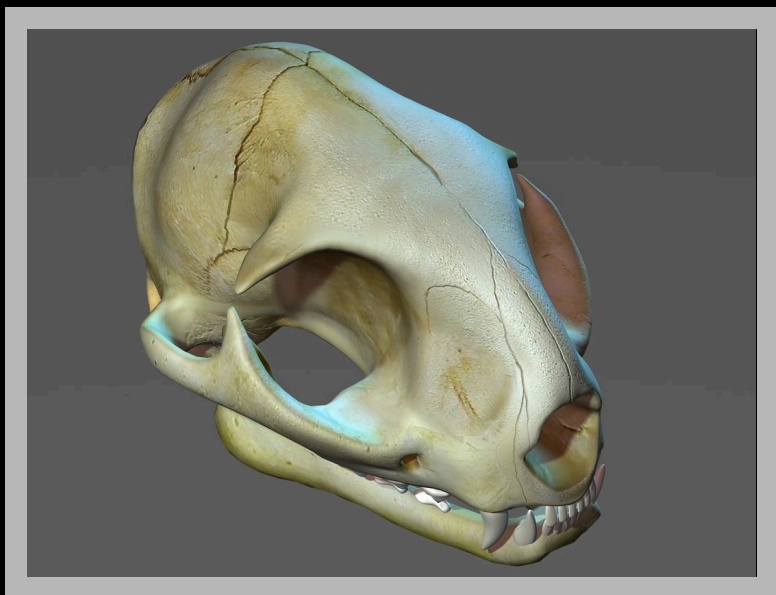
*He was walking "laps"
around the parking lot ! ! !*

But why??? What was the point of all this??? I'm here looking for my cat. But what the hell is he doin' here??? Then I had a chilling realization . . .

He's never going away ! ! !

He's gonna walk "laps" around me all night long and that's exactly what he did. *The Night Walker* walked "laps" around me all night long and then mysteriously disappeared shortly before sunrise.

What the hell was all that about??? To this day I don't know. All I know is he was finally gone, dawn had broken, and I had to keep looking for *Lady*.



THE CAT SKULL

The next day at 1:22PM I got a phone call from ranger George at Blackberry Farm.

"I have some bad news."

"What?"

"We found a cat skull today."

Noooooooooo ! ! !

Ranger George continued, "The skull is about two weeks old. Isn't that about the time you lost Lady?"

It was. The timing was right and my heart sank into my stomach. The thought of Lady being eaten alive by some heartless predator was my worst nightmare. If this cat skull was Lady I would never forgive myself for drinking too much and falling asleep that night. But was it for sure this cat skull was Lady???

Based on the uncanny timing ranger George was convinced the cat skull was my Lady, but I wasn't so sure. My Lady was a scrappy girl and a kickass fighter. Back in the cottage days I watched two racoon bullies attack Lady and Lady had those two racoon bullies running for their lives in seconds!!!

No. My gut told me this cat skull wasn't Lady but I had to be sure. I had to inspect the skull myself. A gruesome task but it had to be done, so I asked ranger George, "Can I inspect the skull?"

"Sure. Come to the park museum. I'm there with the skull right now."

When I arrived at the park museum ranger George handed me a brown paper lunch bag and said, "The skull's in here."

Yikes. This was not something I was looking forward to.

My heart pounded hard in my chest as I opened the brown paper bag with utter dread. I pulled out the cat skull with my right hand and got a shock. It was perfectly white and clean.

"Why is it so *white* and *clean*?" I asked.

"Birds, bees, ants, and insects pick it clean in no time," ranger George replied.

This was bad news. I was hoping there would be a tuft of fur on the skull to compare it to Lady's fur. No such luck. Then a thought came to me and I began to pet the skull just like I pet Lady.

Ranger George shot me a curious stare.

"I don't think it's Lady," I said.

"What makes you say that?"

"The head doesn't feel right. I know Lady's head like the back of my hand and this doesn't feel like Lady's head."

Ranger George replied, "This is the *only* cat skull we've found in the past six months. I'm sorry, but it *has* to be Lady."

Ranger George was *right*. Everything pointed to this cat skull being *Lady's* skull, but my kickass Scorpio intuition was telling me something else. Then I got an idea.

"May I take the skull to Lady's vet? He has X-rays of Lady's skull and teeth. He should be able to tell for sure."

"That would be fine," replied ranger George. "Just return the skull to the museum when you're done because we want it for our collection."

So, I put the cat skull back into the brown paper lunch bag and drove off to Lady's vet who was just five minutes away.



THE WORST 10 MINUTES OF MY LIFE

Lady's veterinarian (Dr. Griesshaber) took the skull out of the paper bag and told me the exam would take about 10 minutes. Those 10 minutes in the waiting room were the worst 10 minutes of my life. Can you imagine waiting 10 minutes to find out if a little white skull in a brown paper lunch bag was your cat!!!

Alone in the waiting room I prayed to God whom I affectionately call “Big Daddy.”

Dear Big Daddy,

Greetings and Adonai.

Today I find myself in a dire predicament whereby the cat skull Dr. Griesshaber now examines may or may not be the cat skull of my cat Lady.

And so thus then I ask you in the name of all that is holy and wholesome to work your magic powers and make the cat skull which Dr. Griesshaber now examines NOT be Lady's cat skull, but the cat skull of some poor unfortunate cat who is now with You in Heaven.

Big Daddy, if you grant me this request I promise to reduce my drinking to a more reasonable level and not give the middle finger so much when I am driving in town even though half the people on the road deserve the middle finger.

In short Big Daddy, if you grant me this request I will do my utmost (or some reasonable facsimile thereof) to be a better person on this God-forsaken planet.

Thank you and Adonai.

Adonai and Amen.

Just then Dr. Griesshaber returned to the waiting room with the brown lunch bag and a big smile on his face. “It’s not Lady,” he said.

PRAISE GOD ! ! !



BACK TO THE CAT DETECTIVE

The “Door Ajar Technique” was a dismal failure and it was time to call the Cat Detective for further instructions.

ME. The “Door Ajar Technique” isn’t working. No sign of Lady. No nothin’.

CAT DETECTIVE. Hmmmm. Okay. I don't think she's in the Nature Preserve anymore.

ME. Where do you think she is?

CAT DETECTIVE. She probably decided the Nature Preserve was too dangerous and is now roaming the nearby neighborhood.

ME. Okay. So, what do we do?

CAT DETECTIVE. I'll make you a "Lost Cat Flier" for Lady and email it to you.

ME. Okay? What do I do with that?

CAT DETECTIVE. You mail it to all the people in the neighborhood.

ME. That sounds really expensive. Did you catch the part where I said Lady and I are living in a car???

Pregnant silence followed by another dose of admonishment.

CAT DETECTIVE. Well, do you want your cat back???



JOHN'S IDEA

I received the "Lost Cat Flier" from The Cat Detective and ran the whole idea past my good friend John Freeman (no relation to Kim Freeman, but isn't it *weird* that they're both *Freemans*???)

John said, "I get those Lost Cat fliers in the mail all the time and I throw them in the garbage without even looking at them. No. If you want Lady back tape the fliers over the keyhole of every door in the neighborhood. That way people have to look at Lady's mug shot just to get in their home."

I thought that was a *brilliant* idea and would save me \$500 in postage since there would be *NO* postage!!!



A STRANGE DREAM

A few days later I had a strange dream . . .

. . . the dream began with me walking up a San Francisco hill. Cars lined both sides of the street but I didn't see any people. I guess everyone was still sleeping. I continued walking up the hill. Still no sign of people. No pedestrians. No bicyclists. No joggers. And strangest of all, no cars driving on the streets. I got a queasy feeling in the pit of my stomach. Something wasn't right here, but I didn't know what.

I continued walking up the hill when I felt a loud *THUMP* along the ground. What the hell was that??? A moment later

it happened again. *THUMP*. And then again. *THUMP*. It seemed to be coming up behind me. I turned around to see what it was and beheld a sight I will never forget. An old wooden telephone pole was “hopping” up the street and directly toward me.

Thump. Thump. Thump.

Weirdest of all, it appeared to be after me! I ran down a side street to see if it would follow me or not.

Thump. Thump. Thump.

It followed me! The damn thing had a mind of its own and was malevolent!

Thump. Thump. Thump.

I ran down another side street, looked over my shoulder, and the goddamn thing was gaining ground!

Thump. Thump. Thump.

I couldn't outrun it!

Thump. Thump. Thump.

I ran down another side street that led straight to a high wooden pier and the San Francisco bay.

Thump. Thump. Thump.

I ran to the end of the pier and the pole closed in on me hard and fast. There was nowhere left to run and so I jumped off the pier and into the San Francisco bay.

The dream ended there.

Time spent
with cats
is never
wasted.

- Sigmund
Freud



FREUD'S COUCH

First thing in the morning I looked for Lady in the nature preserve for an hour but there was still no sign of her, so I drove to a nearby 7-Eleven, bought a cup of coffee, and returned to the nature preserve parking lot to sip my coffee and tried to fathom last night's dream. As I sipped my coffee and gazed at the relaxing green trees and beauty of the nature preserve my mind slowly drifted into a foggy

hypnotic daydream and much to my surprise I suddenly found myself on Freud's couch.

"Very inzeresting zream," Freud said in his thick Austrian accent puffing away on his cigar.

"What's your *interpretation* of the dream?" I asked Freud.

Freud gently petted the tiger-striped ginger cat on his desk and said, "I zink zee telephone pole represents jor primal egzistential *fears*."

"My primal existential *fears*???"

"Jess."

"Could you elaborate on that a little?"

Freud leaned back in his chair, "Zet me ask zu a question. Zu you fear the *danger, hostility, and unpredictability* of our verld?"

"Yes, *naturally*."

"Zoes are your primal egzistential fears."

"So, you think the telephone pole represented my primal existential fears?"

"Jess."

"But *why* a telephone pole???"

"I zon't know. Maybe jor zubconciuous likes zelephone poles," Freud chuckled. "Anyway, the *object is irrelevant*; it's *what the object does* that madders. In this case, the zelephone pole was hostile and chased you; don't you zee?"

"Yes, I see what you're saying, doctor. The antagonist in the dream could have been *anything*. My subconscious mind simply cast a telephone pole in this movie dream."

"Jess, very vell put."

"But what about the empty streets with no people? What does that *signify*???"

"Zat zignified jor feeling of being all avone in dis verld with no vun to help you."

"Whoa, I think you nailed it, doctor."

"Jess, vell, zream interpretation is one of my *specialties*"
Freud smiled, cigar smoke floating languidly in the air.

"Dr. Freud, is there any *lesson* in this dream?"

"Jess, a very *profound* lesson."

"What?"

"Stayz away from *San Francisco*."

(We chuckled like father and son. I liked Freud very much. He's a lot cooler than people think.)

"Thank you, doctor. I must travel back to my *Time* now and continue looking for my cat."

"Jess, ju must find jor cat, for cats are better companzions zen people, and time spent with cats is never vase-ted."



COYOTES AND MORONS

Blackberry Farm is popular with coyotes and morons and morons are by *far* the greater in number.

Something I heard a million times as I searched for my cat Lady was, “Your cat was probably eaten by coyotes,” and usually followed by, “It’s just a cat. Get another one.”

This is like telling the parents of a missing toddler, “Your baby girl was probably torn to shreds by a mountain lion. No big whoop. Just have another kid.”

Anyway, these asinine coyote comments got me worried so I called The Cat Detective to get her professional opinion.

ME. People are telling me Lady was eaten by *coyotes* !!!

CAT DETECTIVE. They always say that.

ME. Well, is it true???

CAT DETECTIVE. I hear the “Coyotes ate your cat” theory all the time and it’s a pretty lame theory. For one thing, cats are not very high on a coyote’s menu. There are 10 or 12 other animals and rodents coyotes prefer more than cats and a *Nature Preserve* would be full of them.

ME. Okay, that’s good news.

CAT DETECTIVE. Moreover, coyotes leave a pile of fur behind because they don’t eat the fur. Have you or the rangers discovered a pile of fur that matches Lady’s fur???

ME. No.

CAT DETECTIVE. Then Lady has not been eaten by coyotes.

That was a load off my mind and a huge relief. I slept better that night knowing that Lady was very likely still alive.

LADY. Pssst. Pssst. Gather ‘round readers and I’ll tell you what happened out there in the woods. Around 3AM a gang of cutthroat ky-otes had me surrounded in a moonlit meadow of the nature preserve. I was there enjoying the beauty of nature and practicing Transcendental Meditation in the stillness of the night when they began lickin’ their chops and chattering their teeth. I knew what they were thinkin’. They were thinkin’ I was a late night snack. So, I slowly and calmly ejected the five deadly switchblades of my left paw into the moonlight. And then I slowly and calmly ejected the five deadly switchblades of my right paw into the moonlight. That’s when *FEAR* and *TERROR* washed over the faces of these canine cowards.

COYOTE BOB. Whoa there guys. Hold up. That's not a rabbit. That's Lady Le Mans.

COYOTE TIM. You mean the infamous "*Lady of Death*???"

COYOTE SAM. Bob's right. That's no bunny rabbit. That's the "*Lady of Death*" herself.

COYOTE TIM. "*The Lady of Death*???" What you guys talkin' about???

COYOTE SAM. You never heard of Lady Le Mans, aka "*The Lady of Death*???"

COYOTE TIM. Nope. I just moved here from the Santa Cruz mountains.

COYOTE SAM. Lady is legendary in these parts.

COYOTE MIKE. Everywhere she goes she leaves a trail of dead ky-otes in her wake, ripped and torn to shreds by her 10 deadly switchblades.

COYOTE DON. That's why we call her "*The Lady of Death*."

COYOTE KEN. According to legend Lady once dismembered a black bear who tangled with her in deez very woods.

COYOTE STEVE. Yeah. My Daddy told me that story too when I was just a wee pup and told me to never tangle with "*The Lady of Death*."

COYOTE DAN. My grampy tangled with *The Lady* back in 2006.

COYOTE JOHN. What happened???

COYOTE DAN. Nobody knows. We never saw grampy ever again.

COYOTE JOE. My cousin crossed paths with *"The Lady of Death"* late one night in 2011. We found him in the mornin' torn to shreds. He looked like a plate of spaghetti.

COYOTE TIM. Ok! Ok! I get the picture guys. What do we do *here*???

COYOTE KEN. There's only one thing to do.

COYOTE DAVE. What's that???

COYOTE BUBBA. Abort.

COYOTE SPIKE. *Pssst. Pssst.* Everybody. *Abort. Abort.*

COYOTE KEVIN. (whispering) Full abort mode. Full abort!

COYOTE CURTIS. Back up *fast* but *slow* guys.

COYOTE ED. Sorry Miss Lady. We din't know it 'twas you. We'ez just passin' through lookin' for a little late night snack-a-roo.

COYOTE BILL. We tought you was a bunny rabbit.

COYOTE BOB. Yeah. We tought you was a bunny rabbit.

COYOTE SAM. Our bad Miss Lady. Won't happen again.

COYOTE JIM. Hard to see in deez night woods Miss Lady.

COYOTE CARL. Yeah, you looked like a bunny rabbit.

COYOTE KEVIN. Simple case of mistaken identity *Lady of Death*—I mean Miss Lady.

COYOTE PAUL. No harm no foul Miss Lady.

COYOTE CHRIS. It's all good Miss Lady.

COYOTE TREVOR. We'll just be on our way now.

COYOTE GEORGE. Yeah, we'll just be moseyin' along now *Miss Switchblades*—I mean Miss Lady.

COYOTE SKIP. You have yourself a good night Miss Lady.

COYOTE BRUCE. Yeah. You have a good night Miss Lady.

COYOTE RAY. Deez woods be all yours now *Miss Death*—I mean—*Damn*—We just be movin' along now *Ma'am*.

COYOTE HAL. You give us a holler if you need anything Miss Lady.

COYOTE LARRY. Yeah. Give us a holler if you need anything *Miss Spaghetti Death*—I mean, *Miss Le Mans lady*.

COYOTE SCOTT. Hey guys, I think I saw some bunny rabbits that-a-ways.

COYOTE WAYNE. Yeah, more bunny rabbits that- a-ways guys. Let's go!

COYOTE STUPID. I din't see no bunny rabbits that-a-ways.

COYOTE CHRIS. (*harsh whisper*) Shut up, stupid!

COYOTE JEFF. Yes sirree, we'll be goin' now Miss Lady.

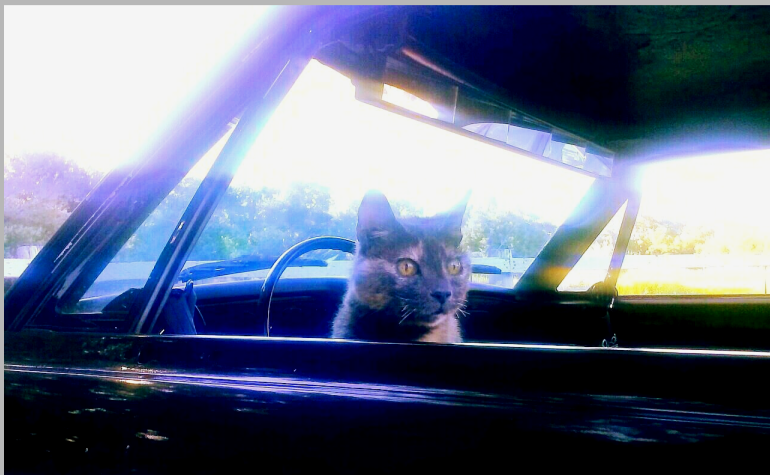
LADY. And so this gang of ky-otes who thought they were badass bitches found out the hard way they were just *bitches*, put their tails between their legs, and slowly slithered off into the night and as far away from my ten deadly switchblades as they could get.



THE DOPPEL- GANGERS

Over the next two weeks there was not ONE but TWO sightings of Lady that turned out to be doppelganger cats that looked so much like Lady even I was fooled. It was *weird*. It was *freaky*. It was *freaky ass weird*.

After the two doppelganger disappointments I became so despondent, gloomy, and depressed that the song "It's the End of the World" by Skeeter Davis began to loop over and over in my head and I couldn't stop it.



It's always darkest before the dawn

The next day was the 33rd day of the search for Lady. I woke up, got coffee and breakfast at McDonald's, and then did absolutely *NOTHING*.

There was nothing left to do. I couldn't even think of anything else to do. I had done it all already. I had canvassed the entire neighborhood dozens of times day and night. I had hired a cat detective and did everything she said. I slept in the nature preserve all night long with the door ajar. I had encountered a freaky-ass night walker at 3AM. I taped "Lost Cat" postcards over the keyholes of every door in the neighborhood. But it was all pointless and in vain. Lady was gone, or *dead*, and I would never see her again.

I sat behind the wheel of *The Black Bat* and tried to process (in utter vain) how I could possibly go on without my *Best Friend*. Just then I received a random text from an "Unknown Caller." The text read:

*We see your cat.
She's at 21870 San Fernando Ave.*

The two doppelganger disappointments were still fresh in my mind so I didn't get too excited. I figured this was just another doppelganger cat and calmly called the number on my screen fully expecting this to be another false alarm. A middle-age Asian man answered the phone.

"Hello?"

"Hi, this is Z. Z. Le Mans, the owner of the cat."

"Oh, hi."

"Do you still see the cat?"

"Yes. She's sitting in the driveway of the address I sent you."

"Great. Listen. There have been some false sightings. Would you mind taking a snapshot of the cat with your cellphone and texting it to me?"

"Sure. No problem. I will do that now."

Three minutes later I received a text with a photo attachment. I casually opened the photo attachment expecting another doppelganger but—

It was Lady ! ! !

This time for sure. I recognized her custom collar. I quickly called the man back.

"Hello?"

"Yes! That's my cat! Do you still see her?"

"No. She disappeared behind the house."

"Okay. I'm on my way. Thank you!"

"Let us know if you find your cat. We have two cats of our own."

I raced to the address and got there in four minutes. I rang the doorbell of the house but no one was home. I didn't want to trespass into the back yard with no one home but under the circumstances did it anyway and called out to Lady over and over again.

No sight or sound of Lady.

I continued to call out to Lady and scoured the back yard for five minutes.

Still no sight or sound of Lady.

Shit. She's missing again! But she couldn't be far away and I could *feel* her presence. Lady was nearby somewhere. The backyard was a bust, so I walked up and down the street calling Lady's name for five minutes.

No sight or sound of Lady.

My heart sank and despair quickly returned. I just missed Lady by seconds and now I might be back at SQUARE ONE

again. Defeated, I began walking back to my car. That's when I heard Lady's unmistakable "yap" and my heart filled with joy. Lady was close by but *where*??? I couldn't see her.

I continued to walk toward the car and call out to Lady. Lady

yapped again but this time the sound was louder and closer. But I still couldn't see Lady. I called out to Lady several more times and continued to walk toward the car. I was almost at the car when Lady yapped again and this time Lady sounded three feet away but I still couldn't see her! Then she yapped again, I turned to my right, and WHAMMO !!!

There was Lady ! ! !

Lady hobbled slowly toward me clearly worn out from her 33-Day ordeal.

"Well, it's about *time*," she grumbled weakly. "I can't believe you *lost* me Mr. Man. I've been living under porches and tool sheds for a month. Your parenting skills suck donkey dicks."

"I'm sorry, Lady."

"Well, don't just stand there like an *idiot*; I'm tired, cold, and hungry; wrap me up in some warm blankets and bring me some *food*."



HE LOOKS SUSPICIOUS

Lady and I were back together and living in *The Black Bat* daily which made us look *suspicious* to all the west Cupertino snobs who are overly *suspicious* by nature and desperately in need of a 30-Day stint in “*Suspicion Rehab*” to detox their minds of grossly unfounded suspicions, snob-filled arrogance, and chronic *xenophobia*.

911 OPERATOR. Emergency services. What are you reporting?

CALLER. There's a man. A *suspicious* man. In a *suspicious* black car. And he looks *suspicious*. And my *suspensions* tell me he is doing something *suspicious*.

911 OPERATOR. I see. Is he committing a *crime*???

CALLER. I just told you. He looks *suspicious*. That's a crime in Cupertino; I believe it's a felony; don't you know this *stuff*???

911 OPERATOR. Okay ma'am. Just sit tight. I'm sending a sheriff deputy to check this man out right now.

CALLER. Better send the SWAT team too.

911 OPERATOR. Does he have weapons???

CALLER. No, but he looks *suspicious*.

911 OPERATOR. Right, well, officers will be out there soon to check him out, ma'am.

CALLER. Wait, there's more.

911 OPERATOR. What else?

CALLER. He *stole* a cat.

911 OPERATOR. He *stole* a cat???

CALLER. Yes.

911 OPERATOR. How do you know he *stole* a cat?

CALLER. He has a cat in the car.

911 OPERATOR. Well, how do you know the cat was *stolen*?

CALLER. He looks *suspicious*. 10 to 1 the cat was *stolen*.



JUDITH WEST

The “caller” in the preceding chapter is a composite of all the west Cupertino snobs who want to run us out of town, especially *Judith West*, the *Queen Bee* of west Cupertino snobs.

The snobs of west Cupertino have taken the position that me, my cat, *The Black Bat*, our bohemian ways, and daily homeless struggle are an eyesore and blemish upon the affluent picturesque canvass of west Cupertino—and worst of all—lower property values!!!

What Judith West and the other west Cupertino snobs don't know is that my grandparents settled in west Cupertino in 1920 when west Cupertino was mostly fruit orchards, ranches, and farms.



Ed Traveras (a kid I grew up with) walks the R/R tracks at the corner of Stevens Creek Blvd. and Bubb Rd. in 1975. The same corner is completely unrecognizable today.

And when I grew up here in the 1970's Monta Vista was a humble blue-collar neighborhood where *everyone* knew *everyone* and *everyone* would give you the shirt off their back.

In those days nobody in Monta Vista judge anyone by their bank account, net worth, price tag of their home, the kind of car they drove, or what prestigious university their kid just got into. Only *snobs* think like that and there were NO snobs in Monta Vista and west Cupertino then.

That all changed in the 1980's and 1990's when the computer revolution turned Cupertino into a sea of high-tech industrial parks and affluent suburbs that became the "go to" for high-tech movers and shakers from all parts of the world. And if these high-tech movers and shakers weren't *snobs* when they got here they soon would be because by the 1990's west Cupertino had become the *Snob Capital* of the world!

Well, someone needs to tell Judith West and all the *snobs* of west Cupertino to GO FUCK THEMSELVES and I got the job.

LADY. You tell 'em Mr. Man!

In an evil *underhanded* attempt to run me and my cat out of town Judith West began telling everyone I was a "Drug Dealer."

A Drug Dealer ? ! ? !

Judith West is a lying sack of shit the Devil shit out his ass and I will show her NO mercy. This sourpuss cuntface bitch has no idea I'm an award-winning writer but she's about to find out—the *HARD* way!



THE 3RD BASE CLUB

LIFE is a GAME (*similar to baseball*) and THE 3RD BASE CLUB is an elite private club for all the rich kids born on 3RD base.

Some of us didn't get that lucky in life. I wasn't even born in the *ballpark*. I was born across the street behind the liquor store next to the dumpster. My deadbeat alcoholic father once pointed a loaded gun at me drunk off his ass and that's a pretty good summary of my childhood.

I was born and raised in abject poverty by two dumbass dysfunctional parents, but that doesn't mean I'm *stupid*. I have an I.Q. in the top 5% percent of the world and have read over a thousand books. With affluent 3RD BASE parents I could have *been* anything, *done* anything. Instead, I'm living in my car with my cat.

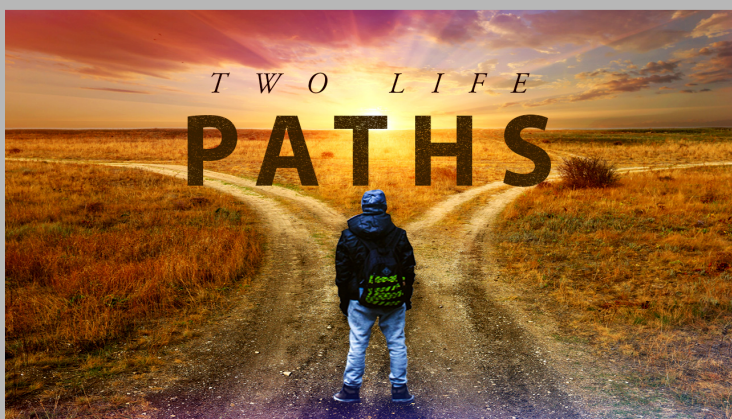
What bothers me about the rich, spoiled, pampered, protected, arrogant, conceited, self-entitled members of the 3RD BASE CLUB is they all act like they hit a home run in *THE GAME of LIFE*.

*They didn't.
They just got born on 3rd base.*

Well, there's a BIG DIFFERENCE between:

- A) Getting born on 3rd base
- B) Hitting a HOME RUN over the center field fence
- A) Requires *luck*—and well, let's face it; just *luck*.
- B) Requires talent, courage, brains, resourcefulness, ingenuity, determination, perseverance, and *mettle*; tons and tons of *mettle*. More *mettle* than 3rd basers have.

And, as it turns out, A and B are intrinsically related to *THE TWO PATHS of LIFE* which I will delineate in the next chapter.



THE TWO PATHS

The Golden Rule

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

(found in every religion)

There are only two paths in LIFE — A and B

LIFE PATH A

The members of LIFE PATH A make MONEY their GOD and their LIFE GOALS are *Safety, Security, and Comfort*.

Due to childhood indoctrination most members of LIFE PATH A identify as their parent's religion, although few of them are religious and their identification with their family religion is a shallow proclamation with no real *belief* behind it.

The members of LIFE PATH A are not trying to make the world a better place—that is the furthest thing from their mind. The members of LIFE PATH A only care about making THEIR life better and don't give a flying fuck about You, Me, Their Neighbors, or the World at Large.

The members of LIFE PATH A see life as a ruthless "Rat Race" where *winning is everything*, and when two members of LIFE PATH A vie for the same piece of cheese it's gonna get ugly—*real ugly*—for the members of LIFE PATH A consider *The Golden Rule* a philosophy that exists only in the pages of religion and one that is not remotely practical or desirable in our greedy, cutthroat, dog-eat-dog world.

When viewed under a microscope the philosophy of LIFE PATH A is shockingly *Luciferian* and most members of LIFE PATH A are *Luciferians* whether they realize it or not!

Membership in LIFE PATH A requires the following character traits, skills, attitudes, and mindset:

- Greed
- Avarice
- Narcissism
- Herd Mentality
- The ability to jump through hoops like a trained seal
- Fear-based thinking whereby you make the *safest* decision at every crossroads and play THE GAME of LIFE as *safely* as it can possibly be played
- A “Greedy Miser” mindset whereby you take as much as you can and give as little as possible
- A thorough knowledge of POWER DYNAMICS whereby you kiss the ass of all those *above* you in power and shit on all those *below* you in power
- Your mental soundtrack blasts 24-7: Me, Me.
- Your idea of SUCCESS is graduating college, working 40+ hours a week at a job you hate, getting saddled with a 30 year mortgage, paying property taxes year after year, having 2.5 kids, sending your 2.5 kids to college, getting divorced, dividing assets in divorce court, getting remarried, getting divorced again, dividing assets in divorce court again, having a mid-life crisis, joining a gym in a futile attempt to stay young and attractive, getting old and selling your dream house to pay the astronomical monthly

fee at the nursing home where you now live, slowly wasting away at the nursing home, feeling sad, lonely, feeble, and insignificant in your final days on this Earth, and wondering with your last dying breath if that's all there was to *Life*, or did *Life* have some *far* deeper meaning and purpose that somehow *escaped* you???

LIFE PATH B

In stark contrast to LIFE PATH A the members of LIFE PATH B make GOD their GOD and consciously choose careers and lifestyles that serve humanity and make the world a better place.

The members of LIFE PATH B view life as a daring adventure or nothing at all and enthusiastically embrace taking risks, innovation, thinking outside the box, and in many cases, *living* outside the box!

And since the members of LIFE PATH B are vastly more influential than members of LIFE PATH A, even a relatively small increase in LIFE PATH B membership would *dramatically* change the world for the better, and a *large* increase in LIFE PATH B membership would create *Heaven on Earth* virtually overnight!

Membership in LIFE PATH B requires the following character traits, skills, attitudes, and mindset:

- Belief in GOD or a Higher Power
- Love of Excellence
- Contempt for the *status quo*, *mediocrity*, and playing THE GAME of LIFE as *safely as possible*

- The *inability* to jump through hoops like a trained seal
- A burning desire to create, innovate, and make the world a better place
- The courage to break stupid laws and stupid rules in service of a Higher Truth and a Better World
- Your definition of SUCCESS is a job you love and making a difference in the world
- The realization that our world is rapidly becoming a dystopian nightmare and that our only hope is a radical “*New Renaissance*” before it’s too late.



In 1973 a college hippie named Steve Jobs became disenchanted and disillusioned with LIFE PATH A, dropped out of college, adopted LIFE PATH B, and the rest is history . . .



THE GRADY TWINNS

"Mr. Man?"

"Yeah?"

"I don't know about you, but I'm starting to get *Cabin Fever* living in the car for so long."

"Yeah. Me too, Lady."

"Remember when we watched *The Shining*?"

"Yeah."

"That guy went crazy from Cabin Fever."

"Yeah. I remember."

"He tried to kill his whole family with an axe."

"Yep. I know."

"You're not gonna go crazy from Cabin Fever and try 'n' kill me with an axe are you, Mr. Man???"

"No Lady, I'm not gonna kill you with an axe, but I could rip your arms and legs off with my manly manness."

"That's not funny, Mr. Man."

"Well, what about me, Lady??? What if YOU go crazy from Cabin Fever and slice 'n' dice me into chunky Mexican salsa with your 10 deadly switchblades???"

"Good point, Mr. Man; I never thought of that. Wait a minute! Wait a minute! What if we *both* go crazy from Cabin Fever and murder each other in a murderfest of morbid magnitude???"

MURDER

"Then we're goners, Lady."

"No, I'm *serious*, Mr. Man."

"Me too, Lady. If we *both* go mad from Cabin Fever and turn on each other in a murderfest of morbid magnitude it's gonna look like a slaughter house floor in here."

"Mr. Man, couldn't you just *lie* to me like all the other cat dads do and tell me everything is gonna be *fine* despite all evidence to the contrary?"

"Blowing smoke up your ass isn't my style, Lady. The ugly, cold, hard, truth served straight no chaser is my style."

"Yeah, I know, Mr. Man; it's just that I wish the ugly, cold, hard truth wasn't so *cold, hard, and ugly.*"

"Yeah, me too, Lady."

"Mr. Man?"

"Yeah?"

"If our Cabin Fever gets worse are the Grady twins gonna show up?"

"I hope not. It would be pretty crowded in here."

"For *reals*, Mr. Man."

"For *reals*, Lady. It would be pretty crowded in here."

"I hope the Grady twins don't show up. Those girls creep me out. Look, Mr. Man, as far as I'm concerned there's enough *creepiness* in the world. We don't need some *dead girl* ghosts showin' up and adding their brand of creepiness to an already creepy ass world. You catch my drift, Mr. Man?"

"I catch your drift, Lady."

"I mean, what kind of world is this, Mr. Man, where we have to worry about the Grady twins showin' up in their creepy ass baby blue dresses and creepin' the holy mother fuckin' shit out of us??? I mean, our life's hard enough as it is, Mr. Man. Can't we just go about our homeless livin' in the car business without worrying about the Grady twins showin' up? We don't need no *dead* girls around here Mr. Man. We got enough *problems* as it is!"

"Good point, Lady."

"Mr. Man?"

"Yeah?"

"I just want you to know that if I *lose it* and turn you into a plate of spaghetti with my ten deadly switchblades the *Cabin Fever* made me do it."

"Thanks, Lady. That means a lot to me. Likewise, if I *lose it* and pull your arms and legs out of their sockets and mount your head on the dashboard for all to see, the *Cabin Fever* made me do it."

"Understood, Mr. Man. We love each other, but we might *kill* each other."

"That's the way it goes sometimes."

"Well, I guess that's it then."

"Yeah. I guess that's it then."

"Guess I'll go to bed now."

"Guess I'll go to bed now too."

"Goodnight, Mr. Man."

"Goodnight, Lady."

"See you in the mornin'."

"See you in the mornin'."

(long pause)

"Maybe."



DRINKING & DRIVING

"Mr. Man, do you really think you should be drinking and driving???"

"I'm not drinking and driving."

"You just had a big ass beer."

"That big ass beer was consumed in the parking garage in a parked position."

"And now you're driving."

"Exactly. I drank. And then I drove. I didn't drink and drive *simultaneously*."

"Yeah, I'm not a lawyer Mr. Man, but I think it amounts to the same thing."

"Lady, would you just concentrate on being a cat and stop being my mother."

"Sure, fine, whatever. Get us killed. See if I care."

"I'm not gonna get us killed. And besides, I have a rather loose interpretation of the law."

"So I've noticed."

"Man's Law means nothing to me."

"That's obvious."

"Cosmic Law is the only law that matters."

"God help us."

"Listen, drinking and driving gets a bad rap because losers and morons get shitface drunk and then drive. I don't get shitface drunk and I'm actually a better driver after a beer."

"A big ass beer."

"Fine. A big ass beer. I'm more relaxed. I go with the flow better. I use my horn less."

"Fine. Drink up Mr. Man. If you wanna get us killed in some hellacious accident of twisted metal, blood and bones, that's your business, but my death will be on your conscience and the karmic penalty will be severe."

"I'm not gonna get us killed."

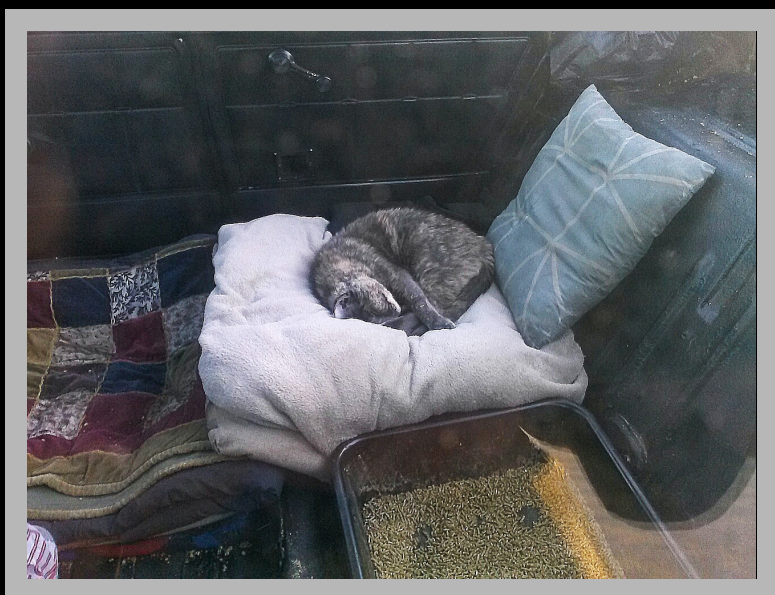
"That's what they all say—right before the *impact*."

"Isn't it time for your nap Lady???"

"Fine. Get us killed. See if I care. Just make sure you spell my name right on my tombstone."

"It's pretty hard to misspell *Lady*."

"Not after a big ass beer."



OUTSIDE THE BOX

Lady and I eventually got living in the car down to a science, but there were two problems I could never solve. Cat vomit and ...

"Lady!!!"

LADY'S MIND. *Oh shit. He saw it. I'm toast.*

"Yeah, Mr. Man?"

"You peed outside the litterbox again !!! "

"I did?"

"Don't give me that innocent crap. You *know* you did."

"My bad, Mr. Man."

"How can you pee outside the litterbox??? The litterbox is huge!"

"Okay, well, I'm glad you brought that up Mr. Man 'cuz quite honestly, using that damn thing isn't as easy as it looks."

"Huh???"

"For one thing, it's not like my butt has eyes. I step into that damn thing, set my coordinates, get into position, make a few last minute adjustments, lock position, then fire away. But it's not an *exact* science. There's is a margin of *error* involved."

"A margin of *error*???"

"A 5% margin of error on a good day and a 10% margin of error on a bad day."

"Well, can you at least clean up your *errors* when you make them?"

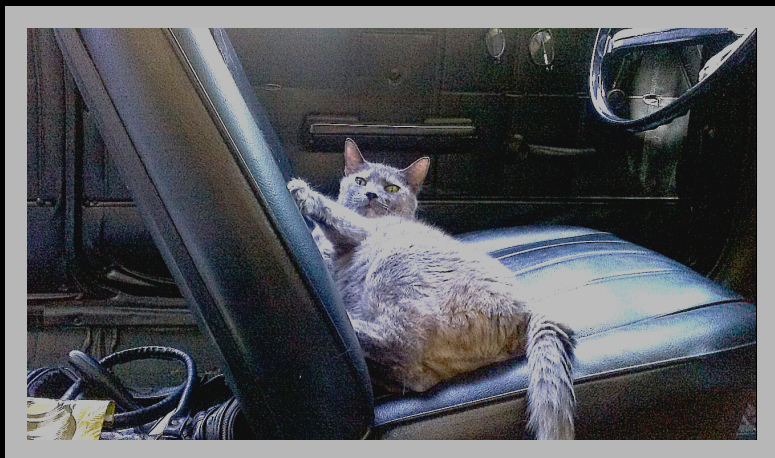
"That would violate our *Terms of Agreement*, Mr. Man."

"What *Terms of Agreement*???"

"The *Terms of Agreement* we entered into when I first moved in."

"Refresh my memory."

*"You do all the **hard** work and I do **NO** work."*





THE HAUNTED HOUSE DREAM

A few days later I had the haunted house dream...

...the dream started with me walking barefoot on Stevens Creek Blvd. at 3AM toward the spooky old house I grew up in. My feet hurt from walking barefoot, but I endured the pain stoically and kept right on walking.

Why I was walking to my childhood home I had no idea, but something in the dream was pulling me there like a powerful magnet and I felt I had no choice but to go there.

When I arrived at the house the house looked far worse than when we lived there. In the dream the house had clearly been vacant for many years and all the exterior paint was badly chipped and half the windows were broken and boarded with sheets of weathered plywood. Our house was so old that our garage wasn't a garage at all but a "Carriage House" with a dirt floor.

I walked barefoot past the gateless gate and into our big dirty yard. I suddenly became very sleepy and tried to sleep on the dirt floor of the Carriage House. This was odd because I always felt that our Carriage House was haunted and never liked being in there alone.

However, I found it impossible to sleep in the Carriage House and soon walked to the back door of our house because we usually entered our house by the back door.

When I reached the back door I saw something a little spooky and unsettling—the door was unlocked and slightly ajar. Despite my apprehension I felt compelled to open the door and look inside. When I did I beheld a ghastly sight...

...empty liquor bottles, beer cans, litter, trash, and cigarette butts were strewn about everywhere. It was obvious that vagrants and party animals had been using our old home as a "crash pad" and "party pad" for many years. Despite this, vivid visions from my childhood and adolescence came to life before my eyes in holographic detail and the juxtaposition of scenes from NOW and THEN was eerie and unsettling and I just stood in the doorway and took it all in. It was a lot to take in.

I was about to enter when I heard a faint moan and the floorboards creaked down the hall. I froze. *Someone* was here. Or maybe it was my father's ghost. Either way, it was time to get the hell out of there and I began walking back to Stevens Creek Blvd. where the dream began, and as I walked barefoot along Stevens Creek Blvd. again I thought...

...*Why* did I come here??? *What* was I looking for??? *What* did I hope to find??? And did I find it???

I had no answers to any of those questions and the dream ended there.



BACK ON FREUD'S COUCH

The next day I was back on Freud's couch. I told Freud about the dream and asked, "What do you think it all *means*???"

Freud puffed on his cigar pensively and said, "Der are many zings to discuss here. Zet's start with zour vamily home. Da

dream starts with you valking to zour childhood home, vright?"

"Yeah."

"Zhat indicates a dezire to return to zour childhood. Do you zee zat?"

"I had a horrible childhood. Why would I want to go back?"

"Zou have some unfinished business there."

"Some unfinished business?"

"Jes. Zum unresolved issues. Ju have zum un- resolved issues in childhood. Dat's vie you returned to joor childhood home."

"What kind of unresolved issues?"

Freud puffed on his cigar and a plume of smoke bellowed out his mouth and danced in the smoke filled room. "Zou vent back to zat house to repair your childhood."

"Repair my childhood?"

"Jes."

"How would I do that?"

"Ju can't repair joor childhood. Zat's the problem. Ju went back to repair something zhat cannot be repaired. Za past is past. Zu can't change it."

"You're right. I can't change my childhood. It was what it was."

"Eggzacktly. But there's more..."

"More???"

"Jes."

"What?"

"Ju have a faddah complex."

"A father complex???"

"Jes."

"Can you explain a little about that."

"Ju rezent yor faddah."

"Yes."

"But ju also have a zeep fear that ju will become yor faddah."

That struck a chord.

"You're right. I've been afraid of becoming my father my entire life. What do I do about it?"

"Zhat's a complex anzwer and ver out of zime. Zet's leave zat for next veek's zession . . ."



A TRIP TO THE WEED DEALER

I'm not a weed guy. I'm a beer and wine guy. Nothing against weed. It's just not my thing. But living in the car with Lady was giving me migraine headaches. So, I decided to see if weed would reduce or eliminate those headaches. So, I drove back to Cupertino to visit my favorite liquor store because I knew the owner's son very well and knew that in addition to

selling bottles of booze the son also sold weed *illegally* under the counter. For confidentiality I will call the son “Mike” and the shop “*Bottle & Bong Liquors*.”

After a long drive all the way across town I parked *The Black Bat* at “*Bottle & Bong Liquors*” and walked through the automatic double glass doors. Mike was manning the counter as usual and playing *CALL of DUTY* on his gaming console.

ME. Hi Mike.

MIKE. Hey Z. Where you been???

ME. I moved to Milpitas.

MIKE. Milpitas??? Why’d you move there???

I told Mike our sad story then said . . .

ME. I need some weed.

MIKE. Weed??? You don’t smoke weed.

ME. I know, but I’m getting migraine headaches living in the car with my cat. I’m hoping weed will cure my headaches.

MIKE. All I got right now is *Purple Haze*; you want some?

ME. *Purple Haze*??? What’s that???

MIKE. It’s purple weed.

ME. *Purple weed*??? What happened to *green weed*???

MIKE. Green weed is still around, but all I have today is purple weed. You want some?

ME. When you gonna have *green weed* again?

MIKE. Maybe in two or three weeks.

ME. *Two or three weeks???*

MIKE. That's when I'll see the supplier again.

ME. I don't think I can wait that long. Yeah, hook me up with some *Purple Haze*.

MIKE. How much you want?

ME. Just gimme one joint for now. If it works I'll be back for more.

MIKE. You got it.

Just then a car pulled up in front of the store and two men got out. Mike looked at me and whispered,

MIKE. Go wait in your car. I'll roll you up and bring it out when I'm done with these guys.

ME. Thanks, man.

I went back to the car and waited with Lady.

LADY. What's goin' on, Mr. Man?

ME. I'm waitin' for some *Purple Haze*.

LADY. What's *Purple Daze???*

ME. *Purple Haze*.

LADY. I said that.

I explain Purple Haze to Lady.

Lady sighs heavily . . .

LADY. More *illegal* activity??? Mr. Man can you possibly live within the confines of the *Law*??? Who's gonna take care of me if you get busted and land your ass in *jail*???

ME. I'm not gonna get busted.

LADY. That's what Al Capone said.

ME. How do you know Al Capone???

LADY. We saw the Al Capone documentary on YouTube, *remember?*

ME. I forgot.

LADY. Be careful, Mr. Man. This Purple Daze deal could be an undercover set-up by the Feds. If you get busted by the Feds they're gonna fry your ass in the *electric chair* and then I'll be homeless and starve to death in a rainy dark dank alley next to some drunk homeless loser who vomits hot sticky whiskey gobbledy-goop all over my fur coat and then I'm gonna smell like hot whisky gobbledy-goop for the next three weeks and it'll be all your fault Mr. Man.

ME. Don't be so *melodramatic*.

LADY. I'm not being *monochromatic*.

ME. *Melodramatic*.

LADY. I said that; anyway, this crazy idea of yours seems pretty loony tunes if you ask me, Mr. Man.

ME. Whataya mean?

LADY. Well, as I understand it, Mr. Man, your plan is to fire-up this illegally acquired ratty ass dried up purple weed cigarette, take a big huge drag from this illegally acquired ratty ass dried up purple weed cigarette, then hold the smoke from this illegally acquired ratty ass dried up purple weed cigarette in your lungs for as long as you possibly can without dying or choking to death, then pray to the gods that by some funky ass miracle some funky ass *"mystery shit"* inside the funky ass smoke from the illegally acquired funky ass dried up purple weed cigarette interacts in some funky ass way with the funky ass wires and chemicals in your brain and then by some funky ass MAGIC no one really understands cures you of these funky ass *margarine* headaches. That's your *plan*, right???

ME. That is indeed my *plan* Lady, however, somehow the way you explain it, it sounds like a hare-brained idiotic idea from a psychedelic Bugs Bunny cartoon from a parallel reality.

LADY. That's because it sounds *exactly* like a hare-brained idiotic idea from a psychedelic Bugs Bunny cartoon from a parallel reality.

ME. Thanks, Lady.

LADY. As usual, Mr. Man, you are hell-bent on testing yet another one of your *crazy* misguided ideas and most likely getting us all killed in the process. I won't try to dissuade you from carrying out this crazy idea of yours Mr. Man since I know that would be pointless, but let me ask you one simple question: *What if this hare-brained idiotic idea of yours doesn't work???*

ME. Then it *doesn't* work.

LADY. That's it??? No back-up plan???

ME. I've never had a back-up plan in my life.

LADY. Are these *margarine* headaches of yours really so bad that you need to resort to crazy ass cures like this?

ME. *Migraine* headaches.

LADY. I *said* that.

ME. Yes, they are.

LADY. How often do you get these *margarine* headaches?

ME. Three or four times per week.

LADY. *Three or four times per week?!?! Damn-a-Rama-Bama*, Mr. Man. Have you ever figured out what causes these *margarine* headaches of yours?

ME. Yeah.

LADY. What?

ME. You.

