

Phinehas

A novel in the tradition of
Andrew MacDonald

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Denied

chapter one

“Dear Mr. Marlin. This letter is to inform you that your claim for unemployment compensation benefits has been denied. This decision is based in whole or in part on information provided by your previous employer.”

Doc blew out his breath in disgust and sat down heavily on his bunk.

For the past two years he had been working for a company near Selma, Alabama, that specialized in demolition and disaster clean-up services. After hurricanes Ivan and Katrina had roared through the southeastern United States, causing untold millions of dollars worth of damage, he had traveled with a crew, removing fallen trees and utility poles and grinding them into small chips, which were then sold to local paper mills to be used as boiler fuel.

For the first year, his manager had been an American. Doc had started on the bottom, learning to operate a knuckle boom grapple truck, a Case skid-steer, a Cat front end loader,

a Cat dozer and finally, the huge CBI biomass grinder. His experience as an over-the-road trucker and truck mechanic had made him the perfect all-around man on the yard, and when the American manager quit, everybody figured that Doc was very much in line to become the next manager.

The home office, which was based in the Midwest, interviewed several interested people, including Doc, but when their final decision came down, the crew learned, to their dismay, that a Mexican had been picked for the top job.

The thing that had everybody scratching their heads was, the new boss had absolutely no experience in cleanup or forestry or transportation! His background, by his own admission, was in the wholesale food industry!

When the Mexican showed up, Doc was given the job of leading the new guy around by the hand, showing him how things worked. In addition, he was charged with teaching him how to do the daily reports, how to coordinate the trucks that delivered the wood chips to the paper mills, how to make arrangements with the railroad and the EPA and the parts house and the diesel fuel supplier and the hundred other things that went along with running the operation.

Everything had gone fairly well, at first. In all fairness to the Mexican, there were some improvements. Several people were given long overdue raises, and there was hope that the grinding crews would finally get group insurance. The problems began when the Mexican declared, in front of the whole crew, that his number one intention was to start picking off the American workers, one by one, and replacing them with "vatoes", as he called them.

Sure enough, that's exactly what the Mexican did. Within a few weeks, he tricked one of the most experienced people on the job into demolishing some old, worn-out trailers

that had been used to deliver chips to the paper mill. In front of everyone, the Mexican told the American guy, who happened to be black, that his job for the week was to get rid of the trailers, and that he, the black guy, could have the money that he got when he hauled the scrap metal to the recycler.

The young black, together with his retired father, spent several days on the project, stripping aluminum and cast iron from the trailers and hauling it to the local scrap metal buyer. The Mexican didn't let the young black guy clock in for the day, but again told him, in front of the whole crew, that his pay for the week was the money he got from the scrap metal.

However, once the job was completed, the Mexican pulled the black guy into the office, closed the door, and told him he had "voluntarily quit", and was no longer allowed on the job site. When the young black, horrified at the news, complained about the decision, the Mexican told him that his time clock had not been punched for the entire week, and he had been reported to the home office as a voluntary quit.

As is the case with such things, nobody else would back up the young guy's story. Doc had asked the Mexican about the situation in private, but had been warned that there were some things that were the responsibility of the assistant manager, and some that were exclusively the domain of the "head honcho". So, at the end of the day, the young black was unemployed, even though he had been an excellent all-around worker, known for his cheerful attitude and his ability to operate any machine on the job site.

As if to rub salt in the wound, a week later, the Mexican called the county sheriff and reported that the metal from the trailers had been **STOLEN**, and gave them the young man's name! The young man, fearing that his father would be pulled into the mess, had no choice but to give the money

from the scrap metal to the Mexican.

Doc tolerated the situation for a year, until he could stomach no more. He sat down and wrote out an analysis, listing in great detail where the Mexican had performed worse than the previous manager, how revenue had fallen, how the Mexican had falsified expense reports and personnel evaluations, and mailed it to the home office.

The home office, it seems, was not interested in any of Doc's data. They didn't care about profits or losses. They didn't care whether the Mexican was honest or not. They had hired the Mexican for one reason and one reason only. He had promised to replace all of the American workers with Mexican vatoes.

Doc learned a few days later that the home office had sent his report to the Mexican. There had been a confrontation, which had been handled professionally, considering the circumstances.

Doc had not been fired. Instead, he had been asked to resign, and the Mexican promised to sign off on unemployment compensation. That way Doc could have some time to find another job, rather than being suddenly pushed out.

"Guess that's what I get for trusting a fuckin' Mexican," Doc grumbled to himself as he read over the denial letter again.

The Mexican had lied to Doc and to the state unemployment agency. Doc had been the assistant manager, but the Mexican had listed him as a laborer. Doc had been earning better than forty thousand per year, which should have shown the reviewers that he was much more than a laborer, but they took the word of the Mexican

manager. The Mexican had also told the state that Doc had voluntarily quit without notice! And, after making a few calls, it became clear that nothing could be done about it!

Doc looked around his cabin, his eyes falling on one item or another, until they came to rest on the AR-15 rifle leaning against the wall beside his bunk.

"You sure you wanna do that?" His younger brother was standing in the open door, grinning at Doc, the "see-I-told-you-so" look as plain as the nose on a Jew's face.

"Fock you, ahhshole," Doc retorted in his best Schwarzenegger imitation. "Well, Timmy, you were right, as usual. Fuckin' Mexican lied to everybody. He got rid of me, and screwed me out of my pennies too. Looks like I'm going back on the road."

Tim reached down and touched the black, semi-wild tomcat that was walking back and forth, rubbing against his legs. "Reckon it's gonna come down to that? You remember how aggravating it was before, what with the DOT rules and all. You think it'd be any different now? Dispatchers lying to you left and right. Customers expecting you to unload their stuff by hand, when you need to be resting. Cops trying to make their quota of tickets. Can't idle your truck and keep warm or cool, what with the price of diesel and the clean air bullshit. And they've made things even worse, with the Hours of Service rule changes they made back in oh three. Do you really think you could make a living, sitting still for ten hours a day?"

Doc pulled gently on his beard, his eyes not focusing on anything in particular. "Brother, it doesn't look like I have much choice. We don't exactly live in the mecca of employment, you know. The black belt of Alabama has a higher unemployment rate than anywhere else in the state.

Probably in the whole country. Several of our local counties are listed among the poorest in the nation. And now, companies are bringing in the Mexicans as fast as they can sneak them across the border. Friend of mine, met him down at the Rumble Strip bar, works at the Social Security office. He told me that they are forever running into situations where Juan Lopez has a social security number, and a dozen other Mexicans are reporting income under the same name and number! Hell, there are even web pages on the internet that specialize in supplying "guest workers" to anybody that wants them!"

"Black folks, white folks, people who were born here and speak the language, skilled people who want to work and need to work, we're being pushed out of our jobs and the goddamn civil rights people won't take our side! I always KNEW their real goal was to destroy America, and not to help the niggers! Even that frizzle headed Morris Dees, supposed to be the champion of the poor, downtrodden masses, laughs at people who ask him to help stop the Mexicans! On his web page he claims we hate them because we're afraid of them!"

"You ever thought about going into politics?" Tim grinned at his older brother.

He paused as Doc waved his middle finger in the air.

Tim continued. "Welllllll, we're not exactly broke. Land paid for, cabins almost paid off, all the cold, hand pumped water we can drink, winter garden starting to look pretty good, all the bobwhite quail we can eat, just itching to walk into the traps, Cahaba river with 150 species of fish within walking distance, solar cells all set up and charging. Don't be in such a hurry. Who knows? Maybe now would be a good time for you to go see that lady lawyer that's advertising all the time. Get you a crazy check and work under the table!"

Doc looked down at the steel toed boots he was wearing, and looked up with a wicked grin. "I could run over to Mobile highway and pick up an ounce hard, and make lots of money selling to the local crack-hoes!"

"Um hum, til you get caught and Big Leroy make you his bitch," Tim scolded.

Doc laughed, his first genuinely cheerful moment since opening the letter. "Well, I just got screwed by a Mexican, so maybe my ass is stretched out enough that I could stand some jailhouse love!"

Tim obviously didn't see the humor in his brother's statement. "So, when are you gonna head out? You gonna go back with the folks you were with before? Gonna haul produce from the west coast? You won't have to worry about things here. Mr. Willie will be okay. He already catches most of what he eats, and he's made friends with the bobcats, and I'll be here to take care of things while you're off in New York or where ever," Tim offered.

"Lynx," Doc corrected. "They're not bobcats, I don't think. I saw an article in National Geographic. The pictures I saw looked exactly like these cats. Big-ass dark tabbies with short tails and rear ends jacked up like a 69 Chevelle hot-rod."

Mr. Willie, almost as though he knew he was the subject of the conversation, walked across the bare wooden floor and jumped up on the bunk beside Doc, demanding some attention. "But to answer your question, I think I'm gonna try something new. Pull a tanker, or maybe even a flatbed. The mistake I made before was driving for an outlaw company. Everybody knew they were running illegal, including the cops, which almost cost me my commercial

driver's license."

Tim grimaced as he remembered his brother's frustration at having to work a local job for the past three years. "Hey, JB Hunt is hiring! I hear they run legal, and I don't think I've ever seen one of their trucks pulled over by a cop!"

"Don't you have to get back to work?" Doc asked his brother in mock irritation. JB Hunt was a running joke between the brothers. Doc was probably the worst non-conformist in the family, and JB only hired ultra-conformist drivers.

"Off for the rest of the day!" Tim retorted, his left hand waving a tackle box in and out of the door. "Everybody else on the crew is too drunk to paint, and I'm not gonna do it by myself! Wanna go to the river and drown some worms?"

"Dang, brother! Haven't you noticed that it's cold out? This is December, or have you been down here in the woods so long you've lost track of time? Maybe later," Doc said as he studied the denial letter for the twentieth time. "Gonna get on the computer and update some applications."

Tim patted the prepaid beep-beep cellphone on his belt. "You got my number if you need me!"

Doc watched as his brother walked through the woods toward the river. He envied Tim's easy-going outlook on life, and how simple he made it sound, losing a job and finding a new one. Almost like deciding which pair of underwear to wear today! Doesn't really matter which ones you wear, or if you decide not to wear any at all!

He looked around his cabin, taking some kind of mental inventory of where he stood. Fifty years old, but in excellent health, nearly new pickup in the front yard, eighteen years

experience driving a truck, lots of experience in maintenance and heavy equipment operation.

“And”, he grimly reminded himself, “a religious nut.”

Doc had been, ever since the spring of '99, a Christian Identity believer. While reading Antiquities of the Jews, by Flavius Josephus, the first-century Jewish historian, he had stumbled onto the idea that the modern day white people are the descendents of the ancient Israelites. He discovered that the ancient Israelites had split apart, and became two separate nations. The two southernmost tribes, Judah and Benjamin, along with some of the priestly Levites, had merged with a dark-skinned Asian group known as the Khazars and the resulting mongrelized people had eventually become known as the Jews.

The other ten tribes had been deported several hundred years earlier, and after overwhelming their Assyrian captors, had migrated north and west, where they had settled in the region of the Caucasus mountains. This branch of the Israelite nation completely forgot their heritage, adopted new languages and customs, and gradually began to think of themselves as Gentiles.

Josephus, a few years after Jesus' crucifixion, wrote that there were vast numbers of Israelites, a great and mighty uncountable nation "beyond the Euphrates". Beyond the Euphrates, heading north from Jerusalem, is southern Russia. The Caucasus mountains. Home of the Caucasians.

Eventually the Israelite “Caucasians” moved on to western Europe, along with a lot of the Jews. The Jews always tagged along where-ever the “Caucasians” went, because they could infiltrate like a dormant disease, and not be noticed. Along the way, people forgot, or were no longer taught, that the Jews had intermarried with the Khazars. And

ever since, the Jews had lived more-or-less as parasites among the true Israelite people. And from time to time, such as in Germany, their hosts had gotten a belly-full of the Jews' parasitic ways and had put them on the road, or worse.

This practice of putting the Jews "on the road" was, in many eyes, a direct fulfillment of the prophecy in Genesis 3, where the Lord said the children of the Woman would "bruise the heel" of the children of the Evil One.

And the more Doc learned, the more he was convinced that the Israelites were still obligated to obey all of the Law. All of the Israelites were obligated, whether they knew their true Identity or not. All six hundred and thirteen of the laws, not just the "big ten". Of course, some of the laws couldn't be obeyed, because there was no Temple and no daily sacrifice, but that still left better than four hundred laws of Moses that still applied. Simple things like telling someone when you discovered theft or dishonesty. Things like returning something to its rightful owner if you found it. Things like not shaving off your beard and not getting tattoos. National laws such as not allowing foreigners to live in the land with the white Israelite people. Not allowing fortune tellers or homosexuals to live in the land.

Doc wasn't too keen on the idea of having tassels sewn onto the corners of his Dickies jeans, but he compromised by having a tassel on his keychain.

Doc, never being one to believe something without proof, had tried for several years to shoot holes in the theory. He had read everything he could find that claimed the British Israelite doctrine was wrong. And in the end, he realized that the evidence was more in favor than against. The modern day white people, the evidence proves, ARE descended from the Ten Lost Tribes of ancient Israel.

Unfortunately, as he had soon discovered, the British Israelite / Christian Identity beliefs were seen as racism and hatred by most people, and were a sure-fire way to lose friends and influence people to hate you, if you witnessed to the wrong person.

Hate the haters so they will stop hating, or so the theory seemed to run!

He stood up and looked around the small, one-room cabin again. Because they lived so far down toward the river, there wasn't any electric service to the land where he and his brother lived, but they delighted in finding new and creative ways to live a normal life, "off the grid". They had bought several large solar panels from the local Chinese tool store, and after careful observation, had arranged them on the roof of the cabin so that they would collect sunlight from mid-morning until late afternoon. They had even taken into account that the sun travels a lower arc in the winter than in the summer. The solar cells kept three deep-cycle batteries charged, and an inverter converted the direct current into 125 volts of electricity. Overhead were several 12 volt LED lights that had been purchased at the local NAPA auto parts store. These bright, white lights were designed to be used as back-up lights on an 18 wheeler, but worked wonderfully as overhead lights. They would light the cabin for two weeks, day and night, without recharging the batteries.

Doc had bought an antenna that was designed to be used with a cell-phone, and had mounted it to the top of the cabin. He had snaked the coaxial cable down, through the wall, to the back of the computer stand. He then used an adapter to hook the antenna into an "air card", which gave him wireless broadband internet connectivity. The laptop was powered by a charger which was plugged into the inverter.

By the door was a stand with the Coleman dual-fuel stove. To the right of that, underneath a window, was a chest of drawers, on which rested two old-fashioned kerosene lanterns. Further to the right, around the first corner, was the beginning of a wide wooden shelf that ran several feet down the wall. Mounted on the shelf was an old fashioned pitcher pump, which pulled water from a pipe that had been driven some twenty feet into the ground. Above that was another shelf with pots and pans and canned goods.

A little beyond the pump, past the second corner and along the rear wall, was a nightstand with his Sangean shortwave radio. Beyond that stood the AR-15 rifle, the bunk, several shelves with boxes of ammunition for the AR, and his books neatly arranged with larger books on the ends, keeping the smaller, soft cover books from falling over. Below the bookshelves was a closet space, and beyond the closet was his computer desk, presently cluttered with bills and various pieces of junk mail, completely covering the laptop computer. Along the third wall was the German made boxwood stove and the woodbin, with an antique cast iron kettle that fit perfectly into the “eyes” that were moulded into the top of the stove.

Past the third corner was a section of bare wall, with only a calendar and hooks for the broom and raincoat, and then the doorway.

Doc kicked back and stretched out on the bed and looked into the ceiling, not really seeing the double layers of Styrofoam insulation. He smiled to himself as he thought about the idea of getting a crazy check. All of the locals said the lady lawyer was the best at getting you on the “draw”. Even as he thought about the benefits of getting a check every month, he knew he could never stand in front of a judge and keep a straight face as he claimed to be insane.

He also knew he couldn't bring himself to drive to Montgomery and get an "ounce hard". Crack cocaine was probably the most terrible thing to happen to Alabama since Reconstruction. Tens of thousands of young people, almost overnight, had gotten hooked on crack. Most of the addicts were young and female. Seeing their gaunt bodies and lifeless eyes as they walked up and down the streets, trying to sell their bodies for drug money, was more than Doc could bear.

The fear of prison wasn't holding him back from dealing, he knew in his heart. His conscience simply wouldn't permit him to go through with it. He had seen, with his own eyes, young white women step around the corner of a building and perform oral sex on a dope dealer for one "hit" on a "stem". Truckstops all over the country were teeming with young girls barely in their teens, selling their bodies again and again, trying to feed that insatiable hunger for the next hit.

He closed his eyes and let his mind wander, thinking of all the women and young girls he had watched climbing in and out of trucks. In particular, one girl he had met several years before, still haunted him as being especially heartbreaking.

Once, when he had been laid over in California, a girl who looked to be about twelve had knocked on his door, asking if he wanted some "company". That was the truckstop codeword for sex. He had invited her into the truck, on the pretext of discussing price, noticing from her accent that she was originally from the east coast, probably Jersey or New York.

He moved over into the passenger seat, making room for her to sit in the driver's seat. "What ya wanna do, baby?" Her face was still rounded with the look of a child, but her eyes had a hardness that betrayed experience beyond her years.

"I dunno", he said. "You're not working for the cops, are you?"

She laughed and pulled up her shirt, revealing nipples that were more like pale moles, and breasts that were hardly developed enough to need a training bra. "Would I do this if I wasn't the real deal?"

He laughed. "No, I guess not. Hey, where are you from, originally? East coast?"

She smiled, apparently pleased that he had noticed her accent. "Maybrook, New York. Exit five on I-84. Ever been there?"

"Hmmm, the old Travel Port truckstop", he mused, half to himself. "Best restaurant in New England!"

"My mom worked there, and I'd stop by after school", she explained, excited that somebody knew about her hometown. "Met a driver, a really nice guy who looked just like Will Smith. He and I spent a lot of time together, and he respected me, didn't talk down to me like I was a kid or nothing. One day he mentioned that he was headed to Los Angeles, so I came with him. Somehow we got separated, I couldn't find him, so here I am." She ended her story with a flourish of her hands.

"So, whatcha wanna do, baby?"

"Hey, look, I gotta confess," he said as he turned to face her. "I'm not really interested in doing anything. What I really wanna do is buy you a ticket outta here. Wouldn't you rather be headed back to Maybrook, instead of doing licks with these drivers? Hell, you can even ride with me, I run up that way pretty often."

"Oh, would you?" she said, the eagerness in her eyes encouraging him. "I can't leave right now, cause I gotta take care of some things, but if you could give me enough money for a Greyhound, by tomorrow night I'd be so far gone from this place that they'd think I got picked up by ET!"

He looked at the floor, trying to think of the right words to say. "I don't actually have any money on me right now," he explained. "I was thinking more of driving you to the station or airport and using my credit card to buy you a ticket, and hitting the ATM to get you some spending money for the trip."

She looked at him, the sudden flash of anger evident in her eyes. She started speaking "black english". "You ain't got no money? Why da fuck you call me up in heah? Jus da was'e my time? I ain't got no time fo' dis shit! Either we does som'in or I'm outta dis bitch!"

"I'm sorry," he began, as she reached for the door handle. She turned and looked at him, the look on her face telling him she wasn't interested in anything he might have to say. She opened the door, climbed down the steps and halfway slammed the door.

He moved from the passenger seat and sat behind the steering wheel where she had just been. He watched her as she walked across the sandy parking lot, until she got into an old, blue Ford. A black guy who appeared to be in his late 40's turned and let her sit in his lap. She apparently told the guy what Doc had offered, because the black guy looked toward the truck and laughed, his lips pulling back to reveal several missing teeth. He leaned back, pulled the young girl backward against him, and ran his hands under her shirt, lifting it up so that Doc could plainly see him playing with her nipples. As he did so, the girl leaned back, turned her head to the side and French-kissing the old guy, making sure Doc could see what she was doing.

For a moment, Doc stopped remembering and looked around the cabin again. His eyes came to rest on the top shelf, above the wood stove, where a small plastic box stood, camouflaged in between stacks of books.

"Oh, I tell you, it's a good thing I didn't have bullets for you that day," he said between clenched teeth. A couple days before he went to California, he had bought the stainless steel .45 automatic from a driver who wanted money to go across the border at El Paso. Unfortunately, or maybe fortunately, the driver didn't have any ammunition to go with the pistol, so Doc hadn't been able to put a grape-sized piece of lead between the eyes of that sick bastard who pulled up the shirt of a pre-teen girl in plain view of a dozen truck drivers.

The pitiful thing was, when Doc had called the California police, they hadn't even sent out a unit to investigate!

Doc took a deep breath. He knew that he'd need a Department of Transportation long form physical if he wanted to drive a big truck, so he sat up and walked over to his desk. After a few moments of shuffling papers, he found what he was looking for...a piece of paper that had cost him nearly ninety dollars. It was a necessary step, as important as having a commercial driver's license, and he replaced it on the desk, this time in a more accessible spot.

As he looked around the desk, he noticed a letter that he had first believed to be junk mail. It had a return address, but no name above the street and city. He opened it out of curiosity, and realized that he was looking at a recruitment brochure from an over the road trucking company that specialized in hauling hazardous materials.

"Bingo", he whispered quietly. He took off his baseball

cap and looked toward the ceiling with his eyes, not really tilting his head.

“This Your doing?” he asked aloud. The Almighty didn’t say anything. He almost never did, and even when He did, it was more along the lines of inspiration, a sudden flash of understanding from nowhere that solved the problem. But, as Doc was known to say, The Almighty was mighty good to listen and never interrupted when you had things you needed to get off your chest.

Doc reached for his cellphone and dialed the number...

Orientation

chapter two

Doc drove into the dirt parking lot, turned into the area reserved for drivers, parked and locked his pickup and walked toward what appeared to be the office building. He knew he was a little early, but knowing the trucking industry the way he did, he figured it wouldn’t hurt to get in there and be the early bird. Trucking was all about being on time, every time. Early was even better.

He found a metal door marked “SAFETY” and started to knock, but as he reached toward the door, someone from inside pulled it open and stood back, her free hand gesturing for him to come right on in. She was a tall redhead with classical Irish features, a sprinkle of freckles across her nose and green eyes that immediately had his attention. She didn’t look big, but she had a well-toned look about herself that he liked. He figured she had been a tomboy when she

was a teenager.

"This the place where they hold orientation? Erik Marlin. Folks just call me Doc." He met her eyes and nodded slightly. "I got your recruitment letter and called this lady, and she told me to show up here first thing today". Doc stuck out his hand and was met with a firm grip and a warm smile, her eyes crinkling up at the edges.

She pumped his hand energetically, apparently enjoying the flirty test of strength between them. "You're at the right place, Mister Doc! My name's Maureen, and judging from your voice, you're the one who called from the cellphone way down in the woods. You bring any critters with you today?"

He laughed, and closed the door as he came inside. "No, sorry, about the only critters down there are a family of cats. Lynx, I believe they are. Left them back in the hollers. They're not too keen on riding around in big trucks, I don't think. Plus, they're all furred up for winter. Probably wouldn't like a nice warm cab."

He watched as she walked back to one of the desks. The office was long and narrow, almost like a converted mobile home. It had a row of student's desks along one side, and a small office in the rear. Through the open door, he could see a cluttered executive desk with an LCD screen that looked like a 21 incher. She shuffled through some things, and came up with a stack of manila envelopes, each of them bulging with what he knew were the endless legal forms and affirmations that a driver had to sign before the company could put him in a truck.

"That my enlistment papers?" He stepped closer to her, and pretended to strain as he took the envelope she offered him. "I swear, these things get thicker all the time! When I first started driving, back in '90, we didn't have half this much

stuff to sign! Come to think of it, even joining the military was easier!”

Maureen rolled her eyes. “Doc, you don’t know the half of it!” She stepped back and waved her left hand toward a long shelf of folders, most of them filled with dog-eared papers. “Every driver that comes through here, we have to keep all these records on him. And you know how drivers are. Quit at the drop of a hat. Somebody offers them more money or a fast truck, and they’re gone without even saying goodbye! Sometimes I wanna just pull my hair out!”

Doc waving his hands in protest pretended to have a minor panic attack. “NOOOOOO, you can’t do that! That pretty red hair should be BRUSHED OUT, not pulled out!

“Ohhhh, a trucker who knows what women want!” Maureen looked sideways at him and wiggled her eyebrows like Groucho Marx.

“Used to have a girlfriend with long hair”, he explained. “She and her daughters trained me well!”

She walked over to a side door and opened it, revealing a much larger room with a long table, surrounded by metal chairs. So much for his idea about a converted mobile home. “Since you’re here, you wanna go ahead and get started with the paperwork? I’m sure you know most of it by heart. The usual stuff, W2 forms and work history and citizenship and all that. And, we have the best coffee you ever tasted, around the corner and to the left. I just made a pot.”

“Ahhh, bless ye chylid”, he intoned in his best Irish brogue. “An Irishwoman that knows haye to maeke good coffee!”

She winked and pointed to her red hair. “This red didn’t

come out of no bottle, baby!"

About that time, the phone started ringing, so he made himself busy, fixing a cup of coffee and picking a spot along the table near the front of the room.

One by one Doc worked through the endless forms. Date. December 12th. Name. Erik David Marlin. Age. 50. He affirmed that he was a citizen, and that he had deductions and that he had a license and all the other things that DOT felt like they needed to know. Again and again and again and again!

After his writing hand started getting sore, he took a quick break, walking outside to enjoy the brisk December air.

Gathered around the plastic butt-catcher were half a dozen men and one woman, from the looks of them and judging by the travel-bags piled on the nearby bench, his fellow drivers waiting for the start of orientation. He walked over to the group, and introduced himself.

"They call me Doc, he spoke up in a cheerful voice. Y'all come in on the bus?"

Responding as one, the other drivers nodded that they were new hires. The lady driver stuck out her hand and introduced herself as "Sassy". She was tall and slim and wore a pair of painted-on boot-cut jeans and a western style shirt that hugged her slim waist.

Sassy dropped her cigarette into the butt-can and lit another. "You the guy we need to see for orientation?"

"Noooo, not me! I'm outta work too! I drove down early this morning." Doc waved toward the parking lot, where his pickup was now surrounded by other vehicles. "I have a

phobia about the big grey dawg!"

Most of the other new hires rolled their eyes in understanding, and one of the other drivers held out his hand and introduced himself as "Fallout". As Doc tried to suppress a grin, the man, who had an uncanny resemblance to Sam Elliott in the movie Road House, explained that, way back when, his trainer had given him the CB radio "handle" of Fallout, because he had slipped and fell nearly every time he climbed out of a big truck.

"Nice to meet ya, Fallout", Doc said as he shook the man's hand. Seeing Fallout's eyes on his coffee cup, he added, "They tell y'all that there is coffee brewing in the Safety building?"

"Coffee? Oh, hell yeah!" Cigarettes were hurriedly dropped into the butt-catcher, and the group made a bee-line toward the door that Doc had recently exited.

A few moments later, Doc followed them into the office, and Maureen began the orientation process. At first, there were forms to be signed and dated and filled out, and then the inevitable DVD's from JJ Keller, videos that told the drivers all about the rules and regulations and safety on the highways and how to fill out the new logbooks. By lunch, Doc had identified all the usual types among the group.

There was one black driver that did nothing but complain. The coffee was no good, the trucks were too slow, the company wanted drivers to work for nothing, the insurance was too costly, the chairs were uncomfortable and there weren't enough black people working in the office and last but not least, they wouldn't put up with this bullshit in New York. All he did was complain, complain, complain.

When Maureen got tired of his mouth and told him he

was fired, the whole room gave her a big thumbs-up and a pat on the back.

When the guy left the recruiting office, he was cursing loudly, and promised that Maureen had not heard the last of him.

Then there was the joker. No matter what anybody said, he tried to turn it into something funny. It was entertaining for the first few minutes, but after a couple of hours, locked up with him in the conference room, it got old.

Fallout had worked for a company that went under, and was moving on to a new job with a more stable company. His face was creased and lined, the result, he claimed, of having worked off-shore on the oil rigs for many years, before he got into trucking. He looked like he had been hit by a good dose of radioactive fallout, but he had a personality that wouldn't quit. Doc was immediately sure he had found a new friend.

Sassy talked about her days as a "bull hauler", trucker slang for livestock movers. She had interesting stories of using a cattle prod to force a drunk trucker out of her cab when he couldn't understand the word NO, and of catching her ex with another woman, and how she accidentally left him at a truckstop in Barstow, California, and didn't realize it for nearly 100 miles. It didn't take Doc long to size her up as being an excellent driver, very outgoing and optimistic, but having some issues with men in her past.

The others were along the same lines. One guy had gotten fired because an overly-curious shop worker had found an unsealed fifth of liquor in his truck. The other recruits laughingly punched him on the arm, calling him a dumb-ass, to which he sheepishly agreed. Fallout elbowed him and asked if he had any liquor on him that he wanted to share.

Another had quit because his dispatcher wouldn't get him home. Sassy grinned as she asked him if he thought this company would be any different, to which everyone else nodded agreement over their coffee cups. Another was just out of trucking school, and needed to find a trainer, someone who would run the roads with him for 8 weeks, until he was ready to run solo.

"Ohhhhhh, fresh meat!", Fallout exclaimed, with a gleefully perverted look on his face, which got everyone to laughing at the horrified, red faced look on the shy young trainee's face. "Boy, you need to ride with me. We'll run New York City and Miami and go down to Boys Town in Mexico and take a shower once a week, whether we need it or not. You ever heard of the donkey show? Good lookin' little girl and a donkey....well, you'll see! I'll have you chasing whores and harassing queers and dodging scales and parking in party row before you know it!".

The trainee got quiet, but his blush didn't fade, which led Doc to silently wonder about him.

Doc, in turn, explained that he had been driving for the better part of twenty years, but he had been stupid, and had let his license get "hot". Too many speeding tickets, a couple of minor accidents and a bad habit of working more hours than the law would allow had cost him his job, and he had been forced to work local for 3 years, until all the bad stuff had dropped off his license.

Doc saw the trainee looking at him as he related his tale, and warned him, "Don't pay any attention to Fallout here. Or to any of the rest of us, for that matter. Lotta folks make that mistake, trying to be a cowboy out on the road. I did it. So did Fallout. Sassy too. Us old hands have learned the hard way, follow the rules and don't draw attention to yourself."

Sassy chimed in with a cheerful “hummmm”, unable to speak for a mouthful of coffee, but she lifted her cup in silent agreement with Doc.

"We don't know it all, but we've got a handle on it," Doc continued. "Don't park in the back row of the truck stop. They call that "party row" for a reason. Whores and drugs and booze. Don't hang out with the boys with the big radios. Don't associate with the chicken haulers and don't let truck stop women up in your truck and don't let them ride with you down the highway. You hang out with the truckers who act like preachers and good buddies, and you'll enjoy your job a whole lot more!"

"Good buddies? Chicken haulers?" The trainee was clearly puzzled at the terms.

"Yeah, good buddies, the queer drivers, the ones that dress like they're going golfing or bowling or to camp meeting and always follow the rules and turn their radios off whenever someone curses. The ones that park close to the building because they are afraid of being mugged in the parking lot. And chicken haulers are the ones that are on crystal meth, driving all the way across the country without stopping. Chicken trucks are fun to run with, but they'll get you in trouble."

"Oh." The young driver didn't seem to be thrilled at the new knowledge, but Doc didn't press the issue, not wanting to explore whether the guy was secretly hoping to get out on the road and prove his manhood by hanging with the "chicken haulers", or perhaps was gay and didn't appreciate the disparaging comparison.

Sassy jumped in and changed the subject. "Why they call ya Doc, Doc?"

Doc grinned. "You ever heard of the English boots called Dr. Martens? They're really popular with skinheads and such. Not to mention they're damn comfortable! Well, somebody noticed my last name and saw me wearing my 10 hole docs with the red rope laces, and decided that Erik just wasn't the right name for me! And somehow it stuck."

The rest of the day was more of the same, with lots of trucker stories and a fair share of teasing directed at the trainee, and finally Maureen asked if everyone had had enough for one day, to which everyone responded with a hearty chorus of agreement. After making sure that they all had their meal tickets and room vouchers, they gathered up their orientation books, walked outside the safety office and boarded the little bus that would take them to the motel where everyone was staying.

Doc had his own vehicle, so he stayed behind and walked back inside the office, where he found Maureen busily going through the mountain of paperwork that always seemed to be on her desk.

"Hey, I wanted to stop in and thank you for taking a chance on me. I mean, with my driving record, there's no way to know if I'm really reformed or not, and you folks are really doing me a huge favor, giving me the opportunity to get back on the road and make good."

Maureen waved him away with a casual hand. "Doc, you'd be amazed at the people who come through here. We get all kinds. And I don't think I'm taking a chance on you at all. You were honest and up-front with me, and I truly believe you have figured it out. I just wish half the folks who came through my office were like you!"

Doc took a chance. "Hey, Maureen, I don't see a ring on your finger. You up to dinner tonight? My treat, even!"

Maureen smiled, clearly flattered, but shook her head. "I'm sorry Doc, but I really can't. I have to work late today, just to get these papers sent in to DAC services, and to run these MVR's. If I have any hope of getting y'all out of here tomorrow evening, I'll have to take a rain check."

"But", she added brightly, with a smile that could melt the polar ice caps, "I do love a good cold Bud Light now and then! If you'll go grab us one, I'll have a beer with ya! Meet me by the red Hyundai, out past the end of the canopy in, say, an hour?"

Just then, the telephone rang, and Doc grinned and waved thumbs-up at her as she answered it. He walked out the door and noticed that it was already dark at 5:15pm. He greatly preferred daylight saving time. Getting off work in the dark was depressing.

He headed across the parking lot to his pickup. He started the engine, waited a moment as another vehicle pulled out of the narrow entrance, and then headed out to the highway and back toward the state line, where he remembered seeing an all-night gas station as he drove in earlier that morning.

Doc stopped at the gas pumps and filled up with premium, and walked inside. He picked out a six-pack of Bud Light in the longneck bottles, got a pack of Big Red chewing gum, and paid the cashier using his credit card. He was about to walk back to his pickup, when he noticed a state trooper parked behind him, but too far forward to be getting gasoline.

Doc walked on outside, knowing that any sign of shyness would alert the cop that he had something to hide. He purposely walked behind his pickup, in between their vehicles,

and turned to go get in the cab when the trooper spoke up.

"Sir, mind if I have a word with you?" Doc placed his bag with the beer inside the cab and meandered back to where the trooper was standing, half in and half out of his car. Young white guy, looked to be about thirty. Nervous.

"That tag of yours. I-D-E-N-T-I-T-Y. I routinely punched it in and, according to public safety, it's flagged as a symbol of a hate group. You know anything about that?"

Doc grinned. "Yeah, I get that a lot", he said as he sheepishly shrugged his shoulders. "When I turned 49, I bought this truck...ain't it sweet? Well, everybody told me I was having an identity crisis in my old age, so I got the tag. I'm trying to hold on to my fading youth, or so they say! Had no idea that it wasn't kosher. Pretty smart, huh?"

"Yup, that's what the computer says, that it's the name of some white power extremist group. Why don't you change your tag if you catch hell about it?"

Doc shook his head in mock resignation. "I've had that tag for a while now, and some folks swear it means I'm a racist. But, if I were suddenly to change it, everybody would say that it's because I really am a part of this hate group, and I'd never hear the end of it. No way to win when you're dealing with that crowd. Damned if you do, damned if you don't. So I keep it."

The trooper laughed and shook his head in disbelief. "Oh well, if you don't mind the attention, I guess it's a free country!"

Doc waved as he halfway turned toward his pickup. "Used to be!", he said laughingly, as he got in and buckled the seat belt.

Doc started the engine, pulled the gear shift into drive, slowly pulled out of the parking lot, looped around beside the building and headed back onto the highway and toward the truck yard. He noticed with satisfaction that the trooper did not follow him, so he shifted his attention to getting back to Maureen and her red Hyundai.

He drove carefully, slowing down at the railroad tracks, not entirely sure the trooper wasn't tailing him in the darkness. He drove to the big sign that stood outside the trucking company, turned into the driveway, and made a left into the gravel parking lot.

The lot wasn't entirely deserted, so he drove up and down until found the red Hyundai. There weren't any spaces next to it, so he parked a few spots down, where he could see the car and the safety door, and waited for Maureen to come out of the building.

The parking lot was dark, so he opened up one of the beers and took a long, satisfying drink of the bubbly liquid. He didn't know who might be watching from a window, so he slumped down in the seat a little, and tuned the radio to the local Christian station, which was playing something called The Urban Alternative.

Doc actually enjoyed listening to such preachers. Know your enemy, he joked to his brother. This one in particular was fairly well versed in scripture, but his delivery was the best part of the show. This guy tended to yell into the microphone, and would get all worked up during the sermon, which Doc found more pleasing than the white preachers whose deadpan, monotone voices were, for the most part, boring.

Doc closed his eyes and listened, trying to imagine this

guy standing in front of thousands of believers, but having a hard time making the picture fit. This guy sounded more like he'd have twenty-five in Sunday school, most of them closely related.

When he opened his eyes, to see if Maureen had made it to her car, he sat bolt upright and charged out of the door. Maureen, or some woman, was standing by the red car, but somebody had her from behind, arms around her, and she was struggling to escape.

Doc ran toward them and, once he got close to the struggling pair, launched himself onto the back of what appeared to be a man, bringing all three of them to the gravel. Doc looped his left arm around the guy's neck, not meaning to do anything except break up the struggle and learn what was going on. The guy, not willing to settle down, let go of the woman, reached backward and tried to grasp Doc's groin with his right hand, while his left hand clawed at Doc's left arm.

"Mother fucker", Doc thought to himself. "Only niggers fight like that!"

Doc was in no mood to have a conversation with some guy who would jump Maureen in a dark parking lot, so, with his right hand he grasped his own left arm which was still circled around the guy's neck. Pushing upward and to the side with both arms, he put pressure on the guy's head, forcing it to lean to the left side in an uncomfortable manner. Still the guy grasped backward, trying to grab Doc's testicles, so, in a surge of irritation, Doc wrapped his legs around the guy's body, pushed upward with his arms and twisted his upper torso sharply to the left. He was rewarded by a soft popping noise coming from the guy's neck, at which point the guy went stiff and stopped struggling.

Doc, untangled himself from the now limp form and

rushed to check on the woman who was now standing at the rear of her car.

"Maureen, you ok?" he asked gently. When she didn't answer, he moved close to her, holding her hands in his own. He waited until she looked at him, and then told her, in a quiet, soothing, yet firm voice, that it was over, and she was safe.

She was quiet for a minute, and then, tears glistening in her eyes, she finally spoke. "That's the nigger I fired this morning, isn't it?"

Doc hadn't noticed. "All look the same to me! Let me check."

He gently released Maureen's hands and walked around the car to where the guy was still lying motionless, face down on the gravel. Doc stepped over the still form and, in the near-total-darkness, saw that it was indeed the black guy who had been so negative during the orientation class.

"Maureen", Doc began. He got up and walked back to where she stood, and when he got close, she reached out and put her arms around his waist. He put his arms around her shoulders and pulled her close, and spoke into her billowing red hair.

"Maureen, are there any hidden cameras here on the yard? Any cameras that might be pointing this way?"

"No, none at all. Too small a company, and we're in a good area. Never needed any." She waved her hand at the other cars in the parking lot. "I'm the last one here. These belong to drivers who are gone on the road."

"Ok, are you good to drive? Can you make it home and

get a good nights sleep? Call a friend or your folks and get through this?

"My mom lives near me, I can go stay with her. She's the best. But why?"

"Well, I've gotta get rid of something." He felt Maureen jump suddenly, as though just then realizing that the guy was dead. "Did this guy come in on the bus? He got a car on the yard? He local?"

"Yeah, on the bus. He's not from around here."

"Good, that's good. Ok, now, how about you? Are you hurt? Scratched? Bruised? Anything you can't cover up with long sleeves or a turtleneck?"

"No, I'm fine, I think. Just a little shaky still, but nothing that a good cold beer won't fix."

Doc suddenly remembered the beer he had promised her. "You still feel like having a beer with me, ole' woman? They should be cold still."

Maureen smiled, the first time since the attack. "I'll take TWO, she said in a firm tone of voice. What you gonna do with him?"

Doc was halfway back from the pickup with her beers by now. "Well, I don't honestly know yet. I was thinking hog pen, swamp with alligators, or maybe a place where nobody ever goes. Problem is, it's too cold for alligators, and it's hunting season, and hogs don't always eat everything. Any ideas?"

Maureen brightened even more. "There's a place down the road from my house, where they take dead animals from

the Humane Society. Nobody goes there except an occasional dump truck with more animals. It's private property, with a big fence around it. And a guy with a bobcat pushes dirt down the hill on top of them the next day. Reckon that would do?"

Doc laughed quietly. "I like the way you think, Lass. Yeah, that should do perfectly. I'll have to make sure he's covered up, but that's not too hard to do. Just keep a lookout for me while I back up and get him in the truck, ok?"

"Hurry", she whispered, as though suddenly becoming afraid they might be seen.

Doc started his pickup and backed near her car without turning on the headlights. He turned the motor off, lowered the tailgate, and with some difficulty, got the limp body hoisted into the bed and closed the gate back up.

Doc turned to the woman, who was watching him with horrified fascination. "Maureen, one more thing before I go. Look around and make SURE that nothing is on the ground. Nothing of his or ours. Your eyes are better than mine, and I'm gonna be putting a tarp over his dead ass. Once you're sure everything's ok, lead the way and I'll follow you to this dump, and we'll put an end to this mess."

Maureen was holding a nearly empty beer bottle, and seemed to be much more relaxed than before. "Mr. Doc, I'll do my best. Let me know when you're ready!"

Doc jumped into the bed of the pickup and unfolded a tarp he used when he hauled brush to the dump. He placed it over the body and tied the ropes to the loops that were made into the bed of the pickup, and turned to see Maureen backing out of the parking space. He waved at her, and got into the cab as she slowly made her way out of the parking lot

and onto the highway.

He followed her a few miles, then turned with her as they branched off onto a county road, and again onto another county road. After a few more miles, they turned onto a dirt road with grass growing in between the tire tracks. Doc was impressed with her choice of locations, knowing from the look of the road that the county maintenance department didn't come down this way, which meant that the Sheriff's patrol didn't, either.

About half a mile down the road, they came to a place that was all red clay and sandy gravel. In the headlights Doc could see what looked like an old gravel pit off to the side, and a place where a vehicle could make a tight u-turn and head back toward the paved road. He stepped out onto the ground and walked over to her car.

"Hey, you sure you're ok?" She nodded quickly. "Well, you head on home and let me take care of this. I'm gonna drop him off the edge and then use my feet to push some dirt down on top of him. This loose gravel and red clay isn't hard to work with. Then I'll head on to the motel, and hang out with the guys til the wee hours, and see you in the morning like nothing ever happened, ok?"

She put her car in park and got out. "I'm gonna help", she said with such an air of finality that he didn't feel like arguing with her. Together they backed the pickup toward the edge of the bank, and once she bumped the side of the bed with the flat of her hand, he stopped and pulled the dead body out and dropped it over the edge. Together they slid down the sloping, gravel bank, bringing enough loose dirt with them that the body was halfway covered up before they ever started to throw dirt on it. A few dozen double handfuls of sandy gravel and clay, and there was no sign that anything was there.

"Just like when the guy covers up the other animals", Maureen said with a smiling, sideways glance at Doc.

"Took the words right outta my mouth", he retorted with a quiet, satisfied chuckle.

They climbed back up to their vehicles, checking each other to make sure that they didn't have any red clay on their clothes or shoes, and then he followed her out of the woods and back to the paved road. She drove about a mile and turned off into a driveway, and he continued on down the road and into town, to the motel.

When he got there, the other drivers had already walked down to the local package store, and were well involved in a nice collection of bottles that were placed, buffet style, on the table in Fallout's room. Beside the bottles, somebody had placed a stack of the standard-issue motel drinking cups. He walked in, put three five-dollar-bills on the table, poured a goodly swallow from the Jim Beam bottle, and with a flourish, greeted the drivers cheerfully.

"Gentlemen! And lady! He bowed deferentially toward Sassy. Sorry I'm so late! I ran into a driver I used to work with on the yard, and we got to telling old trucker lies, and you know how that can be! I like the guy, but he can be hard to get away from!"

"Aw hell, we know you were talkin' shit to Maureen, you liar!", Fallout roared as the others erupted in laughter. "But that's okay too, long as your fingers don't smell bad!"

Doc made a production of sniffing his fingers, offered them to Fallout, shrugged his shoulders, and grabbed a second swallow of Beam.

The other drivers, Sassy included, were all sprawled out on the sofa, the bed and the armchair, watching something on cable. Sassy, who was on the bed, moved over and gave him room next to her, and, after taking another good swallow of Jim Beam, he kicked off his boots, stretched out on the bed, and was soon sawing logs...

Fallout

chapter three

The next morning, Doc woke up before the others. He hadn't had as much to drink as they had, judging from the nearly empty bottles, and he really wanted to go back to his room and get a quick shower.

He got off the bed as gently as possible, although not without waking Sassy. She dreamily caught his hand as he scooted off the edge of the bed, but instead of staying with her, he lifted her hand to his lips and lightly kissed her fingers, and whispered that he'd be right back.

She was back sound asleep before he made it out of the room.

Doc stepped carefully over the driver who was sleeping at the foot of the bed, grabbed his boots and carried them out the door. He was happy that the door didn't squeak or make much noise as he closed it behind him, and once outside, he walked to his pickup and let down the tailgate, and sat there

as he pulled on his boots. He started to lace them up, but decided against it, as he was planning to get a shower before going back for the rest of orientation.

While he was sitting on the tailgate, he did a quick check of the bed of the pickup, noting that there was no sign of the load he had carried the night before. Upon walking around to the front of the pickup he was, however, upset to discover that there were weeds and tall grass pieces caught in the grill. That was the kind of oversight that could get a fellow in a lot of trouble, assuming that a competent investigator came nosing around.

He made a mental note to stop by the self-spray car wash on the way to work.

He got his bags out of the cab of the pickup and went to his room, for which he had signed the previous night, but hadn't entered. He dropped his bags on the bed, chose a pair of jeans, a shirt, underwear and socks, and headed toward the shower.

He purposely waited in his room until the little bus had picked up the other drivers, and then got into the pickup and headed toward the car-wash down the street. He carefully sprayed all the grass and weeds out of the grill and from underneath the body, and swiped the spray across his boots for good measure, to get rid of any remaining dirt or clay that he might have missed.

Later on that morning, when everyone was taking a smoke break, he took a quick moment to stop in and see Maureen. She looked good, and in fact, she looked positively beautiful! Her smile was all that he needed to see, to know that she was fine, and had no lingering doubts or misplaced guilt over the night before.

As he stuck his head in her office, she was on the phone, but she quickly gave him a wink and touched two fingers to her lips and blew him a kiss, and was back to business as usual.

However, as he made to turn around and head back to the smoking area, she called out to him and invited him into the little office.

"Hey, can I trust you with something very important?", she half whispered in a mock conspiratorial manner.

"Sure!" Doc quickly ran through the events of the night before, wondering if perhaps he had forgotten something.

"You remember I told you that the dump was on private property? Well, it's not just any property. It's my dad's property. He can't stop them from killing those poor animals, but he would rather offer them some kind of decent burial than have them hauled off to the county landfill. And after I told him what happened last night, he is mad as hell, and he's going to go down there today with the bobcat and push several yards of dirt down that hill. I just wanted you to know that, to know that all the loose ends are covered."

Doc tried not to let it show, but he was so shocked and relieved that he couldn't help but laugh. "Your dad? You sure he's not gonna turn us in or anything?"

"Oh, hell no!" Maureen declared flatly. "That ole' man hates niggers worse than anybody you ever met in your life! Especially when one of them tries to put his hands on daddy's only daughter!"

Doc was surprised to hear Maureen use such language, but he didn't mind at all, and when the telephone started to ring he waved cheerfully and let her get back to work. He

walked outside and chatted with the other recruits, and while they were on break, someone from the traffic office brought them a note, telling them who their dispatchers were going to be.

Doc, Fallout and Sassy had the same dispatcher, the huge fat girl, while the other guys were parceled out among others. According to the dispatch note, Doc and Fallout were already assigned loads, heading to Chicago.

"Good deal, man, I'm glad we're gonna be running together!", Fallout said quietly. "I wanted the chance to trash around with you anyway, and this will be great!"

"Works for me", Doc said, taking a quick look around. "Between that nigger yesterday and the joker and the drunk, they're enough to drive a man to experiment with hard drugs!"

Fallout laughed and punched Doc lightly on the shoulder, and they both headed on into the recruiting office. They had to watch some more short movies, sit through a couple of speeches by the safety manager and the shop guy, and after that, they were assigned their trucks and were free to leave out.

Doc and Fallout, being "old hands", as the truckers call it, generally tended to run by themselves. They knew from long experience that the fastest trucks collect the most attention from the cops, and so, they set their cruise controls a couple miles per hour over the speed limit and eased on up the road. While the other drivers talked on channel 19 of the CB radio, the old hands tended to jump to another channel and chat amongst themselves, unless there was bad weather or they were in a metro area.

So, after they loaded their personal stuff into their trucks, topped off the fuel tanks and hooked to their trailers, they

made one last loop through the truck yard, waved at Sassy and the other new hires and headed on up the road toward Interstate 65.

Doc liked channel 25, so they drove along, chatting about family and other drivers and the trucks they were in and pretty much anything that came to mind.

Truckers love the CB radio the way depressed people love their therapists. The CB radio lets a driver talk about his problems, his feelings, his fears and his regrets, and most of the time, the other drivers are there to give him an understanding word or two and help him get past whatever is bothering him. And that's what Doc and Fallout did, driving along on their own channel, away from the traffic reports and smokey reports and warnings about road construction and whatever else was happening on "Sesame Street", as channel 19 is frequently called.

They "strolled" on up through north Alabama and stopped at exit 310, in Cullman, where the McDonald's has truck parking and the nicest bunch of young people Doc had ever seen in a fast food joint. It was no coincidence that they were all white! They then crossed the Tennessee line at mile marker 366, almost stopped at exit 6, but the Boobie Bungalow wasn't open that early. On up the road they stopped for a minute at Stan's Restaurant off exit 46 in Columbia, where they bought country ham slices and filled up their coffee cups. Then they headed on up to Nashville, where they stopped at the T/A, right next to the Nashville Titans stadium, and got more fuel. Late in the day, they got tired as they neared Louisville, Kentucky and decided to stop at exit 116, which is near Shepherdsville, and to spend the night at the Love's truck stop.

Doc had figured they had roughly 350 miles to go once they left Shepherdsville, which would put them in Chicago

before afternoon rush if they got an early start and didn't trash around too much.

They got off the exit, but before they went into the Love's, they went across the street to the little gas station. They each got two bottles of beer and a few slices of the very excellent hoop cheese that the little old lady cuts to order. Then they crossed the street and drove into the Loves, and parked in the back row, preferring the company of the old hands to that of the driving school types who fought for spaces in the very front row. Fallout found a hole down on the very end of "party row", the row of trucks that was further from the building than any other, and Doc backed into a hole a few spaces up the way from him.

They went inside and got showers, and sat in the little booths for a while, drinking the good Love's coffee and chatting with other drivers who stopped in and joined them.

Afterwards, they walked out to their respective trucks and got on the CB for a little.

"Hey, Doc, you wanna hear something crazy, man?"

"Sure Fallout, whatcha got?"

"You ain't gonna believe this shit, but my passenger side door won't lock! I've tried everything I can think of, but no matter what I do, it won't lock!"

"Uhhhh, Fallout, that ain't good. Hey, you wanna use my load strap to run between the two doors? Lotta drivers use them to make sure nobody can break in on them."

"Oh hell, Doc, I am NOT gonna have somebody parked next to me and have him see a strap between my doors! Only scared women and good buddies do that stuff! I'll

manage. Besides, I've got my big ole' rubber tire knocker hammer with me. Anybody comes in here with me is gonna have a headache!"

"All right ole' man, I'm gonna sleep with the CB on channel 25, so if you need me during the night, just holler!"

"U got it Doc...channel two-five!"

With that, Doc climbed into his sleeper and was soon asleep. However, sometime during the night he had a knock on his door, and not knowing if perhaps there was something wrong, he looked out the window to see what it was about.

When he rolled down the window, a young man with a lispy voice was asking him if he wanted some male company. Doc didn't even answer. He just rolled up the window and flopped back into the sleeper.

Unfortunately, he was awake, and not even the rest of the beer was enough to get him back asleep. So, he sat up in the front seat and turned the CB onto channel 19.

As he clicked the button, he heard an effeminate voice saying, "How bout it truckers? Anybody needing to get that load sucked off, just bring it back to the Kokomo Homo!"

At first Doc was tempted to key the microphone and say something hateful, but then he had a wicked idea. All day long, he and Fallout had been playing jokes on each other, and it occurred to him that, with Fallout's broken door lock, this would be an excellent way to have some fun and, at the same time, teach a faggot a lesson that he'd never forget.

Doc softened up his voice a little, and responded to the queer. "Hi guy, talk to me on channel 1, okaaaay?"

Down on channel one, Doc told the queer what he had in mind. Yes, he was interested in some company, and he was in such-and-such a truck, down on the very end of party row by the grass. The passenger side door would be unlocked, and he (the queer) should just come on in and get in the sleeper.

Doc had a hard time keeping the laughter out of his voice, but somehow he managed to do it. He gave all the details to the queer, and saw to his delight that the queer was indeed headed toward Fallout's truck.

He quickly put his CB back on channel 25, and watched as the queer opened Fallout's door and climbed inside. A few moments later, the truck started shaking violently, and, from the far side, Doc saw Fallout's passenger door fly open and what looked like a young man fly backwards out of the door!

He listened for a long time on the CB, switching back and forth between 19 and 25, but Fallout never said a word on the radio. and Doc never did see the queer again. Satisfied that the joke had worked and that he'd never hear the end of it in the morning, he put the radio back on channel 25 and climbed back into the sleeper, and was soon fast asleep.

The next morning, about 4:30, Fallout started calling on channel 25. Fallout seemed eager to get started, so between the two of them they decided to head on and beat the Louisville morning rush. They both had little porta-potties in their sleepers, and didn't need to get out of their trucks. Their plan was to drive on up into Indiana, and have breakfast at the T/A at exit 50. It was still dusky dark as they pulled out of their spaces and headed on up toward Louisville and the state line.

They passed I-265, the Gene Snyder loop, and slowed down to double nickel, not wanting to donate any hard earned money to Louisville's finest. About Mohammed Ali boulevard the traffic was slow, probably because of all the people working at Jewish Hospital, but as soon as they crossed the bridge into Indiana, things were better. They watched their speed until they got to exit 16, but then they jumped to channel two-five and set their cruise controls on sixty-three (Indiana limits trucks to sixty miles per hour) and rolled on up the road.

They went on to exit 50 in Indiana, and had breakfast, and continued on northbound, but never once did Fallout mention that he had had a visitor during the night. They talked about the chance of lake effect snow in Chicago, and Doc used his laptop to find directions to the receiver, which was the Gurnee Mills mall on Grand Avenue, due north (technically west) of Chicago on Interstate 94.

Since Doc knew the area, they decided to go on up and spend the night in the parking lot of the mall and make their deliveries first thing the following morning. They drove on up through the middle of Chicago on I-94, rather than taking the I-294 loop, catching the traffic during the very early afternoon, when it was lightest. They had stopped and got fuel and lunch before Chicago, at the T/A in Gary, Indiana, so they weren't really interested in stopping until they arrived at the mall.

Once at the mall, Doc wanted to go see the stores, but Fallout wasn't much interested in all that stuff, so he decided to take a nap while Doc did his "trashing around". Doc walked in through the big Outdoor store, spending some time in the hunting and fishing department, and then walked on into the main part of the mall. He didn't spend any time in the clothing stores, but he did check out the bookstores, the jelly bean store, the electronics store, the computer stores and

several tee-shirt stores.

He finally wound up in the food court, getting himself a large plate of General Tso's Chicken, a side order of Orange chicken, brown rice and steamed broccoli. He had just finished the meal and was headed to get a second cup of Starbucks, when, to his shock, he saw Fallout waving to him from the other side of the fountain!

"Hey ole' man, I thought u didn't do malls!", he exclaimed, genuinely happy to see the driver.

"Couldn't sleep, so I figured I'd come check on you", the older man grumbled in mock irritation.

Doc showed him where his table was, and while Fallout sat and watched the fountain, Doc stepped back over to Starbucks and got them both a tall coffee of the day, quick shot of half and half but with no sugar. He brought them back to the table and sat down, and noticed that his friend seemed upset about something.

"Uh oh", Doc said to himself. "This is where I get in deep shit for sending that queer over to Fallout's truck in the middle of the night!"

Fallout made idle chit-chat for a while, commenting on some of the girls who were wearing tiny little dresses, even though it was snowing out, and told Doc about this place he had seen along the way, where you could get your name sewed onto a baseball cap. Doc didn't say much, but let him take the lead, hoping he would eventually speak his mind.

"Doc, you'll never believe this shit in a million years, man. Something happened last night, and I'm scared." Fallout was usually loud and boisterous, but he got very quiet when he made that last statement.

Doc was both relieved and alarmed that this man, veteran of the oil fields and offshore rigs, former chicken hauler, tough and wiry as shoe leather, completely oblivious to stuff that would make most truckers duck and run, could admit to being afraid of anything!

"What happened, Fallout? Couldn't have been much, could it? I mean, all night long we were like 4 trucks apart, and I kept the CB turned on. What was it?"

"Doc, I know I can trust you...you're an old hand, and you're good people. Man, last night, middle of the night, this good buddy climbed up in my truck and got in the sleeper with me." At this, Doc put on an expression of shocked horror, trying not to laugh at the same time. Fallout went on. "Man, when that boy climbed into the sleeper and started putting his hands on me, I grabbed my big rubber tire hammer and I beaned him dead square in the front of his head! I pushed him backwards and before he fell out the door I beaned him again, same place, hard as I could!"

Doc could hold it no longer. He smothered it as much as he could, but he couldn't help laughing a little, until he saw that his friend wasn't laughing with him.

"I'm sorry man, I know it's not funny, but the idea of a good buddy climbing in your truck in the middle of the night..."

"Yeah, but Doc, there's a problem." Doc didn't say anything, waiting for the other shoe to drop. "Doc, this morning, when we woke up and left, the boy was still laying there in the snow! I'm afraid I killed him, man!"

Doc was, for one of the very few times in his life, completely speechless. On the one hand, he had intentionally killed a guy who was attacking Maureen, and

never blinked an eye. A few years earlier, he had killed a prostitute that had robbed him of twenty dollars. And there was that would-be mugger in the truckstop in Virginia. And he had never given it a second thought. He was surprised that his running buddy would be so taken aback at having rid the earth of a faggot. On the other hand, he was seeing himself in a new way. He had always considered himself to be a bit of a quiet, shy type. A bookworm. A geek. A nerd. Men like Fallout, on the other hand, he had always considered to be manly, tough, unbreakable, admirable.

And now he was seeing himself in a role-reversal that he hadn't expected.

"Doc, you're the kind to notice stuff that nobody else sees. So tell me, man, did you see any cameras on the poles out there last night?

Doc thought back, mentally going over the layout of the Love's. They had parked in the very back row, completely away from the fuel islands, nowhere close to the automobile side, and just beyond Fallout's truck was grass on a steeply sloping bank, leading down to the edge of the woods.

"No, man, I don't think there was anything like that. You know Shepherdsville. No lot lizards to speak of, and that good buddy was probably the only one out there. No businesses in the area, and the cameras that watch the fuel islands point downward, not out toward the back. Plus, there were three rows of trucks between the islands and our row. Him still being there at 4:30 in the morning tells me he was alone, and didn't show up on any cameras. And if anybody had found him while walking their dog, we'd have heard about it."

Doc brightened up at the prospect of helping his friend.

"Hey ole' man, what say we grab us a few bags for my little shop vac, and some of that purple cleaning stuff that will burn your hands, and have us a GI party in your truck this evening? We can get us a couple of pints in the package store back down the way, and kick back and relax and tell trucker stories and aggravate the Yankees on the CB radio."

Doc playfully poked at Fallout's arms as they lay folded on the little table. "Idleness is the devil's workshop, gramps! Let's go DO something! Take your mind off it!"

Fallout's expression didn't change for a moment, as though he wasn't entirely convinced, but then, with a wicked twinkle in his eyes, he looked Doc in the face. "I'll buy the purple stuff and the paper towels and the bags if you'll spring for the booze!"

Doc was relieved to see his friend's improved outlook, and with a great flourish he reached into his shirt pocket and pulled out his VISA card and twirled it around like a magic wand. "Ole' man, I got plastic! We got the world by the short hairs!!!"

Fallout grinned, and they both stood up and pushed their chairs under the metal table. Doc dumped his paper plate into the trash bin, and put the plastic tray on top in the rack, and they headed back down the hallway toward the chain drugstore that was near the Outdoor store.

While Fallout picked out the cleaning supplies, Doc walked down a side hall and picked out two pints of liquor, making sure to get Fallout the particular brand of 100 proof vodka he had mentioned earlier in the trip. After going through the checkout, he met the older man in the hallway, and they headed back to their trucks.

"Oh shit!" Fallout breathed as they walked out into the

cold, sunny afternoon air. Doc at first thought it was because of the temperature, but when his friend caught him by the arm, he looked up, and saw the cause of the man's alarmed outburst.

A police cruiser, City of Gurnee, Illinois marked on its side, was parked in front of their trucks, and the officer was standing nearer to Fallout's truck. For a moment Doc considered heading back inside the mall, but he decided against it. If the cop were to look their way and see two men walking INTO the mall with bags in their hands, it wouldn't look right.

"Follow my lead", Doc whispered to Fallout as they walked out across the parking lot. "This guy is probably wondering why we're parked in a place where the signs say "no truck parking", that's all."

"Hope you're right", the other driver grumbled, clearly not happy with the idea.

As they got closer to the officer, Doc lifted a hand with a bag in it and cheerfully greeted the man. "Afternoon there! It be okay if we park here for a while? We're supposed to deliver over there first thing in the morning, and we don't know of any truckstops in the area. We're from Alabama, and about halfway lost up here!"

With that, Doc waved his hand toward a loading dock down on the back side of the mall, at which point the officer smiled and appeared to become a little more friendly.

"You fellows have paperwork? Wouldn't be the first time I've caught drivers in here who tried to pull a fast one on me!"

"Not a problem", Doc offered. "Right there on my dashboard, but I'll get it for you if you like!"

"Yeah, if you don't mind", the patrolman said with a nod of the head. "If the night crew asks for your paperwork and it turns out I didn't check it, it might come back on me. Never can be too careful these days, you know."

Doc unlocked his driver side door and climbed up on the running board, but didn't get into the truck. He noticed that Fallout had followed his example, and the two of them slowly reached into their cabs and brought out the bills of lading that had the receiver's name and address printed across the top. Reclosing his door, Doc brought the papers to the officer, who had warily stepped back toward his car, which seemed to be standard procedure for dealing with truckers, many of whom carried firearms.

"Right there on the top, Gurnee, Illinois, December 15th, 8am. Load of women's apparel, fresh from Mexico, reboxed in Alabama to make it look like they're American made. My pardner's load is for 7am. They space us out I guess because there's only one dock."

The officer seemed satisfied, and tipped his hat to the two drivers. "Y'all have fun in the snow and ice! Bet there's not much of that down where you come from!"

Doc grinned sheepishly. "My brother called me just before I went into the mall. He's sitting on the banks of the Cahaba River in Alabama, catching a mess of fish, and he's gonna fire up the smoker and cook them in the back yard when he gets back home!"

The officer laughed as he got back in his car. "Rub it in, guy!" And with a wave of his hand, he put the car into reverse, backed away and headed slowly around the side of the mall.

Fallout walked over to the bags that Doc had placed on his running board, and as soon as the cop was out of sight, took out the bottle of vodka and, cracking the seal, took a goodly swallow of the potent clear liquid.

"Whassa matter old man? Losing your nerve in your old age, are you?" Doc was standing close to him, and gently used his elbow to push his buddy in a playful way.

"Got your old age right here, little boy!" Fallout had a look about him that, if someone didn't know him, they would think he was angry, but Doc had learned enough about him in the past three days that he knew better.

Without further waste of time, they climbed up in Fallout's truck and proceeded to GI the whole cab. The hand-holds on the outside of the cab got special attention, first with the purple stuff and then with some metal polish that Fallout found in the side box. While he was taking care of that, Doc used the small, but powerful shop vac to carefully remove every bit of dirt and foreign matter from the floorboard, headliner, seats and the curtain that hung between the cab and sleeper.

Fallout came behind him with more of the purple stuff, and since the upholstery was all heavy vinyl, he wiped everything down with paper towels drenched in the highly alkaline cleaning solution.

After the cab was sanitized to their satisfaction, the two old hands relaxed in the seats, pushing the handle that let the seats recline backward, and putting their feet on the dashboard.

"Hey, Fallout, I've been thinking about something." Doc took a good swallow of the bottle he had bought for himself, a twelve year old Scotch whiskey. "If, and I'm saying IF, somebody comes nosing around and asking questions about

last night, what say we tell them MY TRUCK was parked on the end? I mean, think about it, nobody pays attention to the numbers on the side of the truck, right? Both our trucks are red, and we're part of a fleet. Apart from the numbers, our trucks are identical. So if they get up in the truck and look around, or maybe put a dog in there, they won't find anything."

The older hand looked at Doc with a mixture of disbelief and wonder on his grizzled face. "You'd do that?", he asked.

"Bah, it ain't such a big deal." Doc shrugged his shoulders. "Besides, it's the principle of the thing. If you had done something WRONG, I would probably look at it differently. But in my heart, you didn't do anything wrong. In fact, far as I'm concerned, what happened was an accident. But if they were to tie you to it, they'd charge you with a hate crime, and then you'd sit in a box for twenty years and wind up with a needle in your arm."

Fallout didn't say anything, so Doc continued. "Besides, old man, I haven't told you everything. Several years ago, I was on my way up to New York City. Maspeth, in Queens, I believe it was. I was out of hours and pulled into an old truckstop just south of DC. It's closed down now, I think. I tried to get into a spot, but this crack-head got right in front of my truck and was gonna guide me into my hole. You know how they are. Kinda like the niggers that want to wash your windows for you. Problem is, he was in my way. So, I set down on the air horn and jumped the truck forward at him."

Fallout nodded his head, the effects of the 100 proof beginning to take a toll on him.

Doc continued. "Well, once I got crack-head outta my way, I realized I wasn't gonna hit that hole, so I moved on down to the far end, where it was dark. I found a spot down there, and caught up my paperwork. Before I hit the sack, I

got out and walked around the truck, on the passenger side, and took a leak between the cab and the trailer. Problem is, the crackhead found me down there in the dark."

Fallout roused up at that, his interest clearly piqued.

"I was standing there, pecker out, taking a leak, and I heard him coming up behind me. He was talking some shit about how I wasn't gonna be so big and bad now that I wasn't in my truck any more. I didn't let it show, but I hooked my pocketknife with my little finger as he walked up behind me and I thumbed the blade open."

Fallout wasn't drunk any more, or at least the effects weren't showing.

"Man, I had my knife open, and it was new and sharp. One of those el cheapo knives with the hooked blade that they used to sell at the Pilot fuel desk. This guy starts talking shit, and I told him I didn't need his help to take a piss, either! Then he puts his hand on my left shoulder and pulls me. I was like oh shit oh shit oh shit, but I turned hard and swung the knife at him, hard as I could, pecker still out, adrenaline kicking and everything. The blade went through his throat and he doubled over. I kicked him in the chest, pushed him down between the cab and trailer where I had just been pissing, and bee-lined it to the cab." I jammed the truck into gear and pulled out of the spot, and motherfucker, as I pulled out I felt the bump bump, as my tires ran over his sorry ass!"

Fallout was laughing by this time. "Dammit boy!", he exclaimed! "And I had you figured for a computer programmer or a hospital worker!"

Doc laughed, partly from the memory of the incident and partly from his friend's mistaken appraisal. "I pulled out of there, and ran over his sorry ass, and never stopped. Just as

I pulled out of the spot, it started raining like cats and dogs, and when I got to the end of the street, I stopped and disconnected my Qualcomm, so they couldn't track my truck and violate me in the logroom. I drove on up through DC, got lost, wound up on mother-fucking INDEPENDENCE AVENUE, US Capitol on the right, Washington Monument on my left, 13-4 low bridge that I barely squeaked under, and somehow I managed to get out of there on route 50 by Walter Reed Hospital and drive way on up the road before I dared to stop!"

Fallout was sitting on the edge of his seat, feet on the floor, leaning toward the younger driver. "So tell me, Doc, did you ever hear about it? Anything come of it?"

Doc grinned. "I went through there on my trip back to the yard, and the rumours around the truckstop were that this crackhead had gotten under the truck to avoid the rain, and the driver pulled out and never realized that he had ran over anybody. The parking lot was so full of holes and speed bumps that the story was believable. I just sat there at the coffee bar and tried not to bust a gut while they were telling about it!"

Doc turned toward his friend and put his hand on the older man's shoulder. "Point is, old man, this shit happens. Lot more drivers than you know have gotten mixed up in stuff like this. Most folks never tell anybody about it. Either they're ashamed of what happened, or afraid folks wouldn't understand. And probably folks wouldn't understand! You know how the bleeding hearts are. It's always the other guy's fault, even though you're just trying to do your job and mind your own business. You're white, up under that dark tan of yours. You're straight. You're a worker, and not a parasite. You're male. You're always gonna be the bad guy. Oprah and her crowd always seem to be on the jury when we go on trial. We're screwed, old friend of mine! Welcome to life in

the twenty-first century!"

Fallout reached out his hand and the younger man met his grip, their eyes meeting in a moment of silent understanding. And almost as one, they both yawned and broke out laughing at each other.

"Doc, you're a good guy, and I'm glad I met you." The gravelly voiced man paused for a moment as he contemplated the events of the last few hours. "You really think everything's gonna be fine?"

"Not a doubt in the world!", Doc replied cheerfully. "But let's face it, we've gotta get up early and get unloaded. Let's get some rest and we'll see what happens in the morning, ok?"

"Channel two-five?" The older man reached up and turned on his CB radio and adjusted the frequency knob.

"Two-five it is! Holla if you need me!" Doc stepped out the passenger side of the truck and closed the door. As he walked around the side toward his own truck, he heard the older man's voice over the sound of the engines, wishing him a good night.

"Night!" he called back over his shoulder, his hand waving in the darkness.

Northside

chapter four

The telephone rang just as Doc pulled into the driveway. Looking at the screen of his cellphone, he recognized the number and pushed the green button.

"Hey old man! Where the hell are you?" He listened as Fallout told him of the past few weeks since they had lost track of each other in Chicago. "Yeah, man, I'm finally back home, but I swear, I thought the little fat girl was gonna make me tour the whole world before she got me home!"

Doc heard the dry leaves rustling behind him, and turned in time to see an excited red Lab charging playfully toward him.

"No, sure haven't", Doc went on. "I stopped by the yard and asked about you, and dispatch told me you had gone to New York. Didn't mention anything about our trip up to Chicago, though. I stopped in Shepherdsville and poked around, but nobody said anything about us or the queer. All seems to be copacetic, as the brothas say!"

After a moment, Doc spoke again. "Hey, good to hear from you! And don't be a stranger! Yup, I've got your number saved right here on the screen. Catch ya later! Yeah man!"

Doc was taking a day off from the road. When he clicked the phone off, he turned to the playful Lab and squatted down in front of him, which turned out to be a big mistake. The dog weighed over 100 pounds and didn't know

his own strength! He bowled Doc over and trampled him in a rambunctious burst of enthusiasm. Doc rolled and stood up, as happy to see his old pal as the dog was to see him.

"Got something for you, Coco!" Doc said in a cheerful voice. Doc had heard the dog's owners use that name, which was a good fit, considering his color. The dog, almost as though he understood, perked up his big floppy ears and sat expectantly. Doc opened the door to his cabin, pulled out a bag of beefy dog ration, tore open the bag and dumped a generous amount onto a square of plexiglass that he used to feed his various visiting animals on.

Doc roughly but playfully grabbed the dog by the scruff of his neck and shoulders and shook him around, but once Coco found his food, nothing else mattered.

Doc went inside, lit the kerosene lanterns, collected some wood and absent-mindedly started a fire in the cast iron stove. He let his thoughts wander, but kept coming back to something that he was trying very hard to keep out of his mind.

In the past few weeks since he had gone back to driving over-the-road, Doc had had several "incidents" that he was beginning to believe were, perhaps subconsciously, his own doing. He had, while going through orientation at the trucking company, gotten into a fight with a guy trying to attack the recruiting lady. Then he had gotten involved with a queer, sending the guy to a friend's truck as a joke, which had wound up becoming serious. Those two things, added to some things that had happened years earlier, would in some eyes, qualify him as a serial killer!

And that was something Doc wasn't prepared to admit, not even to himself!

As the fat pine splinters caught fire and began to light the larger pieces of wood, Doc let his thought wander some more, going back to something that had happened years earlier, before he knew anything about Identity.

Doc had had a run-in with a white prostitute who had robbed him and given the money to a black dope dealer. At the time, Doc had not been a believer, and in all honesty, he had regretted the act later on. But, somewhere along the way he had stumbled on the story of Phinehas, a priest of the Lord who had killed two race mixers in the Bible.

Doc found himself rather intrigued by this Phinehas fellow, and had spent quite a bit of time online, researching him from every possible angle. And the more he learned about Phinehas, the less he felt guilty about killing the prostitute.

"Phinehas", he said out loud. "Phinehas. I like that name." Doc got up and lit the Coleman dual-fuel stove, and put the percolator over the blue flames. He took a few minutes and swept the floor, and carried the trash out and put the handle-tie bag in the back of his pickup. When he got back in the cabin, the coffee was already gurgling up, turning a rich brown colour in the glass bulb that topped the shiny metal percolator.

Doc let his thoughts bounce back and forth between the past and the present.

Phinehas, as Doc understood the story, was a man filled with zeal for the ways of the Lord. He was also a priest, closely related to Moses and Aaron. When Zimri, an Israelite man, had taken a foreign girlfriend named Cozbi, and was showing her off among the people as his girlfriend, the Lord had burned with anger, since Israel had been commanded to NEVER intermarry with the non-Israelite people. The Lord, in

His displeasure, had killed over twenty thousand Israelites, because they had observed Zimri and his foreign girlfriend around the camp, but had not put a stop to such an abomination.

That, as much as anything else, made the lesson important to Doc. If the Lord would kill thousands of innocent Israelites because of the sins of one man, what would He do to the nation in which millions of Israelites were practicing the same offense?

Of course, there were other accounts of the story. The Babylonian Talmud (Traditions of the Elders, which Jesus hated) claimed that Zimri and Cozbi were having sex in the sacred tent that housed the Ark of the Covenant. The Talmud even went so far as to say that Phinehas (Pincas in the Hebrew) had thrust his spear through the two of them as they had sex, and had pierced both their sexual organs.

Doc had his doubts about the Talmudic version of the story, since it was already established that the Lord, if someone entered the tent in an unholy manner, would burn them to a crisp at the doorway of the tent. The two sons of Aaron, certified priests, who tried to enter the tent at the wrong time of the day had been killed in such a manner. They had permission to enter the Tabernacle, but only at certain times of the day.

So, Doc reasoned, it was highly doubtful that Zimri had been able to enter the tent and have sex with his foreign girlfriend. And besides, the part about piercing both their sexual organs was a bit much. While it would certainly be painful and would definitely be disabling, it wouldn't necessarily be fatal. It seemed to Doc that the piercing of the sexual organs was added simply to spice up the story. And, would it even be possible? The pelvic bones of the man and the woman would have made it a tricky thing to pierce both

their sexual organs with one thrust!

The issue in Numbers 25, beyond any doubt, was of race mixing. When Zimri hooked up with a foreign girlfriend in front of the people of Israel, he and the Israelites who looked on but did not interfere paid a terrible price, and the Lord blessed Phinehas with an eternal priesthood as recognition for his zeal and faithfulness.

"Eternal priesthood...wouldn't my mama be proud of me?" Doc chuckled.

Doc's thoughts went back to the prostitute and his fears that he was turning into a serial killer.

One night, before Doc had become a believer and started trying to turn his life around, he had stopped in Montgomery, out of hours, and had gotten into the sleeper berth for a nap. It was mid-winter, and he left the motor running, so the heater would keep the cab comfortable.

Doc woke up to the sound of someone knocking on his sleeper berth. He groaned and rolled over, taking a moment to push the button on his wristwatch, the blue light showing him that it was a little after four in the morning.

Knock Knock Knock. Doc grudgingly had to give it to the girl. She was persistent if nothing else. He rolled off the memory foam mattress, pushed aside the heavy vinyl curtains and climbed into the driver's seat.

He blinked, his eyes slow to adjust to the bright lights of the parking lot. He could see a woman standing by the door of his truck, waving at him as she nervously looked behind her, as though worried about the cops. He glanced around, seeing nothing except the usual truckstop types, black guys walking around wearing backpacks, and emaciated women

who looked like they'd spent some time in Hitler's work camps, and the big sign inviting drivers to stop in at the Swifty Travel Plaza.

Seeing nothing unusual, he rolled down the window and let her climb up the steps, noticing that she appeared to be in her late twenties, slim, with dark hair that was cut in a pageboy style. Doc thought, in the darkness, that she had a pretty smile.

"Hey baby, can I get in for a minute?" She looked around nervously, as though expecting the cops to roll into the parking lot. "Your heater feels really nice, mind if I warm up a little?"

"You're not a cop, are you?" he asked in all seriousness. Montgomery PD had a nasty habit of dressing female officers as prostitutes and using them as bait to entrap unwary truckers.

She was carrying a small purse, which she put between her knees. She was wearing a tube top, which she quickly pulled down to expose her breasts. "Ok?"

He reached down and pulled the door latch, and she quickly climbed in as he stood between the two curtains, to make room for her. The Swifty Travel Plaza was designed so that half the trucks could park with their cabs facing the building, but the other half had to back in to the parking spaces that ran along the heavily wooded lot to the east of the parking area. Doc was in the last space next to the wooded lot, and his cab was facing the street, in full view of police binoculars and video cameras, assuming they were watching at this hour.

"Baby, can we jump in the back?" She glanced toward the curtains where Doc was standing.

"Yeah, sure, come on back", he said as he reached over her shoulders and pushed the lock down. "Don't want anybody to interrupt our fun!"

They pushed between the curtains and reclined on the full sized bunk, the light from the big sign lighting up the sleeper berth enough that Doc could see that the girl had taken off her top, baring a set of nice looking breasts. "They call me Northside", the girl said. "What's your name, baby?"

"They call me Doc", he replied. "Are ya getting hot already? Should I turn the heater down?"

Northside giggled quietly. "Naaaah, I'm good. I just wanted to make it hard for you to say no."

Doc smiled in the semi-darkness. "Oh, you're making it hard, no doubt! So, tell me, what would it cost me to get an hour of good snuggling?"

Northside was wearing a short, ruffled skirt, which she pulled up to her waist, exposing a cleanly shaved bottomsides. No panties. "You really think you could stand a whole hour of this?"

Doc gently pulled on his beard as he considered. "Tell ya what. I'm not really interested in getting naked, but if you wanna hang out for a while, you're welcome. Nothing against YOU, by the way! I'm just tired and wanna catch up on my rest. Maybe after I get rested, I'll get to feeling more frisky?"

Northside seemed to like the idea, so she lifted her hips and slid the skirt down to her ankles, and then kicked it to the side. "I like being naked, especially when the driver has nice soft sheets like these."

They sat and talked for a while, and when Northside asked about something to drink, Doc turned his back and pulled the thermo-electric cooler from beneath the bunk and offered her a soft drink. He got himself a cold beer.

Doc was about to suggest that he needed to get some sleep, when a loud banging came from the side of his sleeper. They both jumped in surprise.

"Goddamn niggers!" Northside said in an irritated voice. She jumped up and put her head through the curtains. "What the fuck do you want? Can't you see I'm doing something?"

Someone from outside the truck said something that Doc couldn't hear, and Northside came back to the bed. "Baby, that nigger won't stop til I go straighten something out. Stupid crackwhore is telling him that I stole his dope. I'll be right back, and look, I'm leaving my purse and all my stuff here. I won't be gone long, ok?"

Doc wasn't wild about the idea of her leaving her purse, but because he was about ready for her to leave, he didn't argue. And he knew she was right. He'd seen it before, when pimps would pound on a truck until the girl inside came out and gave them their money or whatever it was that they wanted.

"It'll be right there where you left it." Doc leaned back against the wall of the sleeper and took a swallow of his beer.

Northside got dressed and climbed out of the truck. Doc sat down on the bunk for a few minutes, and when the girl didn't come back, he pulled on his tee-shirt and got in the driver's seat. He usually slept in his jeans, in case he ever needed to exit the sleeper in a hurry.

In the early dawn, he could see a slim girl in a short skirt walking across the four-lane street that ran in front of the Swifty, her body language not showing any signs of fear or worry, the black guy with her not appearing to be threatening or angry.

Doc climbed back into the sleeper, and on a sudden impulse, looked in the cubby where he usually emptied his pockets before he went to bed. His wallet was there, as was his pocketknife and keyring. However, looking beside the tv / dvd player, he couldn't find two rolls of quarters that he had stashed a few days earlier.

Doc laughed at himself. "She probably noticed them and snatched them up when I turned my back to get the drinks! Good thing my wallet was out of her reach!"

Doc took one last look toward the street, but didn't see any sign of the girl. He made sure the doors were locked, and went back to his bunk. He lay there in amused irritation, more disappointed in himself than in the girl. He considered a couple of ways to get even, but consoled himself with the thought that, as it was written, "A thief shall repay five times".

Doc sat up and reached for his shoes, and noticed the black purse that Northside had left behind. He opened it, halfway expecting to find condoms or maybe even a prepaid cellphone, but it was empty. Not even so much as a gum wrapper.

Doc grimaced in chagrined amusement as he turned the knock-off Gucci handbag over. "Well, if I ever turn queer and move to California, I've got a start on my accessories!"

He had a sudden burst of inspiration, pulled on his shoes and jumped into the driver's seat, and put the transmission in gear. He touched the brake pedal a couple of times, to warn

anyone hiding under his truck that he was about to move, and gently released the clutch, moving forward and out onto the street.

He went to the east, about five miles, until he came to the intersection of US 231. He turned right, and went to the first light. He turned left, and went through the driveway of a large apartment complex, and came out in the parking lot of a big sporting goods store. Underneath the big sign, the smaller sign said OPEN 24 HOURS. He found an open area in front of the building. He pulled out the brakes and got out, making sure to lock his doors. He then walked inside, and headed directly toward the back.

After he had finished with his shopping, he made his way to the front of the store, paid with cash, and headed back to his truck. He pushed in the brakes, looped back the way he had came when he entered the parking lot, cut through the apartment complex, and came back out on US highway 231. He turned north, went about a block, and turned west onto the South Boulevard, heading back toward the Swifty.

When Doc got back to the Swifty, he noticed that his original parking spot, next to the woods, was still open. This time, instead of backing into the spot, he drove forward, his cab pointing directly into the trees, and the rear of his trailer facing the street. On his right, looking out the passenger window, was the rear of a parked trailer. To his left was a thicket of weeds and trees that seemed almost impenetrable. In front of his truck was a thick undergrowth of hedgebushes.

“Perfect”, he commented to himself as he went about opening some of the things he had bought. As he thought about what he was planning, he realized that his hands were shaking. He laughed, noticing that his voice had a bit of a quiver in it as well, so he decided to take a quick break.

He walked inside the back door of the Swiftly, exchanging greetings with the Indian man who owned the place. He turned to the left, walking past the coffee machine and the ATM, and opened the door to the wine cooler. Inside, he found a bottle of Wild Irish Rose wine, the red variety, and took it to the front. He paid cash, again, and headed back to the truck, noticing that none of the dealers or girls were visible in the parking lot.

“PoPo must be in the area”, he mused quietly to himself. When Montgomery PD drove down the bypass, the locals would disappear like roaches in the kitchen when someone turned on the light. He climbed into his truck, locked the door, and went back to his preparations.

After a few swallows of the potent, sweet wine, Doc calmed down and was able to finish his little surprise. He sat back in the sleeper, turned on the tv / dvd player, and watched a movie.

He woke up, and realized from the darkness that he had slept all day. The wine, combined with his general tiredness, was known to do that. Like all truckers, he was obligated by Federal law to take 34 hours off duty, or find himself without hours to work. The law reminded him of the old diet plan, where you were given so many cards which represented various foods. When you ate a certain food, you'd put that card back in the file. When you drank a soft drink or had a snack, other cards would be returned to the file. When you ran out of cards, you didn't eat any more until the next day. Truckers were under a similar system. They had seventy hours in an eight day week to drive, unload, reload, fuel and inspect their trucks. When they ran out of hours, they had to sit, or take 34 hours off duty and restart their clock. Since he had already decided to take 34, he wasn't bothered that he had slept so long.

In the growing dusk, he climbed into the driver's seat and checked his mirrors. He could see the street behind him, and could occasionally see people walking by the front of the Swiftly. He turned on his CB radio, and sure enough, he soon heard the other drivers commenting that a lot lizard was walking down the row of trucks, heading toward the section where he was parked.

Doc waited until the figure passed by the end of his trailer, and quickly touched his brakes. The tail lights came on, and the girl turned toward his truck and walked up the narrow path between his truck and the trailer on his right side.

As she got closer to his mirror, he could see that she was white, with some kind of dress on, but in the darkness he couldn't tell whether it was Northside. She quietly knocked on his passenger door, and he opened it from the inside.

As she climbed up inside the cab, he recognized her. It was indeed Northside, but from the way she was talking, she seemed to be drunk, or extremely high on something. She wasn't wearing a tube top any more, but had on a black tee-shirt.

"Hey, girlfriend!" he cheerfully spoke to her. "You a cop?"

She stripped off her tee-shirt, apparently feeling safe in the back of the parking lot. "Do I look like the PoPo?" she slurred as she twirled the shirt around her finger and let it land on the dash of the truck.

He reached over and gently fondled her nicely rounded breasts. "No, I'm afraid you don't", he whispered as he backed through the curtains, his hands sliding down her arms and softly grasping her hands.

She followed him, the smile on her face apparently meaning that she had completely forgotten the episode that happened earlier that day. She immediately flopped down on the bed, and didn't complain when Doc ran his hands up and down her body, and under her skirt.

"We gonna do something?" she asked? She provocatively lifted her hips up and down, as though having sex. "Cost ya forty dollars!"

Something about the brazen way she hit him up for another forty dollars caused him to lose any pity he might have for her. The knowledge that she had taken his money and gone back to her motel room and partied with the black guy, probably for free, didn't help his mood.

"Girlfriend, you drunk!" he chided her in a pleasant voice. He moved her around, so that she was lengthwise on the bed. He lifted her upper torso and sat down behind her, letting her head and shoulders rest on his lap, her head cradled gently in his left arm. To his left was the wall of the sleeper, at the head of the bed. To his right was her body, stretched out, her right arm between them, her left arm carelessly laid on the bed. He then softly ran his fingertips up and down her face, lightly tracing the curves of her face, tickling her ears, noticing that, as he did so, her eyes were slowly closing.

While he continued to gently stroke her face and neck with his right hand, he reached with his left hand and found the thing that he had hidden between the mattress and the wall of the sleeper berth. Making sure not to do anything that would alarm her, he reached with his right hand and started stroking her left arm, up and down, and when he had gotten down to her wrist, he put his fingers around it and pulled it upward, still not doing anything to scare her.

When he had her left arm positioned where he wanted it

to be, and her right arm trapped between their bodies, he leaned forward and kissed her on the tip of the nose. "Nite nite, Northside", he whispered.

ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZTTTTTTTT!!!! The electronic stun gun that he had touched to the top of her head caused her to stiffen momentarily, and then she started twitching, but not violently. He continued to hold the button down, sending electrical impulses running through her body at better than one hundred thousand volts. After thirty seconds or so, he released the spring loaded button, and was satisfied that she was incapacitated.

He then grabbed her hair with his right hand and pulled her head forward onto her chest, and touched the electrodes to the base of her skull. He pushed the button again, sending even more electricity through her brain, hoping that the impulses would travel through her spinal cord and into her brain, as well as down the Vagus nerve, which was connected to her heart. Knowing that the human heart has the property of automaticity, which means that it will operate without impulses from the brain, he knew that he would have to initiate an arrhythmia if he were going to make her heart stop beating. He also knew that the Vagus nerve has the effect of slowing down the heart rate.

He was careful to make sure the electrodes only touched her head among the hair follicles, figuring that, should there be an autopsy, the medical examiner would wrongly assume that she had had a scalp condition.

"Such things aren't uncommon among crack-whores", he reasoned to himself.

Again and again he repeated the process, moving the electrodes around on her head, trying to space them randomly, so that the little marks might be mistaken for bug

bites.

After many minutes, he realized that the batteries were beginning to get weak. He then lifted her up and slid from beneath her head and shoulders. After a quick glance out the curtain, he reached up front and retrieved her tee-shirt from the dash of the truck.

With some difficulty, he managed to get her back into her shirt, and let her flop back onto the bed. On a sudden impulse, he grabbed a clean towel and a trash bag, and rolled her first to the right and then to the left, putting the makeshift diaper underneath her midsection so that, if her bladder and sphincter were to release, nothing would get on his bed.

“And I thought I’d never have a practical use for that nurse’s aide course I took”, he chuckled to himself.

He pulled out the two nine-volt batteries that powered the stun-gun, and replaced them with new ones. Putting the device on the top shelf, where the girl couldn’t reach it if she suddenly regained use of her limbs, he started to check her vital signs.

He felt for a pulse in her wrists, but couldn’t find any. He checked her carotid artery, and thought he could feel something, but wasn’t sure. The truck was running, and the giant fifteen liter diesel engine created a lot of vibration that sometimes made it difficult to take his own pulse.

He reached into the cabinet by the head of his bed, and pulled out the little LED flashlight. He pulled open her eyelids and shined the light into them, one at a time, and was grimly pleased to see that her pupils did not move much. At least, not as much as he would have expected, if she had been in good shape. However, he wasn’t sure what effect crack cocaine or alcohol would have on her autonomous reflexes,

so he waited.

After an hour had passed, he checked her pupils again, and this time, there was no movement at all. He was also happy to see that her cornea was slightly cloudy, which told him his plan had indeed worked. He checked once again, to see if there was any sign of a carotid pulse, and found none.

He knew he had to work fast, if his plan was to be ultimately successful. He not only had to rid the earth of this thieving, slimy excuse for a human being, but he also had to get away with it.

He climbed out of the truck and walked around to the hood. He noticed some leaves that had collected at the edge of the woods, and also took note of a cardboard box that had been crushed by someone's tires. He took a moment to walk down the side of his trailer for a few feet, and took notice of the way that the bushes and tree-limbs touched against the side of his trailer. It was pretty clear that, in the ten o'clock darkness and with the help of the bushes, his cab was very well out of sight.

He checked her makeshift diaper, and found that she had wet the towel, but that nothing had seeped onto his bed. He opened the side door of the sleeper, at the head of the bed, and turned back to the girl. He gathered her up and lifted her off the bed, and with some difficulty, swung her toward the open door, and let her slide, head first, onto the ground.

In case somebody had seen her body fall, he jumped out quickly, his cover story already well rehearsed. He was going to tell anyone who might ask that she had freaked out, and had jumped headlong out of his sleeper door, rather than exiting through the cab.

Fortunately, nobody seemed to have noticed, so he again gathered her up, making sure not to leave any drag marks on the leaf-strewn pavement, and gently deposited her in front of his hood.

He then put leaves and the cardboard box over her legs, to keep them hidden from casual view, and noticed with satisfaction that her dark clothing and dark hair weren't easily visible. He made sure her body was away from the curb, and once he was sure he had done everything possible, he made ready to leave the parking lot.

He got in the cab and filled out his log book, a written record of a driver's location and hours of duty. He then got on the CB radio and idly chatted with some of the other drivers, listening to see whether anyone had noticed anything out of the ordinary from his section of the parking lot.

After a few minutes, he began to back out of the parking lot, listening for anything on the CB that would indicate that he was about to hit another truck. He turned his headlights off, leaving his trailer and top marker lights on, and was very happy to see that Northside was completely covered, and should a driver back into the space, which was the norm, he would never have a clue that anything was behind him except maybe some dead leaves.

Doc was "under a load", which meant that he was scheduled to be at a warehouse and pick up a load, once his 34 hours were over. He turned left out of the Swifty parking lot and headed toward Mobile highway. At the light, he turned left again, onto highway 31 south. About a mile down the road, he then branched to the right and headed down highway 80 west.

His pickup point, which truckers call their shipper, was the paper mill in Claibourne, Alabama. He signed in at the

guard gate, conferred with the man at the loading dock, backed in to the dock, chocked his wheels and started going over his truck with the little vacuum cleaner that plugged into the cigarette lighter socket.

Every place that Northside had been, he ran the nozzle of the tiny shop vac again and again. He took the little air gun that was hooked into the pressurized air system of his truck and jetted air over the bed and out of the sleeper door. He used the air gun on the seats and floorboard, and then ran the vacuum over them again. The makeshift diaper had been wrapped around the empty wine bottle, the ends tied into knots, and thrown out the window as he drove over a high bridge, and by now was floating down the river toward the Gulf of Mexico.

Doc snickered at the thought. "If it hasn't been swallowed whole by some of the huge catfish that live in the warm waters of Alabama rivers. Never can tell what they'll bite. They are attracted to smelly things, and that towel was pretty bad!"

By the time the truck was loaded, it was daylight again. Doc knew it was crazy, but he couldn't resist returning to the scene of the crime, although he didn't think of it as such. He called his dispatcher, told her the bill of lading number, the weight, the number of pallets and the number of hours that he had available to drive, and then headed back toward Montgomery.

His destination was a warehouse in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, so it wouldn't be out of route for him to work his way back to I-65, head north to exit 168, exit and turn left into the Swifty. He set the cruise control at a leisurely 68 miles per hour, and headed north.

When he got to the 158 exit, he stopped and drove

through the Flying J parking lot, listening on the CB for any gossip about things at the 168. When he didn't hear anything, he updated his logbook and drove another ten miles north, and took the 168 exit.

He didn't go into the Swifty. He just drove by, and was happy to hear that somebody had backed into a parking space in the darkness, and had ran over a crack whore that had passed out down by the woods. The rumors were that the trailer tires had passed directly over the girl's head, and the driver apparently didn't even know it, because somebody else had found the girl's body later that morning, when the driver next to him had left the Travel Plaza.

Of course, the news people were there, and the PoPo were making the proper kinds of noises, wishing there was something they could do about the drugs that were destroying America's children, all the while standing right beside known crack dealers, pimps and their crack whores, never once making any arrests.

Doc turned right onto Mobile highway, following it north, past the sleazy motels near the intersection of Air Base boulevard that were little more than flop houses for crack whores and their customers, and around the eastward curve that signaled the beginning of Fairview Avenue. He continued down Fairview, past George Washington Carver High school, and took the northbound ramp onto I-65.

As he rolled northbound, he realized that he had been more tense than he thought. As the tension melted away, he discovered himself giggling, as though he had been smoking some sticky green weed. After that passed, he had found himself in a more contemplative mood.

The return of the big red Labrador retriever brought Doc

out of his daydreaming. He leaned back in his little aluminum storage building, remembering the incident with Northside and trying to make some sense of it all. He didn't particularly hate Northside, at least not at first. In fact, if she hadn't plotted with the black guy to trick him out of his money, he might have let her spend the night with him, if only for the company of another human being.

Doc contemplated the possibilities. Was it possible, even back then, before he had become an active believer, that the Evil One would have been working against him? Does the Evil One know the future, and that we will someday become instrumental in leading white Israelites to Christ?

That was his number one frustration about being an Identity believer. He had heard, from various ministers, that Identity believers come under the attack of the Evil One, and that any potential girlfriend or wife will, if she is susceptible to that sort of thing, feel an intense hatred of the believer, put there by the Evil One, to lead the believer into a state of depression and despair.

Doc could trace his isolation, almost to the very day, to the time when he had accepted the Identity message and had given his life to the Lord. He never claimed to be a saint, of course, but he did try to warn his fellow White Israelites about the sin of mixing and mingling, quoting from Deuteronomy, chapters 7 and 14, where the Lord had commanded Israel to segregate themselves from the non Israelite, non-white people of the world.

Sometimes he would remind them of The Federalist Papers, which were written by the same people who wrote the original Constitution. In Federalist Number Two, the author wrote in extremely clear language that the intent of the founding fathers was that the United States would be a land populated by people with a common language, a common

history, a common heritage, a common religion and a common sense of right and wrong.

In short, the Founding Fathers never intended for the United States to become a melting pot.

That particular folly was perpetrated upon the unsuspecting American people by FRANCE, when they presented the American people with the statue of liberty.

Doc shook his head as he stirred some creamer into his coffee and idly scratched the head of the big red lab, who had wandered inside. Very few people listened, and of the few who did, very few had the education and the intelligence to understand what he was trying to tell them.

“Micah or Hosea wrote that the Israelite people are destroyed for lack of knowledge”, he recited to himself.

“It’s hell to be a Zealot in a Lukewarm world!”

Doc shooed the big dog out with his broom and started cleaning up the place.

HoneyDoo

chapter five

Doc was parked about tenth in line, waiting to get loaded with glass bottles in Auburn, New York. Auburn was a quiet, distinctly upstate-New-York little town about exit 33 off the western part of the New York Thruway over toward Buffalo, situated on the north end of the Fingerlakes region, about a hundred miles to the northwest of Bingo, which was trucker slang for Binghamton. The glass plant had a first-come-first-served system, so the drivers had to stay awake and move ahead when the line moved, or risk being passed by other drivers.

"Anybody know how long these people take to get you loaded?" Doc had just turned on his CB radio, and the new voice coming over the airwaves sounded very quiet, very sexy, and very female.

Doc's hand jumped, as of its own accord, and keyed up his microphone. "Last time I was here, they made me wait pretty near 24 hours. They get to you in the order you arrive, in their own good time. Stay awake or folks will pass you as the line moves forward. Those doors in front of you, when a door gets empty with a green light, the next driver in line gets to load. I wouldn't be in any hurry if I were you."

The sexy voice came back across the CB again. "I'm gonna walk up to the office and talk with them. Is there a snack bar up that way?"

Doc replied, "Snack bar to the right of the dispatch office. It's the place where all those lights are coming from." Doc lied. "I've been thinking about going up there myself."

The voice came back again, "Okay, if you're going, I'll see you up that way!"

Doc didn't answer. He jumped back into the sleeper berth and pulled on his boots, US Army natural suede leather combat boots with the speed-lace system, designed so that you could pull them on and not lace them up unless you wanted to. Next he put on a leather cap with flaps that covered his ears and wrapped around the lower face, protecting him from the bitterly cold January wind. He pulled his jacket out of the corner of the sleeper berth and put it on as he climbed down out of the truck, making sure to lock the cab as he closed the door.

He walked carefully through the knee-deep snow, knowing by past experience that there was hard-packed ice underneath, slippery enough to send a careless driver sprawling across the parking lot.

He kept a good six feet away from the parked trucks, especially those with the new LED lights, having seen some nervous rookies get upset, afraid that the casual passer-by was trying to steal light bulbs or fuel. While Doc thought it was a bit silly, he figured it was easier to just avoid the hassles. New drivers tended to be afraid of their own shadows, especially when they were in the "dreaded" northeast!

And nowadays it seemed to Doc that they were ALL new drivers!

As he got closer to the building, he looked around for the woman he had talked with on the CB, but didn't see anybody except this huge girl that he conservatively estimated at 350 pounds or better. She had a smallish face set in the middle of a balloon-shaped head, short blonde hair that barely covered her ears and saggy boobs that looked like they had a belly-button between them. Apparently no bra, not that he cared. Judging from the voice he had heard on the CB, this porker couldn't be the one he was hoping to meet, so he

walked on up the way, adopting the "thousand yard stare" that folks in New York City use when walking in a crowd but avoiding contact.

"Are you the driver I was talking with on the CB?" Doc paused, certain that he wasn't hearing right, but the porker spoke again.

"I was talking with a driver just now, who told me how to get to the break room. Was that you?" It was the sweet, sexy voice he'd heard on the CB.

Doc had no intentions of being caught up in some endless conversation with some old girl who weighed twice as much as he did, so he improvised.

"Ani lo mevin Anglit", he said in a gruff, accented tone of voice. "No-a English speaka".

"Ohhhh, you're the Russian guy we heard coming down the road! Ok, I'm sorry!" The porker turned and headed into the dispatch office, and Doc waved at her in dismissal, which he had seen many arrogant immigrants do, and made his way on up to the breakroom.

"Brrrrr!" Doc shivered, but not from the cold. "Good thing for me that there are lots of Paki, French and Russian speaking drivers up in this neck of the woods!" He hadn't actually spoken in Russian, but rather, in modern Hebrew, but he didn't much believe she knew the difference. It was something he had taken up in his spare time, driving up and down the highway, studying Hebrew CD's in case he might someday need to pass himself off as one of the enemy.

He took his time, hoping the attitude of the unionized, completely unconcerned shipping office people would convince the porker to head on back to her truck, thus saving

him from having to endure some kind of foreigner-attraction that so many white women seemed to have. He spent a few minutes looking through the sandwich machine, the candy and gum machine, and finally found himself in front of one that sold Snapple Tea.

He dropped a few quarters into the machine, and pushed the button for an iced tea. The bottle rumbled back and forth through the innards of the brightly coloured electronic vendor, and popped out at the bottom. He especially loved the flavoured teas that were, at the time, only available in New England. This one was raspberry with lemon and sugar, and without really meaning to, he downed the whole bottle in one long drink. He dug in his pockets for another buck-fifty, pushed the same button as before and once the bottle came into reach, he put it in his jacket pocket and headed back to his truck.

"Shit!" He didn't really mean to blurt out the word, but as soon as he left the building and started walking toward the trucks, the porker stepped out from between two trucks parked at the loading docks and excitedly started jabbering at him.

"Oh, that's so WRONG, how people from other countries learn to say bad words before they learn to speak English! But everybody knows that you people understand a lot more than you let on! Tell me, how do you like it here in America? Been here very long?" The porker was on a roll, and it didn't look like Doc was going to be able to escape her evil clutches!

"Excuse, please, wife." Same gruff, accented tone. Doc fished the tea out of his pocket and pointed toward the back of the parking lot, hoping she would leave him the hell alone.

"Ohhhh, okay, you're in a hurry to get back to your wife!

I'm so sorry!" The porker patted him on his arm and pointed the same way Doc had just indicated, and with a big toothy smile, waved him on his way.

Doc headed on back to the parking lot, but purposely avoided going to his own truck, knowing that her eyes were following him. He walked between two trucks and came out in the shaded area of the line, and kept close to the trucks as he made his way back to his own cab.

As Doc ducked and dodged between parked trucks, he cautiously glanced up toward the building and saw the big girl getting into a red truck very much like his own. Doc drove for a company whose tractors were all painted red, with white trailers emblazoned with three red stripes. The company had a lot of loads coming out of this glass plant, so it wasn't unusual to run into fellow company drivers waiting in line, but this wasn't the kind of meeting Doc wanted to have!

As he watched, she pulled away from the loading dock, got out and closed her doors, put on the door-seal and drove out the gate. As she passed beside him, he noticed that her rear trailer wheels were too far toward the back of her 53 foot trailer.

"Big ticket in the northeast, pulling trailers with the tires slid that far to the rear!", he wryly commented into the wind. As a general rule, if a driver pulled a 53 foot trailer anywhere north of the Carolinas and east of Indiana, the trailer tires had to be slid pretty far underneath the trailer. Failure to do so made the trailer difficult to maneuver on the tightly winding roads in the northeast.

"Oh well, your money!"

He got up into his cab and turned the CB back on. As soon as he clicked the knob, he heard a familiar gruff and

gravelly voice. As soon as he could politely interrupt their conversation, he keyed his microphone.

"FALLOUT, where tha hell are you?!?!?" He forgot all about the porker, in the excitement of running with his old friend.

"Hey, Doc, is that you? I'm here in line at the Auburn glass plant! Looks like I'm gonna be here a while, probably won't get loaded until tomorrow morning! You know how these folks are!"

Doc flashed his headlights on and off a few times. "Hey, you see my lights? I'm waaaaay back in the line myself! Come over and visit with me!"

Fallout, in his usual good-natured-but-grouchy way came back over the radio. "You gonna make an old man like me get out in this snow and ice and walk around knocking on big trucks like a lot lizard? I thought you and me was buddies! Get your lazy ass over here and bring all your beer!"

Doc couldn't resist the chance of running into Fallout again, so he retorted, "Okay, gramps, flash YOUR lights and I'll come over. Gotta tell you the latest news!"

Doc noticed lights flashing to his right. He couldn't be sure which truck the lights came from, but he figured Fallout would let him know when he got close, so he turned everything off and climbed back into the sleeper berth. He fished a six-pack of Pete's Wicked ale (the dark variety) out of his thermo-electric cooler, locked up his truck and carefully trudged over the uneven snow and ice that separated him from his friend's "house". He saw three of the familiar red trucks, but once he came around the corner, he recognized the series of black numbers alongside the headlight cowlings, and headed toward his target.

He couldn't see up in the truck because the windows were fogged over, but there was a light on inside the cab. He knocked, and when the window rolled down, an unfamiliar face looked out at him.

"We don't want any good-buddy company up in here, you fuckin faggot!" The voice was loud and echoed all around the parking lot and he backed away from the cab, thinking he had made a mistake, but then Doc heard Fallout's voice coming through the window.

"Oh hell, Doc, we're just giving you a hard time! Come on up and get yourself a cold beer! Folks, this is my buddy Doc, he comes off looking like a computer geek, but he's a chicken-hauler if there ever was one!"

Doc climbed up the steps to the open door, and sat down on the freshly-vacated passenger seat. He shook hands with everybody and gratefully accepted the ice cold beer that was thrust into his hands. He then handed the plastic bag with his six-pack to the lady sitting near the refrigerator.

"Doc, this is Bama-boy in the front, and back here with me in the sleeper is Charley Brown and Juicy Lucy. They run teams together, usually to the west coast, but this week they're up here! We're all loading up with bottles for Eden, North Carolina! Where you supposed to deliver?"

"Headed to Eden too," Doc said as he raised his bottle in toast to the other drivers, noting with satisfaction that they were all White. "Y'all gonna hang out til we're all loaded, and run down there together? Or do y'all have appointments that you gotta make?"

"That's the plan, run down together!" Fallout was his usual gregarious self, not knowing any strangers, and the life

of the party. "You wanna run down with us? Or are you gonna chase that Honey-Doo down there?"

At the mention of Honey-Doo, Doc put his beer in the drink holder and stepped back into the sleeper, pretending to be menacing his old running buddy.

"Fallout, don't you start, old man! I heard this woman on the radio while ago...she sounded like a cheerleader or something, but when I got up there, she turned out to be a big legged woman, like the niggers say! She is 350 pounds if she weighs an ounce!!! She's the kind of woman who doesn't climb up into your truck...she pulls the goddamn truck down to her!!!" Doc poked his bottom lip out like a pouting little boy. "Besides, I can't chase her. She already left!"

Everybody in the truck roared with laughter. "Yeah, we were listening when you were talking shit to her! Hey, a woman like that would be right up your alley! Shade you in the summer, and keep you warm in the winter!!!"

Doc sat back in the passenger seat, laughing with the other "old hands" at the joke at his own expense, and silently reminded himself to scout out the airwaves before he let his presence be known.

"Yeah, I'd love to run down there with y'all! Are there any other "red" drivers here? Anybody we'd wanna run with?" Doc's unspoken question, which he knew Fallout would understand, was whether there were any niggers who would try to run with them, severely limiting the kinds of conversation (and hellraising) they could enjoy on the way to Carolina.

"Well, there is this dyke-looking rookie next door to us. Oh, she's hotter than a three dollar pistol, but not sociable. Trained with Dime-Dropping-Dusty not too long ago, some

relative of his, we think. She's probably on the Qualcomm right now, telling dispatch that we're partying. And the other truck, on the other side, is CB and Lucy here. Bama-boy is parked up the way a bit, but he won't get loaded until tomorrow, either. Looks like we got us a CONVOY, Doc!!!"

When Doc, a mouth full of beer at that moment, looked quizzically at Fallout, the old man explained. "Dime-Dropping-Dusty is this guy you haven't met yet. Goes by Dusty on the two-way. I ran with him just after we split up in Chicago that time. Every time he saw a red driver doing something he didn't agree with, he was on the phone or Qualcomm, ratting them out to home office. Proud of himself!"

Doc, in the spirit of the party, got an evil thought. "Hey, guys, anybody got a Canadian quarter? My thought is, if this dime-dropping carpet-muncher next to us doesn't wanna join in and be part of the group, maybe we orta fix her good!"

Fallout fished around in his change jug and brought out a quarter with the image of the Queen. He handed it to Lucy, who handed it to Doc, but they all had a curious look on their faces.

"Well, I hate to waste a good old American quarter, but this Canadian will do perfectly. I want to undo her red air hose and put the quarter in between her glad-hands. When she gets ready to move ahead tomorrow, she will push in her yellow and then the red air knob, but with the quarter in the gladhand, her trailer brakes won't let go. She will be Stuck like Chuck!!! And her being a rookie, she won't figure it out til next week!!!"

The rest of the group loudly agreed with a round of high-fives, so Doc climbed down out of the cab and did as he had planned. There were two air connections between the

cab and the trailer, one blue and one red. The easy way to remember them was, "Red to roll, and blue for the brakes". A semi-trailer has powerful spring activated brakes which are normally locked. Before a driver can move a trailer, he must first pump air into the system through the red lines, which will release the spring brakes. And once he is moving, when he touches the brake pedal, he sends air through the blue lines, which overcomes the spring pressure and causes the brakes to grab. If, going down the highway, the red air line comes loose or is badly damaged by road debris, the trailer brakes will lock up and slide down the highway, usually causing a jack-knife accident.

Doc didn't really mean the female driver any harm. Little jokes like this were common among the close-knit fraternity of over-the-road drivers, and actually gave the new rookie drivers some good experience in troubleshooting minor problems out on the road. He knew from years of experience that somebody would very quickly feel sorry for her and tell her what had been done to her air line.

Doc unhooked the red air line, placed the quarter on the rubber grommet, securely re-attached the air line to the connector, and climbed back into Fallout's tractor.

"She wake up?" Bama-boy seemed worried that Doc had been caught in the act.

Doc waved his hand in polite dismissal and took a good drink from his beer. "Naaaah, if she did, the cab never moved. And I was extra careful not to make any noise. If she saw anything, she probably thought I was just a drunk "red" driver in between the trucks taking a leak!"

For the next few hours the five drivers sat in the warm truck and told trucker stories, swapped tales of horrible shippers and scary trainees and helped Fallout get rid of his

excess beer, of which he seemed to have an almost limitless supply stashed in a hidden compartment under his bed. After a while, the line moved ahead, at which point some of them jumped out and moved their own trucks, so as not to lose a place in the long line, but they soon came back, a couple of them bringing even more beer!

One by one, they got quieter and quieter, until they were all dozing. The front seats were constructed so they would recline almost completely, and there was room in the sleeper for Fallout and the team drivers to lean on walls or on each other. The CB radio was kept turned on, and whenever the line moved forward, drivers would get on the air and wake everybody up, so before too long the sun was up and everybody except Doc had been loaded. As they helped each other get legal, checking New York HUT stickers and weights and trailer lengths and planning legal routes, Doc emerged from the shipping office, waving a stack of papers they all knew to be his bills of lading.

"Y'all ready?" Doc keyed his CB microphone with nearly frozen fingers. The shipping office was warm, but out on the loading dock there had been no heat whatsoever.

"Waiting on you to get legal!" Fallout spoke for the others, and they chimed in with good-natured ribbing about slow old men and suggestions that Doc had been doing more in the glass plant than just loading his trailer.

"Already legal", Doc retorted between chattering teeth. "I adjusted my trailer wheels, slid them to the right spot for New York as I was getting backed into the loading docks. Weight is fine, no way to be overweight with empty glass bottles. Did my paperwork already too!"

Without any further discussion, one of the red trucks pushed in his buttons and slowly started moving toward the

gate. One by one, the rest followed suit, until four large, nearly identical trucks were rolling down the small streets and heading toward the toll booth that would allow them access to the New York Thruway.

They didn't have to pay money at the toll booth, because their trucks were all equipped with a computerized card that automatically took care of such things. They agreed that they would keep their speed at 65 miles per hour, since New York's posted speed limit was heavily enforced by State Police. The Thruway was nicely maintained, and the snowplows had been on the job. They drove eastbound for a while, got onto Interstate 81 at Syracuse, stopped in Binghamton to top off their fuel tanks and soon crossed the state line into Pennsylvania.

Before they had gone far into the "keystone", they started going up and down some pretty steep hills. Since the roads weren't as well maintained, and there were reports of "greasy" spots on the CB, they slowed down and increased the space between trucks, hoping to reduce the chance of a pile-up if someone were to spin out on black ice.

After they got south of Hershey and Harrisburg, the road became more level, and the weather was quite a bit warmer, so they bumped their speed on up to 65 again and headed toward the Mason-Dixon line. They stopped for a minute at exit 5, Greencastle, Pennsylvania, getting quick coffee refills and bathroom breaks, and got back on the road without losing more than ten minutes.

Once they got past Maryland and West Virginia and the scale house at the 304 in Virginia, they threw caution to the wind and began running 70 miles per hour, which put them in Roanoke, Virginia, just as they were legally "out of hours". Charley Brown and Lucy could have kept going, but they hated to leave the convoy. They all followed Doc into the big

T/A truckstop and found parking spaces in the very back.

After getting showers, they got a good night's sleep, and ten hours later, Friday the 13th, they started rolling southbound again. They turned onto route 220 just south of Roanoke, followed it down toward the Carolina line and followed the little two-lane road into Eden, North Carolina.

One by one, they checked into the little yard just outside the brewery, got directions on where to drop their loads from the sullen black security guard and received a stamped copy of their bills of lading. Once they were all unhooked from their respective trailers, they parked alongside the chain link fence marked "bobtails only" and got in touch with dispatch at the home office.

Of course, as is the story of a trucker's life, they arrived at a time when no loads were available for them until Sunday night, so they found themselves sitting all weekend at an isolated drop-yard, nothing nearby except a brewery. Somebody on the CB said there was a motel with truck parking not far down the road, so everybody piled up into one of the trucks and they drove without a trailer in the direction given.

Fallout was sitting in the rear with Lucy and Charley Brown, while Bama-boy drove. Doc had his usual corner, perched in the front passenger seat. As they rode along, Doc caught Lucy whispering something into Fallout's ear. He wouldn't have paid it any attention, except that earlier in the day, Lucy and her old man had been arguing. Later, Doc caught Lucy looking his way with a grin on her face, and he absentmindedly wondered if maybe Lucy had plans of sneaking over to somebody else's truck in the middle of the night. Doc's truck, to be exact.

Doc wouldn't have complained, because Lucy was a nice

looking woman, and had a good attitude about living on the open road.

Just as the sun was going down, they turned in at a fairly nice looking motel, tall pine trees out front, red brick walls and white wrought-iron handrails alongside the sidewalks. Couple of fast food restaurants across the street. Fallout, a cellphone in his ear, told the driver to turn right and look for another red truck, because somebody already had a room and wanted the other company drivers to come hang out for the weekend.

Once they found a parking spot that didn't block anyone's path, they shut down the truck and climbed down onto the ground. Even though they were hundreds of miles further south than they had been when they loaded, there was still ankle-deep snow on the ground, although the streets appeared to have been plowed.

"Room on the end, 102", Fallout called to the others. "Doc, hold up! Got something for you!" Doc slowed and kept pace with his friend, but the gleeful grin on the leathery old face wasn't exactly reassuring!

"Doc, it didn't take me long to figure out that you sent that faggot over to my truck that night!" At Doc's surprised expression, Fallout slapped the younger man on the back and laughed loudly.

"Don't you worry, I don't give a shit. What tipped me off was that the queer knew my passenger door wasn't locked. But hell, you didn't know it would turn out like it did. Truth be told, I always wanted to do something like that! Something I can tell my grandkids, if I ever have any! But you know the old saying. Paybacks are a bitch? Well, this one is a bitch and a half!"

For a moment, Doc considered making a run for the now-silent truck parked behind them, knowing that he could unlock and start the truck with his own key. Insert the key and turn and jiggle it as you push it further in, and 9 times out of 10, the lock will open. But he knew that anything likely to happen in the motel room would be in good fun, so as quickly as the thought occurred to him, he abandoned it.

Doc sighed in mock resignation. "Ok, what have you got for me? Y'all gonna hold me down and strip me naked and throw me out in the snow?"

Fallout roared with laughter again. "Hey, that's not a bad idea! But nooooo, this is even better! Involves a woman! You gonna git laid tonight, my friend!"

"Laid? Hell, let's go inside!"

By this time everybody was inside except Doc and Fallout, but the door was still open, so they hurriedly crossed the parking lot and went inside the dimly lit room.

As soon as they got inside, Doc recognized a voice. "Shit!" he breathed to himself. The porker was there! As his eyes adjusted to the darkness, he saw two large beds, a refrigerator, television, nightstands and several drivers sitting on chairs or on the beds. Fallout, realizing that Doc was catching on to the payback, put his arm around Doc's shoulders and half-dragged him across the room to where the fat girl was reclining on the far bed.

"Hey, HoneyDoo, this is the guy we were telling you about on the phone!" The girl smiled brightly and lifted her massive upper body onto an elbow. "Yeah, you know, the one who thinks you have the prettiest voice he's ever heard, the one who can't wait to meet you!"

Doc put on a show of shyness. He stuck out his hand and grasped hers briefly, and found his voice.

"This your room? We sure do appreciate you letting us hang out here for a while! Much better than being stuck in a truck all weekend! Sure we're not imposing?" Doc was pretty sure the girl didn't recognize him as the supposed "Russian", but he intentionally accented his voice with a little bit of a lisp, plotting his escape as he did so.

Fallout broke the tension. "Hell, don't let him fool you, HoneyDoo, this guy is a hell-raisin' chicken-hauler from way back! He puts on that innocent act and gets people to thinking he's a rookie or a good-buddy or something, but he's an old hand!"

HoneyDoo didn't say anything, but she smiled dreamily and fell back on the bed. One of the other drivers caught Doc's eye and held up a thumb and first finger, as though holding a joint. Doc gave the driver an understanding thumbs-up and gladly accepted the cold beer that was offered by Lucy. One of his own microbrews, he noted with some satisfaction. Two nights before, everybody had loved his Wicked Ale so much that he didn't get one. Apparently Lucy had stashed one somewhere and saved it for him. Or had bought him one before they had left New York.

He made a mental note to ask her about it later, once everybody else was asleep or passed out.

There wasn't much on the television, so they flipped around until somebody found a triple-X channel, at which point everybody cheered, even Lucy. They all got fresh beers and found comfortable places as the movie played. Couple of hours later, after they were all pretty drunk, Charley Brown caused a scene. He got jealous because Lucy was getting into the movies and making comments about how her

body was better than the one on the screen and how she could teach the porn starlet a few things. When she pulled up her shirt and proved that she had better boobs, he yelled and cursed and demanded that he be taken back to his truck.

Lucy stayed, saying something about how her co-driver wasn't her HUSBAND, and how he needed to stop being so jealous.

As soon as the truck started up and Bama-Boy carried Charley Brown back toward the drop yard, everybody got a fresh beer and patted Lucy on the back, telling her that she had done the right thing, and that they were happy to have her company.

HoneyDoo was still in dreamland, apparently, because even when the jealousy had gotten loud, she had never moved a muscle.

Around ten in the evening, after they had decimated dozens of beers and most of the contents of a large bottle of good Canadian whiskey, they started drifting off to sleep. Doc tried to fight it, hoping to stay awake long enough to get a chance to talk with Lucy, but once he saw that she had passed out, he found himself a pillow on the bed nearer the front of the room and got comfortable.

When Doc woke up, the television was off and he couldn't see anything. He carefully moved one foot at a time, sliding them across the floor, and made his way across the floor to where he thought he remembered a bathroom being. He found a door, which turned out to be a closet, but the next door he found was indeed the bathroom. He went inside and closed the door before he turned on the light.

Once he was ready to go back into the room, he opened the door a little and tried to look around the room without

having to turn on any other lights. The bathroom light streamed out past the door and illuminated the room enough for him to see that nobody was on the beds except Honey-Doo.

"What the hell?" Doc wasn't upset, knowing how truckers love to play pranks on each other, but he was a bit concerned, not happy with himself for having slept so soundly that people could have left the room without him knowing!

As quietly as he could, he left the bathroom door slightly ajar and made his way back through the room. Sure enough, nobody was on the floor, and when he checked the door that led outside, he found that it wasn't completely closed. Apparently the others, when they had left, had been afraid the latch would make noise and wake the people in the room.

Doc already had his boots on, and he found his jacket thrown over the back of a chair, right where he had left it. He could hear Honey-Doo snoring softly on the other bed. He saw a bottle with two fingers of whiskey still in it, so he downed the last of the burning liquid and, quiet as a mouse, made his way out the door and pulled it closed behind him.

He remembered the way back to the drop yard, but he wasn't exactly crazy about having to walk several miles through freshly plowed snow on the side of the road. He checked his watch, and saw that it was almost four in the morning. Seeing the sign for the all-night fast food place across the street, he walked as steadily as he could toward the front door, digging in his pocket for change to get himself a bracing cup of coffee.

About the time he got to the edge of the roadway, he noticed someone walking through the parking lot of the motel. He wasn't sure, what with the fogginess of his brain at the moment, but the figure reminded him of the security guard

with the hateful attitude, the one who had stamped his bills of lading at the brewery.

The figure was walking away from him, so it didn't merit any further notice. Doc crossed the road, waded through the snow on the other side, and carefully stepped onto the salted blacktop of the restaurant.

As he neared the building, he noticed a congregation of police cars gathered at one end of the parking lot, under the big yellow neon sign. And they were looking toward him. He tried not to notice, and summoning up his willpower, set his sights on the door of the little eatery and walked as normally as his brain could muster. As he neared the sidewalk, he pulled his billfold out of his rear pocket and got ready to dig for money.

A black-garbed figure stepped toward the door and blocked his path.

"Sir, mind if I have a word with you?" The voice wasn't loud or demanding.

"No, not at all. Friends played a prank on me, and left me in the room over there with this big ole' fat girl. We're truck drivers, stuck for the weekend up at the brewery. I've gotta walk back to my truck, so I figured I'd get me a cup of 40-weight before I take off thatta way." Doc gestured up the road with a tilt of his head, shrugging in what he hoped was a show of resignation.

Doc, already having his wallet out, removed his Commercial Driver's License and offered it to the cop, who looked at it and returned it.

The officer laughed, apparently having dealt with truckers before.

"Sounds like they got you good! So everything in the room is good, girl okay, nothing I would want to know about?"

Doc laughed quietly, not so much out of politeness as to keep his head from hurting.

"No, everything over there is fine. Big girl is sound asleep, or passed out or something. I was glad of that, because I didn't wanna have to chew my arm off! Everybody else is gone. Ran off and gave us some privacy!"

The officer smiled, as though he had an understanding of Doc's dilemma.

"Mr. Marlin, it's a long way up to the brewery. Sure you don't want me to call you a cab or something?"

Doc waved his hands, but carefully not making any sudden moves. Not a good idea to alarm a cop when he has a dozen of his heavily armed closest friends standing less than twenty feet away.

"Naaaaah, I'll be fine. I need the exercise anyway. But if you patrol up that way, and wanna keep an eye on me, I'll be walking straight up this road for the next hour or two. This bright yellow jacket will be easy to spot, I'm sure!"

The officer gave Doc a cheerful thumbs-up, and stepped back toward the other cops. Doc went inside the building, got a large coffee to go, paid the lady and left her a tip, and then headed on out the door.

Doc noticed, as he pushed through the double air-lock doors, that the cops were all wearing what appeared to be bulletproof vests, and several of them were carrying the tiny little German-made machine guns that were so popular

among Special Forces types. MP5's, he thought they were. Mentally scratching his head, he kept on walking without a break in his stride, but he was still pondering what he had seen as he topped a low hill and dipped out of sight of the motel.

A loud bang, not a gunshot, but definitely metal on metal, made him turn around and look back as he trudged on through the snow. There were lots of blue lights flashing over the hill, but he wasn't interested enough to walk back and try to get a look. He shrugged his shoulders, took another swallow of coffee, and started walking again.

It wasn't quite two hours before he found the gate to the drop yard, but it was long enough for him to have burned off all the alcohol in his system. He found himself rather enjoying the fact that he had been dropped off, and once in the bobtail area, noticed with smart-ass satisfaction that Bama-Boy's truck was still gone.

He climbed up into his truck, closed and locked the door and cranked up his truck. He let it fast-idle for a few minutes, turned the heater on to max, and warmed up the cab and sleeper until he was comfortable. Then he shut down the engine, and hooked a little 12-volt warmer into the closest cigarette lighter outlet.

His truck was equipped with a regulator so that he couldn't run his batteries down by using little gadgets like the heater, so he snuggled up inside his sleeping bag, placed the heater on a shelf so it would blow in his direction, and was soon sleeping soundly.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

Doc groaned and rolled out of his extremely comfortable

sleeping bag. He noticed that the electrical shut-off had cycled, shutting down his little heater, so apparently he had been asleep for some time. He could see daylight shining through the gap in the curtain between his cab and sleeper.

The knocking came again, this time on his sleeper wall. He could hear Fallout's coarse voice calling, although he couldn't figure out what his friend was saying. Swearing eventual revenge, he forced himself to get off the bed and look outside the sleeper.

Fallout was standing on the side of his truck, peering in through the frost-covered windows. When he saw Doc moving around, he tapped on the window with his ring.

"Doc, damn I'm glad to see you! Let me in, it's cold as a welldigger's ass out here!"

Doc leaned over and pulled the knob that unlocked the doors. As Fallout climbed into the cab, he reached back into the sleeper and gathered up the sleeping bag, and draped it over his shoulders.

"Mind if I start this thing up and get some heat in here?" Fallout clearly wanted to sit and talk a while. When Doc nodded, the older man started the engine and continued on.

"Man, we've been worried about you! We left last night, kind of a prank, but we intended to come back. That's why we left the door closed but not locked. And when we got back, the cops were swarming all over the place! Had Honey-Doo and some black guy laid out on the cold sidewalk!"

Doc's memory put two-and-two together. "This black guy, he remind you of the security guard we had to deal with yesterday evening?"

Fallout nodded, the light of understanding in his eyes. "Yeah, sure did, now that you mention it! Well, here's the skinny. Turns out that Honey-Doo was some kind of dope courier, man! She gets a run out west, and her nigger makes a call to a contact out there, and she brings back a package of stuff. She gets a run to Miami or New York, same deal. She brings it back here to her boyfriend, who makes a fortune, selling dope to folks in North Carolina and southern Virginia! It's all over the news and the CB!"

Doc, an evil gleam in his eyes, reached into the shelf to his left and pulled out his electronic stun gun. As he pushed the button, a bright blue spark, hundreds of thousands of volts, jumped two inches between the electrodes.

Fallout pulled back, but didn't reach for the door handle. Doc tried to make his voice sound menacing. He started out quiet and deadly, but worked up to the point that he was shouting.

"And you dropped me off with her? Caused me to have to walk home in the snow? Got me interrogated by the same cops that busted down her door? You know, there's a lotta snow out there. Drifts up in the hills 20 feet deep. Folks wouldn't find a body for a couple months! Even longer if I push some dirt in on you!"

Fallout laughed and turned the heater up a notch or two. At his old running-buddy's nonchalance, Doc found himself laughing as well. He put the stun-gun back in its hiding place and accepted the hand that was being held out to him.

"Even! Told you paybacks are hell! So, Doc, we're all headed down to the little place across from the motel. You wanna go have breakfast with us? I'm buying!"

"Soon as I get dressed. Western Omelet! Coffee! Hash browns with cheese! And I'm driving my own damn truck this time!

El Paso (Texas, not Illinois)

chapter six

"Anybody out there know the exit for the truckstops just east of El Paso?"

Doc was headed west on Interstate 10, carrying a load of ceramic tiles. He had loaded them just east of Dallas, and as far as he could tell, the shipper was balancing out inventory between one plant and another.

"Exit 37, Petro on the left, the "J" and the Love's on the right. Bring your own gun!" The driver on the other end had a bit of a "been-there-done-that" chuckle in his voice as he gave Doc the directions.

Another helpful voice chimed in. "More fun if you park at the McDonald's!"

Checking his watch, Doc saw that it was nearly 5pm, which meant 4pm El Paso local time.

Doc had parked in El Paso before. He thanked the drivers and started looking out for exit 37. Before he had gone very far he passed a Texas rest area, and began counting down the mile markers. 40. 39. 38. As you go west or south on the Interstate, the numbers get smaller. Then a big sign telling people that Horizon Boulevard / Exit 37 was one mile ahead.

Doc, like most “older hands”, used the 15 liter engine in his truck to slow down whenever possible. A vehicle that weighs as much as 35 cars tends to burn up brake pads very quickly! Long before he reached the exit, he dropped a gear and slowed down to 60, and once the exit came into sight, he turned on his right turn signal and dropped another gear. The exit had a long uphill grade, which further slowed down his truck, and by carefully dropping gears as he neared the top of the ramp, he found himself going about 5 miles per hour as he approached the green light for Horizon, all without having to touch the brake pedal.

He turned right on Horizon, and a couple hundred yards up the road, he turned right again, into the Love’s Travel Center. He looped behind the building, past the rows of trucks that had already parked for the night, noticing the young women darting between the cabs and occasionally waving or flashing little LED lights in his direction.

Horizon Boulevard was famous for drugs, prostitutes, illegal CB radios and rides across the border into Mexico. Doc wasn’t much interested in anything except illegal CB’s, but he did spend a few moments checking out the girls, all of them dark-skinned, as he drove behind the truckstop store. It always bothered him when they looked to be barely in their teens, but nobody could get the cops to do anything about it,

even when other drivers pointed out the exact truck in which the little girl was “doing business”.

“Burn in hell for that shit!”, he growled to himself, jokingly. Doc wouldn’t do business with a non-white woman under any circumstances, not because of her age or looks (or lack of them), but because of his Christian Identity beliefs. While not all Identity people believed the same way, Doc was convinced that any white person who willingly had sex with a non-white, which was to say a non-Israelite, could not expect to enter Heaven. The only exception he could see in such a thing would be if the white person wasn’t aware of the commandment. If the white person had been properly warned, there was no excuse.

Doc found his way blocked by a truck that was trying to get into one of the Idle-Aire parking spaces. He got on the CB and talked the driver into the spot, something that most drivers do to help each other out. Within a minute or so, he was rolling again, making a giant loop behind the building and finally heading back toward Horizon, and came to a stop at one of the fuel pumps.

He popped out his brakes, turned off his lights and reached behind the seat for his plastic folder. He popped it open and found his driver’s daily logbook, which he updated so as to show himself arriving in El Paso and purchasing fuel at 5pm. He fished the company credit card out of the side pouch, placed the folder on the passenger’s seat and opened the door of his cab.

Before he stepped out of the truck, he turned his CB up a bit louder, so he could listen to the continuous racket that could always be heard around El Paso. Then he stepped out of the cab, making sure to maintain his three-point-contact, and stepped off the expanded metal grate onto the concrete.

Doc pushed the button on the little monitor and waited. When the fuel desk responded in Spanish, he said nothing, refusing to respond to anything but English. After a short pause, the woman's voice came back over the speaker.

"Company name?"

Doc gave her the company name, truck number, trip number and odometer reading. The woman explained to him that he was limited to 300 gallons, which he expected. Company policy. When prompted, he scanned his fuel card through the electronic reader. In a few seconds he saw the LCD digits on the fuel pumps reset to zero, and he began to pump fuel into his tanks.

His truck had 120 gallon tanks on both sides, so he started the nozzle on the driver's side and then walked around to the passenger side. Once he got them both going and secured by bungee cords, he took a moment to use the long-handled brush to clean his windshield. He opened his side box and took out two empty water jugs and filled them from the faucet, and put them in the side door of his sleeper berth, bracing them where they couldn't turn over. Then he carefully climbed back into the cab and listened to what was going on around the truckstops.

The CB was busy. It was wintertime back east, but out west and so close to the Mexican border, it was nearly 80 degrees. One woman, by her voice a nigger, was raising hell about how she was a proud black woman who wasn't afraid of pasty faced white boys who hide behind their radios and talk hate. Another woman was offering to clean out big trucks, which, as often as not, was a front for prostitution. At the very least, many of the truck cleaners would work bare-breasted as they ran a vacuum cleaner over the floors and rubbed the shiny stuff over the dashboard, walls and seats. Another driver, a man, was trying to tell the drivers

about how they needed to pray the sinner's prayer and accept Jesus into their lives, and turn away from the girls and drugs and alcohol. Another voice was saying "Shut up, nigger!" to the woman who wasn't afraid. And right in the middle of it all came a crackling noise, a good sign that the operator was running a couple thousand watts of illegal power, drowning out all the voices.

"Attention drivers here at exit 37 Horizon! Papa Smurf is about to make another run into Mexico! Senioritas, doctor, dentist, pharmacy, shopping, cantinas, massage parlors, three free shots of tequila and a six-pack of genuine CERVEZA! Ten more minutes before we pull out! Round trip to Mexico, air conditioned van, drive you all the way in, stay with you while you party, and drive you all the way out, no walking the bridge! Papa Smurf, channel two-five, channel two five!"

Doc heard the click of the automatic fuel shut-off levers, so he stepped back out of the cab and topped off his tanks. One by one, he returned the nozzles to their hangers and replaced the fuel caps. Climbing back into his cab, he started the engine, released the brakes and drove forward, enough that the truck behind him could get into the fuel pump and be filling up while Doc went into the store.

Inside the store, he made a quick trip to the restroom, and then poured himself a cup of the Love's dark roast coffee. In his opinion, Love's dark roast coffee was as good as anything available in the fashionable gourmet coffee shops! He then walked back to the coolers and picked out a 12-pack of beer, and carried it all up to the fuel desk. After signing his fuel receipt and receiving a copy, he paid for the coffee and beer, and hurried out to his truck, hoping to get moving before the driver behind him had finished topping off.

Just as he rounded the corner at the rear of his trailer,

the driver behind him called out his thanks, so Doc waved at him and walked on up to the cab of his truck without wasting any time. He unlocked the door, put his beer in the little thermoelectric cooler and his coffee in the beverage holder and drove out of the Love's parking lot.

Turning left on Horizon, he went back south, crossing over the interstate, and went down the hill toward Mexico. On his right was a big green sign pointing toward the entrance of the Petro, and on his left was McDonald's. He drove past the building, turned left into the dirt parking lot, negotiated his way through the potholes that could hide a small foreign car and turned left by the dumpster.

He started to park by the dumpster, facing north, but on a whim he kept moving and crossed the little paved side street and drove into a much larger dirt lot where he saw a good dozen trucks parked side by side. He looped around behind them, and finding a nice spot on the end that would allow him to look south into Mexico, he drove forward, matching his truck to the others in that line, and popped out his air brakes. He left the engine idling so he could charge up his batteries, run the air conditioner and let the thieves know that he was "at home".

Doc had learned his lesson about taking showers in the truckstops. In places up north or in Canada, he didn't worry about it, but the closer he got to the Mexican border, the more he avoided them, because of the general lack of cleanliness. More than a few times, back when he was a rookie, he had walked into a border town truckstop shower and left with a horrible case of athlete's foot. One time, he had been forced to get a prescription strength anti-fungal to get rid of the itching and slimy wetness between his toes!

He stepped into his sleeper berth, pulled out a little swing-out shelf that was designed to be used as a desk, and

put his little Coleman dual-fuel stove on it and started the fire going. He then fished out a stainless steel bowl from under the sleeper berth, filled it three-quarters full of water from one of his water jugs and placed it on the hot blue flames.

While the water was getting warm, he chose a shirt, jeans, socks and underwear from the built-in closet. He pulled three clean washcloths out of the cubby-hole above the closet, and after testing the water, pushed them into the bowl.

After taking his clothes off, he took the first cloth and squeezed the water out of it. He then briskly scrubbed his face and neck, and after re-wetting it, turned off the flames and re-washed his face. Next, he removed a second cloth from the hot water and poured a little body wash from a bottle that he kept in the cubby hole with the washcloths. After soaping his body thoroughly, he pulled out the third washcloth and rinsed. Finally, he put the bowl on the floor of the sleeper and soaked his feet in the still-hot water for several minutes.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

Doc wasn't surprised when someone knocked on his door. Like the driver had told him earlier, McDonald's was the hotspot in El Paso. Drivers who didn't like being awakened every few minutes didn't park there! Giving in to curiosity, he gingerly took his feet out of the bowl of now-lukewarm water, and poked his head out of the sleeper curtain, and leaned toward the driver's side window.

Standing there was a slim woman, 110 pounds soaking wet, late-thirty-something by the look of her, medium brown hair cut in a long pageboy type style. He waved her away, indicating that he wasn't interested in prostitutes or drugs, but she shook her head and pointed to his left, at the truck parked beside him.

Looking to his left, Doc saw a red truck, the name on the door showing that it was the same company as his own employer. The woman pointed to the truck and to herself, indicating that she was the driver. He knew he was taking a chance with what he did next, but something about this woman, an intuition, made him feel good about her. He reached over in full view of the woman and pulled up the knob that unlocked his driver's side door.

The woman pulled the handle from the outside, opening the door, and climbed inside Doc's cab.

"Bear with me a minute or two, I'm back here getting a sponge bath!" Doc still had his head and chest poked out of the heavy vinyl curtain, so the lady could clearly see that he wasn't dressed.

"No problem! I saw your truck and parked next to you. Couldn't find a parking place in the truckstops, and I'm out of hours, so I gotta stop here whether I like it or not! When I saw your truck I felt way better! Took me a while to build up the nerve to knock, because I didn't know who was in this truck. I'm just glad you're white!"

The lady seemed pleasant enough, speaking with an accent that he figured to be from the northeast, and looked to be clean and well-groomed. And she was glad Doc was white!

The lady reached over to the dash and turned off the CB, and bumped up the heater a bit. "You don't mind if I hang out with you, do you?"

The engine was running, so Doc called out between the curtains that he didn't mind at all. "Folks call me Doc! I don't mess with the girls and don't do drugs, so I'm happy to have the company! Since you're stuck for ten hours, do you

feel like a cold beer?"

The lady laughed and stuck her hand between the curtains, splaying her fingers wide in mock anticipation. Doc reached into the cooler, pulled out one of the bottles and gave it to her, amused at himself for being excited at the brushing touch of their hands. He hurried up and got dressed, but didn't put his boots back on.

"More room back here!" Doc pulled the curtains back and tied them with the little velcro-tipped loops. "Wanna relax and watch some tv, listen to the radio, sit and chat? I've got a computer if you wanna check email!"

The woman looked doubtfully toward the back, but when she saw the well-lit, clean and orderly sleeper berth, she nodded her head and walked back between the seats. Doc scooted back toward the head of the bed, leaving her a lot of room on the other end, and with a flourish of his hand, welcomed her into his home away from home.

Doc stuck out his hand toward her. "Folks call me Doc, but I think I said that already! I haven't been with the company long, just since December. I just came from the northeast, then to North Carolina, then to Dallas, and now I'm delivering to El Paso tomorrow morning. Floor tiles."

The woman took his hand and shook it firmly. "Folks call me Foxy! Haven't been with the company long myself. Trained a couple months ago with my brother in law, goes by Dusty on the CB. My first trip alone, they sent me up in the snow and ice! Got stuck at a glass plant in New York, trailer brakes frozen up, and after I unloaded at the brewery in Eden, I traded trailers and wound up with this load of tiles heading to El Paso too. But mine came from Virginia, a special load of off color tiles that they're gonna re-do."

Doc tried not to show his surprise. "You were at the glass plant in New York? Auburn? When were you there?"

The woman frowned in concentration, and touched the light on her watch. "It was about the 11th, I believe. A Wednesday."

With a shock, the man suddenly realized that the woman sitting with him was the female driver that had been parked next to Fallout's truck in New York. The driver whose brakes he had disabled with the Canadian quarter!

Doc tried not to let his surprise show. "I was there about that time, I think! I forget the day I picked up, but I delivered at the brewery on Friday the 13th. Me and three other drivers ran convoy from the glass plant down to the brewery. Icy roads up north of Wilkes-Barre and Scranton! Had to spend the whole weekend at the brewery drop yard. I didn't see any other red trucks, though."

"I got loaded in the middle of the morning", Foxy went on. "You folks were probably long gone by the time I got my trailer brakes thawed out. The mechanic told me that I should keep the red button pushed in all the time during the winter, because it helps keep water from freezing in the lines, or the shoes from sticking. Something like that. Trailer kept messing up on me, so I didn't get to North Carolina until late Monday."

She didn't mention a Canadian quarter in the gladhands, so Doc went on and made small-talk with her. They talked about their impressions with the company, and discovered that they had the same dispatcher, the huge, morbidly obese fat girl who sat in the back corner of the office. Foxy showed Doc a few pictures of her kids, a son and two daughters, all in their teens. When their beers got low, Doc fished out two more of the brown bottles and, like a true gentleman, broke

the seal on Foxy's, but didn't actually remove the cap. Doc then showed Foxy his laptop computer and demonstrated the little adapter that sat on the dash of the truck, held in place by a square of velcro.

"You can actually be online while you're driving down the highway? And you get for-real-and-no-shit high speed?" Foxy was incredulous. "I have a laptop too, but so far I've been stopping at these truckstops that sell WiFi. Their connections always suck! About the only good connections are the Texas rest areas!"

Doc, having a mouthful of beer at the moment, waved his hand, thumb pointed upward, toward the woman.

"Oh, it's great!" Doc had finally managed to swallow the beer. "Speed is the same, downloading or sending! None of this 1.5 download and 256 upload crapola. And the only place I haven't been able to find signal was out in the middle of the desert, a hundred miles from nowhere. I bought mine in Virginia, up on 81, and I kept a steady connection, listening to internet radio preachers, until I got way out past Dallas!"

Foxy perked up and her eyes met his, the excitement clearly visible.

"You can actually listen to preachers while you're going down the highway? I love good preaching! Or, if I wanted to listen to a news channel all day, or maybe talk with my kids at home on webcam chat, I could do it? They could look through my webcam and see me, or the highway?"

Doc pretended to polish his fingernails on the front of his shirt. "Do it all the time!" When Foxy's eyes lit up even further, he got a sudden burst of inspiration.

"Wanna try it now? If you'll call home and get your kids

on chat, we can connect and you can talk with them face-to-face on my laptop and webcam!”

Foxy started to give him the go-ahead, but suddenly her face changed, and Doc could see the difference in her expression. “Hey, Doc, do you think we could walk across the street to the truckstop first? I hate to bother you, but I need to visit the ladies’ room, and this McDonald’s closes their doors at sunset. It’s that, or me squatting between the trucks in full view of every tom-dick-and-harry in the parking lot! And I really don’t wanna walk alone!”

Doc reached for his boots without a moment’s hesitation, even though he had a little porta-potty under his bunk. He was enjoying her company, and didn’t want to say or do anything that might cause her to “jump ship”.

“Don’t blame ya a bit. I’ve trained women before, and I understand the hassles, and it’s fine. A good looking woman like you walks toward the building alone, she’s just begging to be approached or even grabbed and pulled between the trucks!”

Doc was pleased to see the quick smile on Foxy’s face when he threw in the bit about her looking good!

Once Doc had his boots on, they climbed out of the truck and started walking toward the McDonalds, which was the best-lit path. They tried the doors, and found them locked already, so they headed on across Horizon, toward the big truckstop. They made it to the store building without incident, and Foxy went inside to do her business. Doc stood outside the women’s bathroom, looking through the glass display window at the cb’s, radar detectors, stereo systems and the various souvenirs that attracted the new drivers and tourists.

When they left the building, Foxy noticed a big yellow

sign off to the right, and grabbed Doc's arm.

"Hey, there's the CB shop I've been hearing about! They are supposed to have linear amplifiers that put out over 1000 watts! Do you think we could walk over there before we go back to the truck? In the morning we have to leave out before they open, so tonight may be our only chance!"

Doc didn't mind at all, since he had grown a little disappointed in his Texas Star 500 watter. He didn't tell Foxy, but he had been looking around for a bigger amp, something the drivers called a 16-pill. The Texas Star had 4 pills, or ceramic power transistors, which put out around 125 watts each. If he had a 16 pill, he figured he could transmit close to 2000 watts!

They walked shoulder to shoulder, but as they neared the sign, they ran into a chain link fence, and had to turn to the right and walk down the line, behind a dozen parked trucks, toward a sign with a big red arrow that pointed the way to the CB shop. Doc let Foxy go first, so they walked single file, occasionally leaning toward the fence to get around a trailer where the driver had parked too close to the fence.

Neither of them saw the aluminum baseball bat before it crashed into Foxy's midsection. She let out a muted cry and doubled over and rolled under the rear of a trailer. Doc rushed forward, reaching toward his right jeans pocket for the lock-back knife he kept there at all times. He figured that, if he moved quickly enough, the asshole swinging the bat wouldn't have time to draw back and make another swing, and with any luck, Doc could charge him and do some damage.

When Doc came around the end of the trailer, he came face-to-face with what looked like a .38 snubby. He pulled up short, not knowing if the gun was loaded or if the would-be

robber was willing to pull the trigger in a crowded parking lot.

“Dinero!” The voice was clearly Mexican. “Quiero dinero! Moneey!”

Doc, since he wasn't alone, slowly lifted his hands and stepped back, noticing at the time that the Mexican was wearing a new-issue US military field jacket, with the computer-generated camouflage pattern. He slowly lowered his left hand, trying not to make the Mexican lose his nerve, and pulled his wallet out of the back pocket of his jeans.

“Tengo solamente un poco de dinero, senyor.” Doc brought the wallet forward, opened it slowly, and removed the few dollars he normally carried with him on the road. He held them out for the Mexican, who grabbed the bills from his hand and stuffed them into a pocket.

“Mire. Todo que tengo.” Doc held the wallet open, showing the Mexican that he truly didn't have any more money. When he saw the Mexican glancing at his watch, he held it out so the guy could get a good look at it.

“No preciosa”, Doc told him with a shrug.

The Mexican, satisfied that the old American driver didn't have anything else of value, backed off between the trailers, and as Doc squatted down and crawled under the trailer to check on Foxy, the sound of running footsteps were evidence that the robber had fled the scene.

As Doc scrambled under the rear of the trailer, he heard Foxy's quiet moan that told him she was at least conscious.

“Hey, Foxy, Mexican is gone. Talk to me! How bad are you hurt?” Doc, being respectful of the fact that they had just met, didn't try to run his hands over her body to feel for

broken bones, but he did get down close to her on the blacktop. She was facing away from him, in a fetal position, so he spooned up behind her and put his arm around her, over her shoulders.

Foxy turned her head and looked back at him, the pain evident in her eyes, even in the semi-darkness under the trailer.

"Next time we go walking, YOU'RE gonna be out in front!" She managed a little coughing laugh as she finished, so Doc knew she was more-or-less okay. Still, he was worried about her, so he gently pulled her shoulder toward him, and she rolled onto her back. Doc carefully ran his right hand, palm flat, over her tummy and upward until he could feel the bottom edge of her rib cage.

"Where did the bat hit you? Did he get your ribs?"

Foxy shook her head, and gently grasping his hand, moved it lower, about the area of her navel, but higher than her pelvic bones. "Got me good, right about here. Don't think anything's damaged. Gonna have a helluva time doing my crunches in the morning, though!"

Doc, not sure if she was kidding or not, tried to stifle the laugh that came out of his relieved heart. He put his hand back on her shoulder and squeezed it in reassurance.

"Dear heart, you think you can move? We probably need to get outta here. Wanna try to make it on to the CB shop? Or back to the truck? I can carry you if need be, but down here in the back of the parking lot, not much light, we are in a bad place." Doc didn't want to alarm the girl, but at the same time, he wanted to impress on her the situation they were in.

Suddenly Foxy started laughing heartily as she rolled away from him, even though there were groans escaping her lips too. Doc heard the sound of metal being dragged across the pavement. Then Foxy rolled back toward him, a dark coloured aluminum baseball bat in her hand.

“Oh, now that is priceless!”, Doc murmured under his breath, not intending to be humorous. When Foxy questioned him about it, he went on. “Well, when I stopped and got fuel, I had a 20 in my billfold. All I ever carry on me. I bought a coffee and a 12-pack, so all I had left was the change. Maybe 8 bucks. All of that in ones. Stupid Mexican traded a 20 dollar bat for 8 dollars cash!”

Foxy sat up and moved toward Doc, so he backed up and held her hand as she scooted out from underneath the trailer. She didn't feel up to shopping for CB stuff, so they headed back toward their trucks, the aluminum bat in her hand drawing more than one comment from other drivers, congratulating her on her choice of self defense. One of them, a female driver, laughed and told Foxy that the bat was the best way to keep her old man in line! Doc laughed with them, and rubbed imaginary lumps on his head as they crossed Horizon and neared their trucks.

They didn't see the pothole in the darkness, and stepped into it together. Although they didn't fall, Foxy was clearly in pain from the sudden tensing of her frame. Doc thought for a moment and tried to word his question carefully.

“Foxy, look, you're hurt worse than you are letting on. You almost fell just now, and what if you get worse during the night? What if you can't get to your CB and call for help?” They were at Doc's truck by now, and Foxy was leaning heavily against the passenger side steps.

Doc went on. “Look, I have two bunks, and my truck is

already warmed up and ready. Why don't you stay with me tonight? If you get worse during the night, I'll be here to get some help, and besides, if these nutjobs see you climbing in your truck alone, there's no telling what they might try during the night. I'll even let you hold my stun-gun!"

Foxy thought for the briefest of moments and nodded her head wearily.

"Yeah, I'm hurting like hell, and a good cold beer might help. Several beers might help even better!" She winked at him and started fishing in a little pouch that was looped to her belt and pulled out some keys. "Would you mind getting my pillow and the black travel bag hanging over the foot of my bed?"

Doc had a better idea. "What say we get you up in the truck first? Then we'll open both our sleeper doors, and I'll pass your things from one sleeper to the other. That way, you'll be inside and can stretch out. And, if you forget something or I can't find it, you can just point it out to me."

When the woman smiled and nodded, Doc used his key and unlocked the passenger door. He pulled it open and took the baseball bat from her, and then steadied the woman as she slowly climbed up the steps and pulled herself into the seat. He climbed up behind her, and as she hobbled back toward the bunk, he followed her and turned on the overhead lights.

Doc pointed toward the cubby hole by the head of the bed and handed her the aluminum bat. "Stun gun is in there, and the heater controls are just to the left of the cubby. And you know where the beer is!"

He grinned as the other driver gleefully played with the electronic zapper, the bright blue sparks giving her face an

unearthly glow.

Doc opened his sleeper door, the one facing toward Foxy's truck, and went next door to the other truck. He unlocked and opened the door, climbed inside, and opened the door so Foxy could see what he was doing. He tossed her pillow across the gap between the two trucks, followed by her travel bag. He was about to pull the door closed when she changed her mind and got him to take something off the rack, a fancy paper bag with little rope handles. He passed it through the doors and, once she gave him the go-ahead, closed and locked her truck.

Before he got back into his own truck, he did a quick walk-around of both vehicles, making sure they were locked and ready for a night in El Paso. While most drivers would never say so out loud, for fear of being called racist, it was common knowledge among drivers of all colours that Mexicans will steal you blind if you give them half a chance.

It wasn't racism. It was just a fact of life. Most of the major trucking companies had drop-yards at the border, and they had local Mexican cartage companies who would carry the trailers across the border and get them loaded. And whenever a driver knew he was dispatched to pick up one of those trailers, fresh back from Mexico, he ALWAYS carried a good supply of light bulbs, mudflaps, rubber gladhand seals and the phone number of a good tire shop.

Many a brand-new trailer went across the border into Mexico, complete with 8 new tires, LED lights, new mudflaps and in perfect condition. When it came back, as often as not, it had 8 worn-out tires, no mudflaps, half the LED lights missing and occasionally, all the expensive red and white reflective tape stripped off the sides!

Wading the drainage ditch that was optimistically called a

“river” didn’t improve the morals of the Mexicans who made the trip.

As many a disgusted driver was overheard to say, “Mexicans are worse than niggers! They’re actually smart enough to be GOOD at stealing!”

It took several minutes to do the walk-around, and by the time Doc was finished, it was good dark. The lights from McDonald’s weren’t in the right place to shed much light on the two red trucks, so he opened his driver-side door. The light inside the door panel gave him enough illumination to make sure the side boxes of both trucks were locked. That done, he turned and walked toward the front of the rig.

When he was a few feet from the open door, a figure stepped around from the darkness and stood between him and the steps he was aiming for. With the door panel light in his eyes, Doc couldn’t see who the figure was, but he could distinctly make out the US army camouflage pattern. The Mexican who had robbed him across the street!

The Mexican stepped toward him, the snubby revolver in his hand. Doc stepped backward, hoping to draw the guy away from the cab where Foxy was resting. There was a fifth-wheel puller made of re-bar just beyond the back edge of the sleeper body, with sharpened hooks that, if Doc could get a hand on it, might give him the chance to slap the gun out of the Mexican’s hand. If he could do that, Doc had already made up his mind beyond any shadow of a doubt that somebody would find a dead Mexican come daylight!

Doc tried to appear nonchalant. He leaned against the side of the sleeper, his right hand appearing to hold his weight as he grasped the air deflector fin, his fingertips making contact with the re-bar. The Mexican, once they had taken a couple steps back into the darkness, was back up to his old

tricks.

“Dinero!”, he demanded. “Moneey!”

BINK!!! The Mexican dropped like a rock! And there, standing on the top step of the cab, Foxy was holding her aluminum baseball bat, grinning like the proverbial Cheshire Cat! Doc hadn’t seen her because of the door light shining in his eyes, but he was in no mood to give her a hard time. He grabbed the Mexican by the collar of his field jacket and dragged him a few feet toward the rear of the truck, dropping him so that his upper torso was underneath the truck, almost as though he were trying to work on the bottomside of the trailer.

He almost forgot the gun, but after a little hurried searching, he scooped it up and put it in his pocket.

Doc walked back to his open door, handed Foxy the gun, and climbed into the cab. After they closed the door, they turned off all the lights and watched the parking lot. The Mexican appeared to have been working alone the first time, and after thirty minutes, there was still no movement in the parking lot except for the occasional dog, and drivers coming back to their trucks.

“Foxy, we can make this look like one of those parking lot accidents, but the bat. That’s gonna be a problem. If we hide it inside one of our trucks, we’re likely to be searched, and if they do, we’re screwed.”

Foxy was sitting in the passenger seat. She rolled down the window and looked backwards, and turned around with a smile.

“Next to us, there’s a flatbed with a tarped load. Think we could slip the bat under the tarp and leave it for the driver to find when he gets unloaded? Or what about just calling

the cops and telling them the truth about what happened?”

Doc wasn't thrilled about getting the cops involved. "If we call them, there's a 50/50 chance they will believe us and let us go. Then there's the other chance, that they'll say we were upset about the first thing, so we set an ambush for the guy and just plain killed him when he came around looking for more money. If it was just you, they might go for it, but with two of us, we stand a chance of being accused of murder."

Foxy sat up more attentive than before. "Do you really think he's dead? I only hit him once, on top of the head."

Doc grinned at his new friend and co-conspirator. "Lady, if you ever get mad at me, shoot me or poison me or something! But please don't ever bean me like you did that guy! But no, I don't know for sure that he's dead, but I imagine he is. He had blood coming out of one ear right after he hit the ground."

By now it had been 45 minutes since everything had happened, and they decided that hiding the bat under the tarps of the flatbed was probably the best option. Foxy opened her window and looked around, but in the inky darkness of the dirt parking lot, nothing was visible. Doc did the same, but apart from a truck whose lights were shining in the opposite direction, they might as well have been all alone in the middle of the desert.

Doc opened his door and started down the aluminum steps, but pulled up short when he looked at the ground under the trailer. There was nothing there!

He stuck his head back inside the cab and let Foxy know what had happened. "Ole' woman, turns out you're not a murderer after all! Mexican done come-to and gone!"

Doc reached inside his pocket and made sure the little snub-nose revolver was still there. He pulled it out, pushed the button that released the cylinder, and made sure that there were cartridges in all the holes. He lifted the gun high, so he could see in the light of the door panel, and made sure none of them had dimples in the primers. Then he stepped off the bottom step, closed the door, and made a quick walk-around of their trucks.

When he got back to the front, he stopped outside Foxy's window and lifted his hand toward her. They had agreed earlier that she would keep an eye on the flatbedder's cab. She handed him the aluminum bat, which he carried toward the back and, with a quick motion, pushed it under the edge of the black tarp of the trailer parked to their right. When he got back to her window, she gave him the thumbs up sign, that the driver hadn't stuck his head into the cab.

Once they got back in the sleeper, Doc looked at her with some degree of amazement. He had been looking for such a woman, slim and athletic, a woman who knew the difference between whites and animals, a woman who wasn't afraid to stand up and take a stand, a woman who wouldn't scream and huddle in the shadows while her man was left to handle the problems alone.

Doc cleared this throat and began what he hoped would be a convincing sales pitch. "Foxy, today has been an interesting day! I stopped here, expecting to have a couple beers, to aggravate the locals on the CB, to watch the whores and dope dealers do their thing, stuff like that. And somewhere along the way, I met you, got robbed, saw you get mugged, got to plunder around in a woman's sleeper, saw you bean a Mexican on the head and wound up with a passable .38 snubby! This is the best day I've had in YEARS!"

Doc saw that her expression hadn't changed, so he went on. "So I'm curious. You know how the logbooks are these days. Drive 11 hours but then you've gotta stop for 10. Gotta do all your unloading, loading, fueling, maintenance and driving in a 14 hour stretch. Qualcomm computer systems that track your every move, so you can't fudge on your hours. The system is set up to work against a single driver. I know, we've only known each other for a few hours, but I've got a gut feeling about you."

Doc reached out his hand and took hers, and was happy to see that she didn't pull away.

"So tell me, Foxy, have you ever thought about running teams? Do you think you and me could drive together, be together 24/7 without killing each other?"

Foxy didn't answer. She handed him an empty beer bottle and asked for a full one. Without any explanation or discussion, she put the unopened beer in the cubby hole by her head. She lifted the covers of the bed, put her feet under them and snuggled down as though she was going to get some sleep.

Doc didn't press the issue. His truck had two beds, so he kicked off his boots and started to climb up the built-in ladder toward the top bunk.

"Where you think you're going?" Foxy was halfway sitting up, resting on one elbow. Laughing at Doc's surprised expression, she held out her free hand.

"C'mere you!"

FOXY

chapter seven

Doc woke up to the gentle beeping of his alarm clock. He knew without looking that it was 6am central time, which meant it was 5am El Paso local time. He was spooned up behind Foxy, the covers pulled up around their necks, his arm around her waist, her hair in his face.

He stretched out his legs, trying not to wake her, but he felt her body move under his arm. Apparently she was a light sleeper. She turned her face and smiled sleepily up at him.

"I was trying not to wake you, sleeping beauty", he whispered as he kissed her on the side of the head. "How's the stomach?"

She grinned at him. "Not as bad as his head, I betcha! Actually, it's not bad. Feels like I haven't done my crunches in a month, and then tried to make up for it all in one night. I've felt worse."

"Good deal", he said, genuinely happy that no permanent harm had been done. "You sleep good? My snoring keep you awake all night?"

She tensed up lengthwise on the bunk, stretching like a cat. "Slept good, better than I've slept in ages!" She snuggled sideways toward him, pulling the covers closer around her neck. "Your air conditioner is fantastic! Plus, being out here on the road, a woman driving alone, is scary as hell! Feeling safe helps a girl sleep better!"

Doc moved closer to her, emboldened by her friendly way. "What time is your appointment? Or are you first-come-first-served?"

She frowned in thought, and shook her head. "I don't remember seeing an appointment on the dispatch message. Have you been to this place before?"

"Cal-tile? I've been there when I worked with other companies", he replied, deep in thought himself. "It was several years ago, and back then they didn't do appointments. They just took you as you arrived. Sign your name on the list, and they call you on the CB when a door comes open."

He carefully climbed over her, and reached behind the passenger seat, searching for his Qualcomm satellite unit. Once he located it, he pulled it into the sleeper and, from behind her with his arm around her waist again, he scrolled through the messages until he found his dispatch message. He looked down through the various fields, information that told him when and where to pick up the load, what route to take, which fuel stops to use, delivery date, etc. Down at the bottom the delivery time field had nothing out beside it, meaning that no appointment had been set.

"No, mine is blank. No appointment. But just the same, we might orta check on yours, just in case. It would be aggravating if you had to wait til tomorrow to get unloaded." Doc nuzzled his face into her hair as he spoke. "Especially if I were to get unloaded and hadda leave El Paso before you did!"

Foxy laughed and took the hand that was draped around her waist. "You're just afraid I'll get away from you before you get a chance to get me out of my clothes!" She rolled toward him with amazing speed for somebody who had taken a bat to the midsection, and tickled his ribs. "Admit it! Admit it!"

Doc laughed, partly from her fingertips and partly from happiness that she had brought up the subject. "Yeah, maybe a little bit", he confessed, "What are you, about a size zero? But also I haven't heard you say whether you could run teams with me." He wiggled his eyebrows up and down, Groucho Marx style. "If we run teams, I figure I'll have more time to talk you into it!"

"Maybe you already have", she whispered, wagging her own eyebrows. But before he could digest what she had said, she rolled out of the bunk like a kid on Christmas morning and stood on the floor, urging him to get up and get his boots on so they could visit McDonald's. "Us sitters have to go inside now and then. And maybe you don't remember, but I drank several beers last night!"

Doc made googly eyes and shook his head in mock frustration, rolling his legs out of the bunk and reaching for his boots. They put their things in their pockets, and Doc returned her keys, which he had not done the night before. Once they were ready, they climbed out of the cab and walked shoulder-to-shoulder across the little paved side road and into McDonald's.

While Foxy went to the ladies' room, Doc got two small coffees and four breakfast burritos. Foxy returned shortly, and while she kept watch on their food, he made a quick trip to the bathroom himself. They ate hungrily, interrupting now and then for quick bits of conversation. Doc ate his burritos plain, while Foxy unrolled hers and flavoured them with the hot seasoning.

Foxy thought Doc's real name, Erik Marlin, was nice. Her name, Doreen, reminded Doc of a story he had read as a child, in a series of books called "Uncle Arthur's Bedtime Stories". The story was "Doreen's jewel box". They exchanged tales of kids, in-laws, Doc's divorce, and the problems that had landed in Doreen's lap when her husband

died in Iraq. She laughed merrily when Doc told her the story of how, about the time he turned 40, his ex-wife had traded him in for two 20's!

Doreen quipped, "Isn't it usually the man who ditches his forty year old wife for two twenty year old teeny-boppers?"

After a while, Doc, figuring that he might as well get it over with, brought up the subject of religious beliefs. If she couldn't handle his Christian Identity faith, there wasn't much point in getting involved with her. Doreen was eager to discuss the topic, which surprised him. In his experience, most women would admit to believing in Jesus, but when the discussion got more in-depth, they would usually try to change the subject.

"Well, it's like this", he started, in response to her question. He gave her the less controversial version of Identity. "I believe the King James very much, but I'm an old fashioned believer. Long time ago, preachers taught that the whole Bible was important. Not just the New Testament. One thing that Chrisians, Islamics and Jews all agree on is that God does not change. Never!

In the Old Testament, there are 613 laws, and there are some of us that believe we're supposed to obey all of them, not just the "big ten". To be sure, some of them can't be done today, like wearing tassles on your clothes, or burnt offerings in front of the Church. And if your 12 year old son is stubborn and refuses to behave, I doubt you could take him before the City Council and stone him to death. I believe the blood of Jesus covers my sins, but I also believe that I'm supposed to obey the old laws. For instance, my beard. And I won't have sex with a non-white woman, or a white woman who has been married and divorced."

Doreen spoke up brightly. "I'm a widow!"

Doc smiled. "It's complicated, and some of it is downright illegal according to today's laws. For instance, the laws that say a homosexual, a fortune teller and a race mixer are supposed to be stoned to death."

At this, Doc paused, hoping to see whether she was offended by what he had told her.

Doreen smiled at him over her coffee. "Damn shame we can't get rid of them, though! It would be a better world without them! Especially the ones who have half-human babies!"

Doc grinned back at her. "Oh, and I forgot! The Bible also says that the woman is the personal, private property of her husband! There is a place, in Judges I believe, where a man cut his woman into twelve parts and sent the pieces all throughout the country after she had sex with a foreigner!"

Doreen playfully kicked him in the shins under the table. "I got your personal, private property right here, buster! And I think you've got that particular story out of context. He cut her into 12 pieces, true enough, but there was more to the story!"

Doc was impressed even more. "Wow, you do know your King James, don't you? Yeah, there was more to the story, and it wasn't the woman's fault. Kind of a sad story, actually. But I'm glad to see that you can joke about this stuff! Lotta folks are way too serious about such things. I almost got in a fight once, when I told some folks that, if two men are fighting, and the wife of one of them grabs the other guy by the "tenders", you're supposed to cut her hand off. Folks wanna fight if you bring up anything other than the "approved" message of their own denomination. Me, I'm open to any idea or theory, until I can prove it wrong."

They were through with their food, so they gathered up

the trash and dumped it into the receptacle. They got their coffee refilled, and headed back toward their trucks, still deep in discussion.

Doreen was talking as she side-stepped a huge pothole in the dirt lot. "Yeah, I know the type! One day I heard a guy talking about Genesis, the first two chapters. He said that, in chapter 1, someone named "God" created the earth and the animals and on the 6th day, he created the dark-skinned man. Then this guy said that, in chapter 2, the name of the creator was "The Lord God", and that He created the white man in chapter 2." This guy figured that the difference in the names was important. He figured that maybe Lucifer had been the creator in chapter 1, and The Lord, our God, was the creator in chapter 2. Oh, MAN, you should have heard the uproar! I believe some of those folks would have killed that guy if they could have found him! Me, I don't know if he was right, but I thought the idea was interesting. And sure enough, in the KJV, Chapter one says "God" and chapter two says "The Lord God!"

Doc chimed in with his own tidbit. "If you look up the names in the Strong's, you'll see that the name is "Elohim" in Genesis 1, but it's YHVH in Chapter 2."

By this time, they had reached their trucks, which changed the subject. Foxy opened her truck and checked her Qualcomm for an appointment time. There wasn't one, so they discussed their plan for the day. After comparing ideas, they decided to run on up to the Cal-tile plant and get unloaded. The woman still didn't mention anything about running teams, so Doc didn't press the issue.

They did their logbooks and brought everything up to date. Doc gave the rest of the beer to a scruffy white guy who was polishing tanks and wheels, and put the empty bottles in the dumpster across the street. Once they were ready, they jumped over to channel 25 and headed on up

Horizon toward the Interstate. They drove several miles toward El Paso, and turned right onto the bypass, which took them north of town toward the Army base. About ten miles up the road, they crossed a set of railroad tracks, turned right again, and on the left, they saw the tile plant. They turned in and parked, and walked inside.

Before long they had been given doors where they would unload, and the shipping clerk asked them if they were already dispatched. The tile plant had a regular contract with their trucking company, and according to the shipping manager, there was a "red truck" load that needed to be in Los Angeles as soon as possible.

By now it was 7am back in Alabama, so after they bumped the dock, Foxy got on the telephone and talked with their dispatcher. She explained that she had been attacked in the parking lot the night before, but that she felt like she could drive. Doc, rather than eavesdropping on Doreen's conversation, decided to walk down to the loading dock and see if he could help the guys on the forklifts. Sometimes the pallets of floor tiles would get bounced around and would need to be re-stacked before they could be "pulled out" of the trailer.

Half an hour later, the trucks were unloaded, so he walked back up to the shipping office. Doreen was still on the phone, so he leaned up against the front counter, making small talk with the guy who was patiently waiting for an answer about the California load. A few minutes later Doreen hung up the phone and walked over to the front counter, a big smile on her face.

"Guess what? They want us to take that special load on to California. Be there tomorrow morning if possible. What is it, 200 miles in Texas and New Mexico, 400 miles in Arizona, and maybe 250 miles in California? We can do it, don't you think? And Maureen in the recruiting office wants

you to call her."

Doc was about to question her about the load to California, but Doreen playfully pulled him toward the phone, so he decided it would wait. He dialed the number, asked for Maureen, and when he heard the cheerful voice on the other end, he explained that he'd been told to call her.

"Hey, Mr. Doc! How are ya? I hear you've been a bad boy out in El Paso! Are you having any trouble getting rid of the bodies?"

"Me, a bad boy?" Doc chuckled at the red-haired woman who knew him better than anybody else in the company. He lapsed into his best Irish brogue. "Ah, Lass, surely you don't mean it!"

"Well, Doreen called and told everybody how you saved her from a mugger, and now she's asking to be taken off her truck so she can run teams with you." At this point Maureen made a gleeful oooooooooOOOOoooooh girly noise. She went on. "As it turns out, we have a driver out there who is at the end of his training time, and wants to get into a single truck. It wouldn't be hard to arrange. He's at exit zero, at the "J". How do you feel about it?"

Doc laughed and explained the situation. "Last night me and Doreen met, and on the way back to the parking lot, we had a run-in with a Mexican with a baseball bat. SHE was the one who conked him on the head with his own bat! By the way, we ditched the bat under the tarp of a flatbed. But yes, to answer your question, I do think she and I would be a good team. Only question I have is, whose truck will we be keeping?"

Maureen had the answer on the tip of her tongue. "Doreen's truck has been giving her trouble ever since she got in it. We want to put the other driver in it, and bring it back to

the Alabama yard. If you really want to run teams, I'll take care of the paperwork and talk to payroll on this end, and you two can get started cleaning out her stuff."

Doc told Maureen to plan on them running teams, and asked to be transferred to dispatch. After a quick word or two with the little fat girl, he came back to Doreen with a smile on his face.

"They say it's ok for us to run teams! We've gotta load here and be in Los Angeles tomorrow morning, early as we can." He gave the thumbs-up to the shipping guy. "They understand that it will take a few hours to clean out your truck and get your stuff arranged in mine, but we can do all that at the "J" on the New Mexico line. Driver waiting on us over there."

Between the two of them, Doreen had the best trailer, so they asked the shipping guy to put the Los Angeles tiles in that one. There was a good chance they would get inspected at Blythe or Banning scales in California, so they needed to go in with the best equipment available. They traded trailers and notified dispatch, and before long the Qualcomm beeped with the new dispatch message sending them to Los Angeles as a team.

Foxy got busy, gathering up her things and passing them between sleepers, the way they had done the night before. Doc didn't try to arrange them, knowing that there would be plenty of time for that on the way to California. The trailer was soon loaded, and without any further delay, they headed west, arriving at exit zero on the Texas / New Mexico line just before noon. Dispatch had sent them a message saying that the driver would be in the restaurant or nearby, and that they should ask for a waitress called "Cherry".

When they got to the "J", they parked as close as possible to the main building and walked up toward the

restaurant. They looked around in the trucker store, momentarily considering the idea of buying this or that novelty that was supposedly the latest and greatest necessity of trucking life, but before long they meandered around the corner, following the smells that came from the kitchen of the "J".

They chose stools at the front, at the stop-and-go bar, and asked the lady for two coffees. While they were adding sugar and cream to their drinks, they kept a lookout for a nametag that said "Cherry".

Before long, a young woman came out of the back, and sure enough, her nametag said "Cherry". She was drop-dead gorgeous, blonde haired with blue eyes, about 20 years old. She let them know that she was working the bar, and offered to refill their coffee.

"Dammit girl", Doc began, and finished up with "oof!", as Doreen elbowed him in the ribs!

Cherry laughed at the two of them and chided Doc in good fun. "Hey ole' man! You can't be flirting with me while your wifey is sitting there next to you!" She leaned toward Doc and, in a loud stage whisper, added, "Wait until she goes to the ladies' room!"

Doc grinned at the young waitress and took a deep breath in mock frustration. He didn't see the value in correcting her about the "wifey" bit. "She's always been like that, seems like I would learn my lesson, but DAMMIT GIRL! You're right pretty for a white girl!"

They chatted back and forth for a while, and enjoyed the better part of 30 minutes just relaxing and having a good time together. Doreen finally remembered the Qualcomm and asked Cherry if she knew of a "red" driver who was looking for a truck to take back to Alabama, to which Cherry excitedly

replied that her boyfriend was a "red" driver, and he was indeed expecting to meet up with such a team. Doreen went on and explained that she and Doc were a new team, and that they were going to keep Doc's truck and were supposed to turn Doreen's truck over to a driver at the "J".

After a little more chit-chat, Cherry gave Doreen the directions to a local motel, located just behind the "J". They thanked the young lady and left her a very nice tip, and headed toward the parking lot.

After they found the other "red" driver, they arranged to meet him at the parking lot to exchange trucks. They had most of Doreen's stuff transferred to Doc's truck by 2pm, and before long the driver arrived with his bags.

Cherry was off work by that time, and she helped her boyfriend get situated in the new truck. She explained that her boyfriend was trained to do other work, but was going to try driving for a while, and she was going to quit the "J" and ride with him. She was early-20-something, while her boyfriend looked to be 40-something, but they seemed like they were perfect together. They picked and teased and laughed and acted like a couple of newlyweds, which amused Doc and Doreen greatly.

"Do you think we'll be like that after we've been together for a few years?" Doc asked his new co-driver.

Doreen threw an empty styrofoam coffee cup at Doc's head and stuck out her tongue. "You'd BETTER be like that, or I'll bean you with my Mexican baseball bat!" When she realized that she no longer had the bat, she corrected herself. "I'll buy me a new Mexican baseball bat and bean you but good!"

Before long, Cherry and her boyfriend were loaded up and ready to head toward Alabama. Doreen was busy in the

back, arranging her things in the cubbyholes and hanging her clothes in the closets. Doc, after waving goodbye to the other drivers, had moved his truck to the rear of the parking lot and was about to get in the sleeper and help Doreen with her moving-in chores.

Sitting there in the back of the parking lot, they had the occasional knock on the door, girls looking for a lonely trucker, and a couple of tank-and-wheel polishers trying to stir up some business, but they politely explained that they didn't need any of that, and the visitors went their own way.

There was one, though, that just wouldn't take the hint. He was a nigger, from the looks of him about 30 years old, and Doc figured he was trying to get the drop on somebody, catch them at a careless moment and maybe knock them on the head and rob them. He lied to the boy and told him that they were broke and didn't need any polish work, and that they weren't looking for any white party-girls.

Doreen, calling down from the sleeper berth, got Doc's attention. "Hey, do you think that guy would like to have a half-pint of vodka? I've got one, and I don't wanna carry it into California...might get searched!"

The nigger heard what she said, and eagerly answered in the affirmative. Doc, in a state of shock and confusion, didn't know what to do except go along with his co-driver's suggestion.

Doreen handed the bottle to Doc, and he passed it on to the nigger, who left the area without any further conversation. Doc then climbed up into the sleeper where Doreen was busily stashing her things away.

"Uh, dear heart, I didn't know you had any vodka. You keep stuff like that with you on a regular basis? And didn't offer to share with me? I think I'm hurt!" Doc poked out his

bottom lip like a pouting little boy.

Doreen laughed and put her fingertip on Doc's lip. "It's not like that, ole' man. You see, the bottle of vodka I gave him was "spiked". It's really easy to take the lid off a plastic bottle of liquor and pour out some of the original stuff, and refill it with something else. In this case, it was refilled with methanol. Denatured alcohol. Causes blindness, even in small quantities. And that bottle was probably 1/3 methanol, but since he's expecting 100 proof vodka, he'll never taste the difference. Nigger will be stone blind by tomorrow, if he's not dead!"

Doreen, seeing the confused look on Doc's face, shushed him and explained. "I've hated niggers all my life. I grew up in Vermont, which was pretty much nigger-free, but when I was in my teens, I moved down to Alabama and discovered what they were all about. But instead of just being frustrated, I found ways to fuck with them. And the number one way, easier than anything else, is to spike liquor and soft drinks with poison and methanol and stuff like that. It's actually pretty easy! A toothpick is all you need to open most bottles without breaking the "tamper-proof" seal. Getting poison is easy, too. Use your trucker's handbook to find the UN or NA number for cyanide or methanol or whatever, and ask the driver for a sample! I'm nearly 40 with a body like a teenager! They never say no!"

Doc moved closer to Doreen and taking a chance, kissed her lightly on the lips.

"Dammit girl! I think I'm gonna love driving teams with you!"

Los Angeles Bound

chapter 8

Doc started driving, rolling westbound on Interstate 10 in New Mexico. Foxy was in the sleeper, still arranging her things, because at the moment there was too much stuff on the bottom bunk for anyone to stretch out, and the upper bunk was uncomfortable to sleep in while bouncing down the highway. While technically she was in the sleeper getting some rest, the reality of life on the road made it nearly impossible for a team to be truthful on the logbook all the time.

He found himself thinking more and more about the woman that had so totally taken over his life in the short span of a day and a half. She was open to the idea of Identity, she was racially aware, conscious of the decline and possible downfall of white civilization because of interbreeding. And when she bragged that she had a body like a teenager, it was no idle boast. The things she did to a pair of tight jeans were amazing. She truly was the kind of woman that would cause a grown man to make a fool out of himself!

Doc was lost in his thoughts when a soft touch on his right shoulder made him jump.

Doreen laughed. "Whassa matter ole' man? You forget that you've got company?" She held out a cup for him.

"I fired up my 12 volt coffeemaker and brewed us something to drink. My favourite, dark roast coffee with a few drops of concentrated flavour." She handed him the cup and kissed him on the cheek. "Gotta keep you rolling westbound, so that we'll be close to California when we trade out."

"Thankee ma'am, I do appreciate it! Better jump back into the sleeper, dear heart. Coming up on the New Mexico scale house. They always make you stop and show your card." Doc reached over and turned on his CB radio. The front panel lit up, the numbers "27.185.0" shining brightly even in the midday glare of the sun.

"What's that?" Foxy was sitting in the sleeper, the heavy curtains pulled around her face, but she was intrigued by the CB radio.

"Galaxy 93-tee", he explained. "Over to the right, you can see the usual CB channel numbers, 1 through 40, but in the middle of the front is an LED readout with the actual frequency on it. This radio has lots of channels that your usual CB doesn't have, and more modes, too. The usual CB is what they call "AM". It's like the AM on your car radio, with lots of static and all. This one will talk and listen on FM, SSB and even do Morse code. Lots more power than the usual CB, too. Instead of 4 watts, it puts out close to 50."

He went on. "It's got a lot of useless junk that most people never use, but I like to hang out on what people call the "freeband". 27.555.0 on the upper sideband, depending on how the sunspots are running, you can talk all day from one coast to the other, and you get to know people. Out in Phoenix there are a lot of people on freeband, as well as back on the east coast, Florida, New England, all over the place!"

At this point, they were rolling slowly through the New Mexico port of entry station, so they stopped talking and paid attention to the red and green lights. Doc pulled forward when it was his turn, and handed the officer his New Mexico cab card, his IFTA vehicle registration and proof of insurance. The officer was satisfied, and waved the red truck forward with a cheerful "Have a nice day, sir!"

Doc, wanting to show Foxy the radio, keyed up on channel 18 and tuned the echo-reverb board that was inside the unit. He made sure that the knobs were turned just so, adding depth and resonance to his voice without garbling, and went back to channel 19, the trucker channel in every state except California.

He keyed the microphone again. "If we were to wake up tomorrow and find out that all the non-whites had suddenly disappeared off the face of the earth, can anybody tell me just ONE WAY that the rest of us would be worse off?"

Of course, the CB exploded in a rash of people cursing and threatening and saying all kinds of hateful things about white people in general and Doc in particular. He waited until the furor had died down a bit, and keyed up again. "Hey guys, I'm not trying to be a racist or a hater or anything like that! I mean, according to the scientists and the Nation of Islam, Africans were the first people on the planet! And surely, since they were here a million years before anybody ever heard of a white boy, it seems to me like they would have something to offer, something they do that we can't live without! After all, they DID have a million year head start on the rest of us!"

More cursing and carrying on. Doc waited a minute and

continued. "Guys, I mean, seriously, what do Africans do for us that we can't do without? Basketball? Graffiti? Jazz? Dancing? Rap? Dope dealing? Pimping? New designs for 30 inch spinner wheels? Trash pickup? Factory workers who hide their mistakes and turn out substandard products? Whole countries where the population is starving to death and flirting with the stone age? Whole countries where condoms are available for free, but the population is 50% HIV positive? Trying to talk but skipping over half the letters in the word? Any 2 year old white child or Frenchman can do that!!! All in all, I can think of a LOT of things that Africans do to this country, but to save my life, I can't think of ONE THING that Africans do that we can't live without!"

When Doc unkeyed, a black voice came back over the air, asking about his assertion that whole countries were 50% HIV positive.

Doc gave him the facts. "Over in Africa, there used to be a British colony called Rhodesia. About 300,000 of the hated white man and maybe 10 million Africans. Back in 1980, I believe, the whites gave up the hassle and turned things over to Robert Mugabe, and immediately, the country went to hell in a handbasket! Once upon a time, under the rule of the HATED white man, an African lived to be 70. Now, after 28 years of FREEDOM from the hated white man, the average African dies when he is 30-something! HIV infection rate close to 50 percent! Childhood diseases that we cure with a little shot, whole villages are dying from! And that's not some Klan propoganda. That's straight from the United Nations web page!"

He went on without stopping. "A thing I saw on

television a while back got to me. It seems there was this tribe of Africans in Rwanda, in terrible shape! Starving to death, dying of diseases, pitiful situation, one tribe on the run from the other. But after the film crew got through making their documentary of the so-called human Africans, they walked into the woods and found a band of gorillas. Gorillas were there in the woods, a mile or two from the "human" village, fat and happy, their babies fat and happy and playing around in the woods like they didn't have a care in the world! Now you tell me, what can you say when, in a space of a few miles, you have so-called humans starving to death, and gorillas living large, fat and happy and doing good?"

The black voice came back again. "You talk a lot of shit, but you don't know anything about Africa. Have you ever been to Africa? Have you ever seen a gorilla in the wild? No, you haven't. You just talking some shit that some racist hater TOLD you to say!"

Doc was getting wound up now, and was pleased to see that Doreen was eager to see the conversation through to a conclusion. Her hand on his shoulder, he keyed up again.

"Okay, you've got me there. I've never seen Africa. But you know what? I've seen Chicago. Gary, Indiana. Lake Station, Indiana. Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn, Elizabeth, New Jersey! Indianapolis. Cincinnati. Toledo. Louisville. Nashville. New Orleans, down along Tchopitoulas, on the waterfront. Atlanta. Houston. Memphis. You name it. You know, as a fellow truck driver, that ONE HUNDRED PERCENT OF THE TIME, if you open your eyes and find yourself in a majority white area, you can park your truck and sleep with the windows down and the doors unlocked! For

instance, Dysart's truck stop in Bangor, Maine! But I'll tell you this, black or white or hispanic or whatever you are, you don't have the BALLS to sleep with your truck unlocked in Gary, Indiana or the southside of Indianapolis or downtown Bronx or any other majority non-white area!!!"

"And something else! In China, Japan and lots of other places around the world, they aren't forced to hire non-whites and put them on the assembly line! And guess what? In the countries that aren't forced to hire Africans, the assembly lines turn out GOOD STUFF! Only here, in the USA, where we're forced to hire non-whites, are the factories a joke, going out of business because the quality just isn't there! China, Japan, Indonesia, Mexico, their factories and economies are going strong, but here in the highly-integrated USA, our big 3, the car companies, are on the edge of going under! And I believe it's because they are forced to hire non-whites!"

Doc unkeyed his microphone but didn't get an immediate response. He knew he was on a roll and pressed his advantage.

"Come on, driver, don't wimp out on me, bro! Surely you can tell me of just ONE PLACE in the USA where the neighborhood used to be majority non-white, and once the whites started moving in, the neighborhood went to hell on a greasy slide-board! Surely you can tell me of a place in the USA where it used to be majority white, and the crime level went DOWN when it got to be "salt-and-pepper"!!!! Hey, a better example, El Paso! Last night I spent the night in El Paso, surrounded by non-whites, and if you're headed west, you probably did too! Did you sleep with your cab unlocked? Did you roll down your windows and enjoy the cool air? Did

you get out beside your truck and fire up the grill? Did you see any drivers break out their guitars and quietly strum a few chords in the darkness? Did you see any drivers pile up some pallets in the back of the parking lot and have a bonfire and a keg party? NO, YOU DID NOT! And you never will, not in El Paso or Laredo or Houston or Tucson, because they're all majority non-white, and because of the crime that ALWAYS takes place in a non-white area, you couldn't! You have to lock your doors and hide in your sleeper and watch television!!!"

This time, a white female voice, literally shaking with rage, came back across the CB. "You fuckin FOOL, I am so ashamed to be the same race as you! You're nothing but a hater, a stupid, ignorant redneck loser bastard who never amounted to anything, so you've got to find somebody to blame for your own lack of initiative and drive! You make me SICK, you backwoods, having-sex-with-your-sister MORON!"

Doc laughed, sincerely, because he knew the attack very well. At one time, he would have been bothered by such a tirade, but over the years, he had gotten more confident of his facts, and considerably more thick-skinned.

"Lady, I hate it that you are ashamed of me, but hey, it's okay! I'm ashamed of you, too, but in a different way! I mean, you know in your heart that we can't park in lots of places, because the non-whites will cut into our trailers during the night and steal our cargo! You know very well, being a woman, you can't get out of your truck and walk up to the building without getting harrassed and possibly attacked by the non-whites in the truckstop! YOU KNOW THIS! But you, for some reason, can't or won't see it! It brings to mind

the verse in the Bible, where in the last days, a great delusion is going to come onto the people, so that they would believe a LIE! And to answer your other question, yes, I do have a lot of HATE in my heart! When I hear about young white kids who can't go outside and play in the neighborhood, so they stay indoors and break out the video games and get fat, 10 years old and 200 pounds, I HATE THAT! I remember when I was a kid, nearly 50 years ago, and I remember playing outdoors with the other kids in the neighborhood, but nowadays, you can't let your kids out of the house because the neighborhood is full of wild ANIMALS!"

Doc took a breather, but the woman didn't reply. Doc was fired up by now, so he decided to push his luck a little.

"You know, it's not popular these days, but I'm what you might call a history nut! And one of my favourite subjects is Germany, back in the early part of the 1900's. You see, Germany back then was a lot like we are here in the USA today! They had a bunch of people living in Germany who didn't produce anything. They had a lot of people living there whose loyalty was not to the German homeland and native people! There were a lot of people in Germany who didn't share in the morality and values that the average German working man had inherited from his grandparents!"

Doc went on. "Well, you might not like to hear this, but after a while, the people who didn't belong in Germany, the people who weren't loyal to the nation and the people, they started living like parasites, like fleas and ticks on a dog's ear! They didn't produce, but they consumed! Parasites! And when the economy went to hell in the late 1920's, these parasites were living high on the hog, while the native

Germans were losing everything they had worked for!!! These parasites got into banking and finance, and INTENTIONALLY collapsed the German economy, and once folks couldn't pay their mortgages, they foreclosed on everything, left and right!!!"

"Well, after a while, there was this little short fellow with a stubby moustache, a vegetarian who never weighed over 150 pounds in his life, who stood up and declared that he was sick and tired of the parasites living better than the producers! And 50 million Germans stood up with him, and next thing you know, the parasites were rounded up and put in work camps, fed nothing but bread and water, and the average German had absolutely no mercy on them!"

"What does this have to do with America? It has EVERYTHING to do with America! Right here in the USA, those same people have gotten control of our banking system, and right now, they're collapsing the economy so they can foreclose on all the real property! Right here in the USA, look in the front of your Federal income tax booklet, if you add up all the parasite programs, you'll find that roughly 65% of the US budget goes to people, paying them so they can live without working! The war, the space shuttle, the politicians' pay, the foreign aid, the roadbuilding, the money they give to the queers so they can dip a Crucifix in a jar of urine, all that comes from the 35% that the parasites don't get!!!"

"And in my way of thinking, I believe we need a little HOUSECLEANING here in the USA! We are a great nation, a great people, the best in the world, but we're like a good dog that is down with the fleas and ticks and heartworms!!!"

"I believe we need a HOUSECLEANING, like they had in

Germany in the 1930's and 40's! Back then, they called the parasites "useless eaters". Nowadays they call them "underprivileged". But whatever you call them, they're like fleas and ticks, hanging fat on the side of your dog, and it's time we gave this nation a flea dip!!!" Doc finished up in a loud tone of voice, as though concluding a political rally.

Doreen was laughing merrily from the sleeper, obviously enjoying Doc's rabble-rousing. "You go, boy! Woohooo!"

Off in the distance, Doc heard a reply that he liked. "Hey, driver, when you get these work camps up and running, give me a call! I don't know anything about gas chambers or ovens, but I'll sure as hell drive the trucks to deliver them to the camp!"

Doc had to give it one more volley before he stopped. "Driver, this is the USA, and we've had half a century to improve the system with some good ole' American know-how!!! Nowadays, the dog pound has these vacuum chambers, put a dog or cat in there and slowly suck the air out of the room, and the unwanted pet just goes to sleep, no suffering and no torture! I believe we could build these vacuum chambers bigger, a whole lot bigger! We could put big trap doors on the bottom, so they'd dump right into an open-top trailer! And ovens aren't efficient! In every state of the Union AND the Confederacy, there are these protein recycling plants that take the chicken parts, the cow parts and the other animal parts that don't go to the grocery store, and they cook them down. They make protein powder and liquid fat out of them! They make SOMETHING USEFUL AND VALUABLE out of them!"

"Imagine that! The parasites, the useless eaters, after

we cook them down, for the first time in their miserable lives, they're USEFUL and VALUABLE!!! The liquid fat can be added to diesel fuel. The protein powder can be used in animal food and as fertilizer! I have a DREAM! I have a DREAM! Someday the useless eaters, the parasites, can actually be USEFUL AND VALUABLE!!!"

A voice came back, laughing so hard that he was hard to understand. "Driver, I agree with you 100%, but the last fellow that used that "I have a dream" speech wound up with half his gorilla face shot off, down in Memphis!!!"

Somebody else keyed up. "Driver, if you ever run for office, I hope it's in my area, because I'll vote for you in a heartbeat!" Another put in, "Your idea about the vacuum chambers and protein powder, that tells me you've put a lot of thought into this! I hope to hell you don't ever get into power!" And another chimed in, "Driver, you don't pay any attention to them people! You keep on preaching, brother, because I've enjoyed your little talk more than I've enjoyed anything on this CB radio in YEARS!!!"

A black voice came across the radio. "I still say he's nothing but a hater. He needs to invite the Lord into his heart and forget about all this HATRED. And his folks should burn in Hell for having taught him all this mess!"

Doc couldn't resist. "Noooooo, you have me all wrong! First off, my folks were all in favor of the Heinz 57 mixing and mingling! I learned to feel this way from having to go to an integrated school! I'm not a hater, not really! I mean, yes, I do hate what is being done to my people, but if you and your people want to go back to your home continent and live to be 100 and live in cities of pure gold, I won't hold it against you at

all! Read it in your grandma's Bible! Deuteronomy chapter 7 and chapter 14. God commanded His people to keep separated from the other people of the world! I don't hate that you exist! I hate what you're doing to my people! There IS a difference, and Praise The Lord, people seem to be waking up and listening! Back in the 90's, if I talked like this, I'd get cussed and threatened, but now, here in 2008, the majority of people key up and tell me I'm on the right track! This isn't about HATE, driver! It's about the survival of a people, a nation, a race of human beings who have a right to their unique way of life!!!"

The black voice came back, with a subdued tone. "Well, at least I have to give you one thing. You've talked for the better part of an hour, and you haven't used the "N" word even once. I don't know whether that's good, or just plain scary, but I have to applaud you for that one thing!"

With that, Doc was satisfied with himself, having put on a good show for his new co-driver, so he reached up and turned the CB off. Foxy stuck her head out of the sleeper, asked for his cup, and brought him a fresh cup of coffee.

"You making any progress back there? If you want to move things around, feel free! I never really had a plan for things in the cubbyholes. I just stuffed things where they fit the easiest!" Doreen walked up front and stood by the driver's seat, and Doc put his right arm around her hips, his thumb hooking into a belt loop.

"Do you plan on getting fuel in Eloy, Arizona?" the woman asked. "They have a nice restaurant, and the fuel is cheap. Might even get a shower. I figure we could trade out there, and I could drive for a while and let you get some rest."

Doc did the math out loud. "200 miles from Eloy to the California line, and then maybe another 200 miles over to the place where we're gonna unload. You sure you don't want me to drive further, say over to Phoenix or maybe even Quartzsite, on the line? There's a good place to stop there, at exit 4 or 7 or something like that, I believe."

The woman put her arm around his shoulders and hugged him gently. "No, it's okay, by the time we get there it will be dark, and I do my best driving after sunset. If you'll fire up your computer and get me the directions to Cal-tile in L.A., I'll take us on in. At least to Ontario, to the truckstops right there where I-15 comes in to the I-10."

Doc unhooked his thumb and gently patted her on her nicely rounded rear, and went back to his driving. He stopped for a minute just east of Tucson, at the Triple-T truckstop, because of their clean restrooms. After they got rolling again, they drove slowly through Tucson, making sure not to break the 55 mph speed limit. Then they rolled westbound again, stopping for an hour at Eloy, putting on more fuel, and Foxy got a quick shower while Doc took care of a bad tire on the trailer.

When they got back into the truck, Foxy climbed behind the wheel and headed down the highway toward California. Doc got into the lower bunk and felt around in the nearest cubbyhole until he found his bottle of melatonin. He swallowed one of the semi-sweet tablets, and before long, was sleeping peacefully as his co-driver piloted them through the desert.

Foxy took them across the California line, catching the Blythe scales when they were closed. She drove on through

the night until they came to the big inspection station at Banning, but since her logbook was in order and the bills of lading were for non-agricultural products, they waved her on through the bypass lane.

She drove westward, and a couple hours before daylight, came to the truckstops across the highway from the Ontario Mills shopping mall. She drove into the parking lot after getting a ticket from the gate guard. She found an open space near the back of the parking lot, and once she had pulled the brakes and turned off the headlights, she climbed into the sleeper.

She kicked off her shoes and lifted the covers, a queen sized comforter that Doc had adapted to fit the twin-sized bunk, and climbed underneath. Doc was sleeping on his left side, his face toward the front of the truck. Foxy snuggled under the comforter, facing toward him, and put an arm around his waist.

Doc stirred and sleepily smiled at her. "How far did we make it? We in L.A.?"

Foxy put her other hand under Doc's body and around his waist, and pulled him close to her. "Ontario, at the truckstop. We can't go in to the plant, according to the CB, so we've gotta wait here til daylight. And I'm not sleepy".

Doc had been divorced for the better part of fifteen years, but he wasn't so far out of touch with women that he couldn't take a hint. His lips met hers in the darkness, and before long their hearts were beating faster and their breath was coming in quick gasps, during the few moments when their lips weren't moulded together.

Doc, feeling as though he wouldn't be pushing his luck, ran his hands up and down her back, then cupping her bottomside, gently kneading the muscular curves with his fingertips. He then brought his hands up her back and around the sides of her ribcage, his thumbs finding and softly caressing her already-hard nipples.

The sound of Foxy's cellphone ringtone made them both jump. The woman kissed him one more quick time and rolled over, fishing around in the cubbyhole until she located the small telephone.

"Hello? Oh, hey Cherry! How are y'all? Houston? Wow, you covered a lot of ground in my old clunker! Yeah, we made it to Los Angeles, and we were just getting some rest before we get unloaded. Still dark out here, you know. Two time zones behind you. Nooo, it's okay, you didn't wake us up!"

Doc promised himself that he would eventually find a way to remind Cherry of this moment, partly frustrated and partly amused at the same time. Women seemed to have some kind of 6th sense, an ability to rescue each other from the vile clutches of the hairy brute beast known as MAN.

Doreen went on. "Far as I know, we're gonna unload here and reload going back east. We have a regular contract with these tile people. I'm gonna ask them if they have a load going to south Florida. Nooooo, things are great! He's got a fast truck, and he doesn't snore too bad!" Doreen tickled him as she told Cherry his secrets.

"Hey, I'm glad you called! No, you call me every day, so we can get together somewhere and hang out! If they keep

you at the Alabama yard very long, we'll stop by and see y'all there, and go out to eat or something! Tell him I said hi, and Doc said tell you "dammit girl!". Catch you later!

Doreen closed the phone and turned back to her co-driver. "She's so nice, isn't she? I hope she goes to school and gets her CDL license. She is a natural for living on the road!"

Doc grumbled, playfully tickling her ribs as he ran his hands up and down her sides. "How long til we see them? Maybe a week? That should give me time to calm down, cause right now I wanna CHOKER!"

Doreen pulled him close again, and kissed him passionately, their legs and arms circling around each other, as though they could somehow get close enough that they might become one body. As Doc once again ran his hands up her sides and headed his thumbs toward her nipples, Doreen gave him one more quick peck of a kiss and pulled away, rolling her feet and legs out of the bunk.

"Come on, ole' man! It's nearly 7am central time, and I'm hungry! Let's go get some breakfast!"

Headed East

chapter nine

"I mean, think about it, this is no longer one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all! There's plenty of justice for minorities and sexual perverts and every religion EXCEPT CHRISTIANITY, of course, but what about the majority? What about the people whose forefathers suffered and bled and died by the hundreds of thousands in the never-ending fight to make this nation great among the nations of the world?"

"For the children of the people who built this nation, there is NO JUSTICE!!! NO JUSTICE!!! Right now, the only good news for the children of the founding fathers is that this nation is very likely going to split apart into several independent nations! And believe you me, at least one of those independent nations will be a homeland, defended with firearms in the hands of brave, unashamed patriots, a safe place for the descendants of the Lost 10 Tribes, the children of the forefathers, THE WHITE PEOPLE!!!"

Foxy sleepily whispered in Doc's ear. "You preaching to the unwashed masses again?"

Doc jumped. Foxy giggled at him and turned the CB off. He nearly always jumped when she came out of the sleeper and caught him in thought, or in a CB debate. He was driving down the highway in Nevada, heading northeast on Interstate 15 toward Interstate 70 that would take them through Denver. She stood between the driver's and passenger's seats and put her arms around his neck, her unrestrained breasts pressing against the side of his head.

Doc turned toward her and playfully tried to catch the nearest nipple between his teeth. "Morning beebieee! You sleep good? I got us a goodly way up, or DOWN, interstate 15. Coming from Los Angeles there is a huge downhill run, nearly 15 miles! You can see the lights of the casinos for 50

miles! Saw a fellow with his brakes on fire, even! We're about to jump off the "big road" and get fuel just north of Las Vegas." Doc checked the road ahead of him, then turned his head toward the sleepy beauty that was his co-driver, and was rewarded with a lip-locking kiss worthy of the Guinness Book of World Records.

Foxy turned and went back into the sleeper, and from the sound of things, went back to bed. Doc turned the CB back on and continued on through Vegas, past the tall buildings and the casinos and, within sight of the darkness of the "other side" of Vegas, he jumped off the big road and drove into the Petro on the northeast side.

As he was turning into the Petro, he saw a huge parking lot off to his left, thousands of Mustang automobiles sitting there on the blacktop, all of them the same white colour.

Doc keyed up his CB. "Uhhhhh, I know I'm gonna get laughed at, but guys, WHAT is this place over to my left, with all these Mustangs?"

Almost immediately the reply came back across the airwaves. "It's the place where they make those hot-rod Shelby or Cobra Mustangs! I forget which. One of them. Maybe both of them! They buy them by the trainload and bring them here, and one by one, they take them inside the bays and turn them into a race car!"

"Kool!" Doc put his microphone back in the hanger and looped around behind the building. He found the fuel islands and, since it was in the wee hours before dawn, he had his choice of places to stop. He parked in the fuel island next to the building and brought his logbook up to date. He then fished his fuel card out of the little transparent slot and went about the procedure for getting fuel.

Before getting fuel, he pulled the curtains apart and asked Foxy if she needed to go inside and hit the bathrooms. She answered with an indecipherable "ugghmph-ahohoh", so he let her sleep and climbed down the steps that were mounted on the fuel tanks.

Once he got fuel and checked the oil and bumped the tires, he went inside and signed the fuel ticket. He came back to the cab and, once he updated the logbook again, he pulled forward out of the fuel islands and headed back onto Interstate 15 northbound.

He was tempted not to turn the CB on, wanting to ride down the highway and listen to his Bible CD's, but since he was still in the metropolitan area and liable to run into local cop trouble, he turned it on. The radio waves were quiet for the most part, considering that even in Las Vegas, people need sleep between 2 and 5 in the morning.

Suddenly he heard a call that got his attention. "Hey, driver in the 'red' truck, Doc, have you got a copy on me? Hey, Doc, Doc, driver in the 'red' truck, come back to me ole' man!" The guy sounded like he was in a bad situation, life or death urgent.

Doc wasn't sure what to make of it all, but he keyed up the microphone and replied to the call. "Hey, you got the Doc in the red truck! What can I do for you?"

"Hey, Doc, there's a lady here who is about to have a panic attack, says you drove off from the fuel islands and left her behind! You have a co-driver that you can't account for?"

Doc hit the side of the highway and popped his brakes. He threw open the curtain and immediately saw that the lower bunk was empty!

"Ohhhhhh, crap! I think I'm gonna be in big trouble!" Doc unkeyed the microphone, halfway expecting to get the cussing of his life.

"It's okay, she's just glad she caught you! Loop around and come back to the Petro, she'll be at the fuel desk waiting on you!"

Doc thanked his fellow trucker and for the next ten minutes, as he hit the next exit, made a u-turn and came back to the truckstop, endured good natured ribbing from 20 drivers, all of them telling him that he wasn't going to get any more nookie for the next MONTH!!! They also warned him that his co-driver was gonna kick his butt all the way to the east coast!!!

Once he got back to the Petro and collected his co-driver, he got back on the Interstate and headed north. Foxy was so distraught that she couldn't sleep, so she sat up front with him and talked him through the grey of dawn, that time between 4 and 5 when it's hard to stay awake. She wasn't mad at him for leaving her. After all, she hadn't told him she was getting out of the truck.

Doc came up with an idea. "What say, from now on, before we start rolling again, we check the floor for shoes? We always take our shoes off before we climb into the bunk. If shoes are there, it means one of us is in the sleeper. But if the shoes are gone, it means we've gone inside the building. Think that would work?"

Foxy held out her hand and Doc met her in a bouncy high-five. They held the grip for several seconds, and when they released it, their hands fell down together and they hooked little fingers together for another minute or two.

They were heading northeast on I-15. Before long they

crossed the state line into Utah. As the daylight came on, they were awestruck at the scenery, hundreds of miles of wind-carved rock that stretched out in every direction. After several hours of new vistas, the breathtaking beauty still hadn't lost its appeal. Eventually they crossed into Colorado and when they got to the intersection of I-70, they headed east toward Vail and Denver.

Doc had travelled that route several times in the past, but Foxy hadn't been that way, so they traded places from time to time so they could both get the full impact of the scenery of the Rocky Mountains. They were both speechless as they rolled from the flatlands into the first canyon. The roadway was winding, with rocky cliffs on both sides that stretched up into dizzying heights. Later, they found themselves driving along the highway that ran next to the Colorado river. As they continued east, suddenly the river took a turn and disappeared into the face of the canyon! They looked at each other, wondering out loud if that was natural, or something the Corps of Engineers had blasted in the wall of solid rock. And a mile or two up the road, the river came back out of the rock face again, and continued on beside the roadway. They saw people coming down ski slopes, people dressed up in brightly coloured parkas and lots of beautiful homes perched impossibly on the side of unreachable mountains.

Foxy, suddenly remembering something from the night before, asked Doc about his idea that the USA was liable to split up into several independent nations.

"You really think that's gonna happen? And if so, what part of the country will be the white part? What will be the other parts? Hispanic? Niggers? How do you figure the parts will be divided?"

Doc reached over the sun visor, into a cubbyhole that

was walled in by a little elastic net. He fished around for a moment, and pulled out a piece of paper, folded into a small square. He offered it to her.

"This is something I printed out a long time ago", he told her as she started reading.

When a State is composed of a homogeneous population, the natural inertia of such a population will hold the State together and maintain its existence through astonishingly long periods of misgovernment and maladministration. It may often seem as if the principle of life had died out in such a body-politic; but a time comes when the apparent corpse rises up and displays before the world an astonishing manifestation of its indestructible vitality.

But the situation is utterly different in a country where the population is not homogeneous, where there is no bond of common blood but only that of one ruling hand. Should the ruling hand show signs of weakness in such a State the result will not be to cause a kind of hibernation of the State but rather to awaken the individualist instincts which are slumbering in the ethnological groups. These instincts do not make themselves felt as long as these groups are dominated by a strong central will-to-govern.

The danger which exists in these slumbering separatist instincts can be rendered more or less innocuous only through centuries of common education, common traditions and common interests.

The younger such States are, the more their existence will depend on the ability and strength of the central government. If their foundation was due only to the work of a strong personality or a leader who is a man of genius, in many cases they will break up as soon as the founder disappears; because, though great, he stood alone.

But even after centuries of a common education and experiences these separatist instincts I have spoken of are not always completely overcome. They may be only dormant and may suddenly awaken when the central government shows weakness and the force of a common education as well as the prestige of a common tradition prove unable to withstand the vital energies of separatist nationalities forging ahead towards the shaping of their own individual existence.

Once she was finished reading it, she looked at him with fascination showing in her face.

"You write this? It kinda reminds me of some of the things I've heard you say on the CB, especially when you get really worked up!"

Doc laughed. "No, not me. It's actually a quote from Mein Kampf, I believe. I didn't actually cut and paste it, but the fellow I got it from said he had found it there. I traded him a copy of "Soldiers of God" for it. But regardless of where it came from, it makes a lot of sense. The races can be forced to live together with people they don't have anything in common with, but sooner or later, just like oil and water, they will pull apart and go their separate ways. And if we don't have a strong central leader that the majority of folks can look to, they'll look to their own individual leaders."

"As for the independent countries, I figure south Florida will be a crazy place, half jew and half cuban with a smattering of Whites. The southeast will probably be a separate area. There are a few good people down there, but most of the old Confederacy is a mixed-race paradise these days. Texas is an interesting place. The whites and the hispanics aren't the best of friends, but they agree that Texas should be an independent nation again and they BOTH hate what the niggers are doing to their state. The southwest, New Mexico, Arizona and southern California, they'll probably connect. Wouldn't be surprised if they rejoin Mexico. Then you have northern California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and maybe Utah or Nevada. Lotta white folks up there who are interested in breaking away from the east coast government. Minnesota and Wisconsin and south, maybe Iowa and Kansas and Missouri and Colorado, they're kinda live and let live. They won't be on our side, but they won't side with the Jews and niggers, either. The folks in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, Pennsylvania and maybe Upstate New York, good union people accustomed to factory work, they'll stick together, and they're beginning to see the truth about what the niggers have done

to this country and our industrial base. Then you have the Northeast, New England. They'll have their own area. Last but not least, you'll have the east coast, Jersey down to Virginia, they're starting to wake up too, but they're not as close to seeing the truth as the industrial states."

Doc took a breath. "Any of that make any sense?" He laughed at himself. "I get started and sometimes don't know when to quit. I'm partly serious about that stuff, and partly dreaming. But still, I could see some benefits for white people, if the country was split up. Right now, forcing us to live by rules that basically don't apply to our people, it makes life aggravating. I mean, some people need to have the big boss man standing over them 24/7, but our people, we can follow the rules even when we're all alone, just because it's the right thing to do."

Foxy lifted her hand like a kid in school. "Please sir, a question."

Doc pointed at her. "Yes, you there, little girl in the front of the class."

"Little girl?" Foxy lifted the front of her shirt, quickly flashing him, and they both laughed for a moment. "Seriously, I know what you're saying! It seems like the other races, except maybe for some of the higher Asian races, have to be forced at gunpoint to live by the most basic rules. I've seen it with my own eyes. Back when I was in school in Vermont, little things like breaking in line or cheating on a test or talking or chewing gum or passing notes, white kids did it, but they felt guilty about doing it. The niggers and Mexicans didn't have any shame about it at all!"

"Well, the Asians are forced to live by the rules by their families." Doc paused and puffed on an imaginary pipe. "Strong traditions and high expectations. If they break the

rules, their families will pretty much disown them. And in all fairness to them, they're more likely to obey the rules on their own than the hispanics and niggers."

Doc pointed out a spectacular mountainside view, and went on. "There are a lot of people who believe that an ancient group of Israelites settled in Japan! Certain religious ceremonies, carvings on their temples, the fact that many Japanese blush, which is a sign of feeling shame, that sort of thing, they're hard to deny. Did you know that non-whites, just like animals, don't feel shame when they do something wrong?"

Foxy went on with her question. "But what about mixed kids? I mean, let's say a white - black mix. Lighter skinned than your average blue-gum nigger, and light hair, but with a good dose of kink. I wonder if those kids inherit any of their white parent's shame at breaking the law?"

Doc didn't know. "I've read a lot of stuff, but can't say that I've ever read a study along those lines. Who knows? I know the Bible said that an Israelite who intermarried with a non-Israelite, their children would be "mamzerim". And until TEN generations had passed, their children would not be acceptable in the assembly of the Lord." When Foxy jumped in the sleeper to get her Bible to look it up, he referred her to his Strong's Exhaustive Concordance in the top bunk.

Once she had the giant hard-bound book in her lap, he went on. "Look up the word "bastard". It's unfortunate, but in the King James, the translators saw "mamzer" and mistranslated it as "bastard". And that has led to a lot of people believing that any child born of unwed parents was condemned to hell."

"Me, personally, I don't believe it. If you look up the original words and find their meanings in ancient Hebrew,

you'll find that there are a lot of places where the translators could have been more exact. For instance, "mamzer" actually refers to a child born of a forbidden marriage! Not a child of unmarried parents! But then again, I've been told that England had its own form of political correctness back then. Some King from around 1300, Edward the First I think, maybe Longshanks from the movie Braveheart, kicked the Jews out of the country, and about the time the KJV was being translated, another King let them back in. So there was bound to be some meddling."

Foxy was reading, but she looked up and interjected, "So, you don't trust the KJV?"

Doc was quick with a reply. "Yes, I do trust the King James, but only after I've had a chance to double check the translations. I prefer the Geneva Bible, an earlier complete translation of the Bible into English. It came out seventy-five years before the King James. The grammar and spelling make it hard to read, but I can muddle through pretty well. And by the way, it's available online for free! I've got one in the sleeper, buried under all those other things. I'll dig it out for you sometime."

Foxy was still looking through the Concordance. When she found the word "bastard" she read the explanation several times, silently and out loud. She seemed quiet, as though lost in thought, so Doc didn't press the issue. The subject turned to different things, and before long they were idly chatting about the scenery, the other trucks on the road, whatever came up.

After trading places several times, they made it through the Rocky Mountains and began the descent into Denver. They passed the sign for Arvada and shortly afterward the road got a lot straighter. They stopped for fuel at the truckstop just east of town, and after a quick shower and a

few minutes relaxing in the restaurant, they were on their way again.

Their load was toys destined for Kansas City. Dispatch had promised to get them back south as soon as possible, because there was a cold front coming down from central Canada. Judging from the satellite pictures Doc was downloading from the Internet, it didn't look good. Besides, since Foxy was still a relatively new driver, he preferred to stay on Interstate 10.

After bringing their logbooks up to date, Doc started driving, heading along Interstate 70, eastbound out of Denver. Foxy had climbed into the sleeper, hoping to get some sleep so she could take them across Kansas. They were making good time, and since the load was a drop-and-hook, they didn't have to arrive at any particular time.

As Doc drove along, approaching the airport that was built over the Interstate, he noticed a white SUV behind him. Not knowing if it was the cops, he checked his speed and lane usage, and once he was sure he was in the right, he ignored it.

Before long, the SUV was alongside him, the windows so dark that he couldn't see anything inside. It didn't speed up and pass, but rather, held its place as they drove down the highway. And later on, Doc noticed that the vehicle was behind him again!

Not being in the mood for such games, Doc took the exit ramp for a Colorado rest area. He drove around to the truck parking area, and sure enough, the SUV followed him.

"Well, hell!" Doc wasn't worried about any kind of inspection, since his truck and trailer were in good condition, and their paperwork was perfect. Still, any contact with law

enforcement had the potential to go wrong, so he wasn't delighted about the idea.

Once Doc got his truck parked, the SUV pulled alongside his cab and stopped. Doc pulled out his brakes, idly wondering if the sudden release of air would get him shot, but it was too late by the time the thought occurred to him. He drew a line and showed himself stopping at the rest area, and waited.

The door of the SUV opened, and a middle aged white man, tall and fit, got out and put his hat on. The man was wearing a uniform of some kind, but wasn't carrying a weapon that Doc could see. He walked around to Doc's window, which Doc had already rolled down.

The officer spoke first. "Mr. Marlin, mind if we chat for a minute or two?" His demeanor was cheerful, and he had a smile on his face.

Doc couldn't have been more surprised if the man had gotten out naked! "Uhhh, sure, I guess so. Wanna climb up here? Or in your truck?"

The officer smiled again. "Oh, in my truck. Already got the heater going!"

Doc climbed down and closed his door. He locked it from the outside, and while the officer was on the other side of the SUV, pushed his little keychain down inside his underwear. If the officer wanted into the truck, he was going to have to call a locksmith or talk Foxy into opening it from the inside!

The officer got right to the point. "Mr. Marlin, I imagine that you're pretty shocked that I called you by name." When Doc nodded cautiously, the man laughed. "I'm Bill. Just call

me Bill. Homeland Security."

Doc shook the man's hand and they exchanged pleasantries.

"Erik, I owe you an explanation. You see, I am one of the guys that monitor domestic terrorism. But we're not the kind that try to infiltrate the Klan or Aryan Nations or Pastor Peters or any of that stuff. Those guys are entry-level. My team and others like us are constantly on the lookout for the lone wolf, the one man whose ideals and sense of patriotism fire him up to resist the things that he believes are destroying America."

Doc nodded slowly, a quiet "um-hum" coming from his throat, but he didn't offer any comment.

Bill continued. "Erik, you know how the trucking industry works. Every load has to go through a broker. Company in New York wants to ship a load of whiskey to California, they call a broker, broker calls a trucking company, trucking company sends the load out to a driver who picks it up and delivers it. All computerized. And somewhere, down deep in a basement or under a mountain or where-ever, there is a computer that stores all this stuff more or less forever."

Doc nodded again. "I have a computer, and understand a little about how everything is interconnected these days. Trucking companies, brokerage houses, Department of Transportation records, the box on the windshield that pays your tolls, even the little unit that lets you skip the scale houses, they're all tied in together and, if you know the password, you can see it all."

Doc smiled as the officer nodded in agreement. "I understand all of that, but what does that have to do with me? I've been a driver for close to 20 years, and while I used to run

wild and crazy, nowadays I run like grandma. I kept a legal logbook even before I started running teams!"

Bill grinned. "Oh, by the way, speaking of teams, how is Doreen? She enjoying the open road?"

Doc looked the man in the eyes, trying to seem stern, but then grinned again. "Okay, you can tell me when I last changed underwear. I accept that. So tell me, Bill, HOW does this all tie back to me?"

Bill took a deep breath. "Erik, what I am about to tell you is MOST confidential, okay? I know you had a Top Secret plus codeword clearance when you were in the service. This is something along those lines. Do I have your word that you will keep this between us?"

Doc was beginning to get interested. "I have my differences with the government, but I am 101% loyal to the American people. You have my word." He figured Bill had a tape recorder or one of those little digital things hidden in the SUV, so he answered truthfully.

Bill took another deep breath and began to talk. "A few weeks ago, I pulled a guy over not far from Denver, thinking he was possibly an illegal. After talking with him for a few minutes, I was convinced he was middle eastern, not hispanic. He had an ID and looked hispanic, but somehow his accent didn't jibe. Gut feeling I guess. I searched his vehicle and found this."

At this point Bill reached into the back seat and pulled something out of a box. It was a rectangular styrofoam container, roughly the size of a box of salt, clearly divided into top and bottom halves. Doc, with Bills permission, divided the two parts and saw a glass bulb, hand-blown, judging from the flaws, about 3/4 full of an extremely fine off-white powder.

"Erik, I took this to the lab, and the guys there had a shit-fit! They ran tests on it, and positively identified it as a weaponized biological agent. They wouldn't tell me exactly what it is, but the guy told me off-the-record, that it was MAJOR. He told me that the lethality runs better than 90%. And, during the time that the victims have symptoms, it is highly contagious. One person in the family gets it, they all come down with it. You catch it and go to the hospital, and the whole hospital comes down with it!"

"And the crazy thing is, the toxin seems to be "cut" with some form of cocaine! Of course, we couldn't find anybody who would test it, but the lab tests definitely came back showing chemicals that indicate coca derivatives. Who knows? Might have been intended for drug users. While they're getting high, they also get infected!"

Bill poured himself a cup of coffee from his giant stainless thermos, and offered one to Doc. "The good stuff from the bookstore!", he explained with a grin.

"Erik, this is where you come in. You see, I've been following you, strictly on the computer, for some time now. Several years ago, a crackhead turns up dead at a truckstop just south of Washington. A truckstop whore in Montgomery. A homosexual in Shepherdsville. A would-be robber in New Orleans. Just last month, a nigger goes blind from a bottle of booze in El Paso. Crew of mexicans steal a case of soft drinks in plastic bottles and half of them turn up dead. A six pack of canned beer gets stolen from a trucker's side box and two niggers dead in Birmingham."

Doc knew that his face was burning beet red, but he didn't admit to anything. He waited until Bill continued.

"Erik, nobody else would have put all this together, but I

searched through the computerized database for one common factor. And while it wasn't easy, eventually there was one name that turned up at the same time and location as when all those people got their name in the paper."

Doc, with a sudden burst of bravado, or perhaps resignation to his fate, turned to the officer and looked him in the eyes again.

"So. You can place me at all these crime scenes. And I can't prove otherwise. But I'm guessing that there is more to all this than you've told me so far. If not, there would be about 20 of your closest friends here with us, pointing guns at me."

Bill laughed cheerfully. "How do you know there aren't?" His expression got hard. "No, Erik, it's just you and me. Two patriots who hate what is happening to our country, and one of us has been doing something about it, little by little. And by God, now, the other one is going to start helping!"

Doc let the man speak his mind without interruption.

"Erik, when I pulled that guy over, I found more than one of these glass bulbs. I found a LOT of these glass bulbs. Whole damn SUV was packed with them! I turned one of them in to be analyzed, but I kept the rest. And this is where you come in. My job keeps me tied down to the Denver area, but you travel all over the US and Canada. Erik, you could, if you were willing, deliver these bulbs to cities all over, and help take our country back from the invaders!"

Doc was no mass murderer. "Bill, you tell me these things are 90% lethal. I have my gripes with this country, to be sure. High taxes and affirmative action and FBI infiltrators and niggers meeting in churches to plot against us and

robbing the space program to fund welfare and 1000 other things get me upset, but not enough to just go out and randomly kill people! What would it accomplish? Who would it benefit?"

Bill's attitude was conciliatory. "Let me explain, before you say no. I did tell you that these things are better than 90% lethal. What I didn't tell you was that they're lethal to non-whites. They're most effective against Africans, less so against hispanics, and even less against Asians. They make Caucasians so sick that they wish they could die and get it over with, but they usually survive."

"The guys at the lab think this was something made up in Russia, maybe during the cold war. Might have been South African. Who knows? Back during the 70's and 80's there was a lot of activity in Africa, with all the natural resources up for grabs. Somehow this stuff appears in Africa, but then gets transferred to the middle east and now to Denver. But the point is, it's exactly what you've been looking for, am I right?"

Doc had the look of wonder on his face that might be expected of a man who just found out that he'd won the lottery. He was partly excited that he had been offered such an incredible gift, and partly suspicious that it wasn't real, that he was being set up to take a fall.

He took a chance. "So, assuming that I say yes, where do I keep these things? Do they have to be kept at a certain temperature? Are they likely to break inside their styrofoam cases? How many do I get? How soon can I get started?"

Bill smiled, this time extending his hand and gripping Doc's with genuine passion. "You don't have to worry about them very much. Temperature isn't critical, but nothing over 100 degrees. You get the rest of this box, 23 in all. Throw

them out at busy intersections. Dry, windy days are good. Try to take advantage of prevailing winds to spread the stuff toward town. And I want you to hold off before you start throwing them out the window. After all, you're not the only driver I have to talk with."

"Son-of-a-bitch!" Doc's words slipped softly between his smiling lips. "You mean to tell me you've identified other drivers who are doing what I, uhhhh, other drivers whose location matches certain activities? Is this a great country, or what?"

Bill winked. "Not just truckers! Bikers, drifters, railroad employees, airline employees, pilots who fly small planes on overnight package routes, retirees who tool around the country in their million dollar motor homes, traveling salesmen, you wouldn't believe the half of it! I've even got this one particular dope dealer that I've got to pay a visit."

"Homeland Security almost put the stops on ALL interstate travel when they found out about this stuff making it all the way to Denver without being intercepted! And once it starts, they will definitely lock the country down. Because of that, we've gotta do this all at one time. If we get a lone-ranger who jumps the gun, none of the rest will have the chance to drop their bulbs."

They spent several more minutes discussing details such as how to disperse the bio-agents, how to take advantage of wind currents, traffic congestion and the effect of rain and snow. Once they had covered all the bases, Bill unlocked the rear door of the SUV and handed Doc the case.

Doc didn't want to put the box in the cab where Foxy might find it, but he had an aluminum toolbox that mounted to the frame behind the sleeper. He unlocked it and, with some careful re-arranging, stowed the box with the deadly glass

bulbs out of harm's way.

Bill was back in the SUV by the time Doc had finished, so after one last handshake, Doc turned toward his cab, fishing the keys out of his underwear. As he did so, he suddenly remembered something and turned back to the SUV.

"Hey, Bill, one last thing! A new wrinkle for your database. You know that queer who got killed in Shepherdsville? I was there, but it wasn't me!"

Bill laughed. "Two of you at the same place and the same time? What are the odds on that?"

Doc winked at the officer and gave him a thumbs up as the SUV headed off into the darkness.

Tough Choices

chapter ten

Doc checked the Qualcomm unit, and sure enough, the dispatcher had found them a new load out of Kansas City that would get them back down on Interstate 10. While he would have been happier with a more direct route, he was thankful to be heading south. Out of the snow and ice. While Doc wasn't at all concerned about Foxy's driving ability, he was of the opinion that new drivers needed to hone their skills, for at least a year, on dry roads.

The next load was out of Independence, Missouri, and from the chuckle in the dispatcher's voice, it was a major pain to back into the docks. She (the dispatcher) had confessed

that several drivers had turned the load down, rather than going back to that particular shipper.

Doc got on the computer and did a quick search for the address. The web page didn't give much detail, and when he clicked on the satellite view of the area, it looked like undeveloped scrubby land out on the northeast side of town.

Looking out the driver's side window, he saw in the mirror that the green light on the dock had been turned on, so he stepped out of the cab and carefully made his way across the slushy parking lot and into the receiving office, where he was given his copy of the bill of lading for 1845 cases of toys. No overage, no shortage, no damage.

Doc got the attention of the receiver and decided to try his luck. "Uhh, bossman, I've got a message telling me to drive north of town and load a bunch of electronics heading to south Florida with a stopoff in Nashville. But when I look it up online, I can't see anything. Looks like, from the satellite picture on the internet, the road just goes off into the boonies and comes to a dead end, nothing there except a big open field or something!"

The receiving manager grinned wickedly and asked Doc about the exact address. "Yup, you're going into the caves!", he said with a good-natured dose of smart-ass. "Remember the movie 'Deep Impact', where the government was gonna hide people after the comet hit? Yeah, that place! Back during the war, they were afraid the Germans or Japanese might try to bomb critical industries, so they carved these caves out of solid rock. They go for miles and miles back under there. Most drivers hate them, because they were designed for really short trailers, not the 53 footers y'all carry these days." The shipper laughed at the aw-shit look on Doc's face. "Pull your tandems all the way to the front!", he suggested.

Doc curled up the edge of his lip, like a snarling dog. "Lovely!", he mumbled, although cracking a smile at the guy behind the counter. "Oh well, I've got a trainee with me, so I guess it'll be a good learning experience!"

"Trainee? What trainee?" The voice coming from behind him didn't sound pleased. He turned just in time to see Foxy walking through the doorway, but she didn't appear to be really mad at him. Just the same, she did seem a little unhappy that he still thought of her as a trainee.

"There's a back door to this place, if you come behind the counter and take a right!" The receiver gleefully grinned at Doc, clearly enjoying his predicament.

Doc improvised. "Well, actually I didn't want everybody and their brother going out to my truck and trying to get a glimpse of my girlfriend! So I said "trainee", and I was gonna hint that you were a dude! See?" At this point Doc put his arms around Foxy and twirled her around the room, easily lifting her off the floor.

"Nice save!" Foxy murmured as she reached up and gave Doc a quick peck on the lips. "But put me down, before I mess up this man's nice clean floor!"

Without any further explanations, Foxy scurried off toward the ladies' room and disappeared behind the door. Doc got some more directions from the receiving clerk, and once his co-driver was ready, they went back to the truck and got ready to head toward Independence.

Doc gave the driver's seat to Foxy, and when she pulled forward, he closed the doors and locked them. He then did a quick walk-around of the truck while she brought her logbook up to date and showed herself as driving. They then drove

around the parking lot, gave their unload slip to the gate guard, and headed east through Kansas City on I-70.

Once they crossed into Missouri, they headed north toward St. Joseph, and jumped off at an exit just north of town. They headed east again, and before long found themselves on a winding road that brought them to a large sign with directions for truckers wishing to get loaded. They got on the CB radio and, after a few minutes of hurry-up-and-wait, they found themselves heading into the caves with directions to drive straight, then turn to the right at a certain junction, and their shipper would be on the left.

Doc had been inside the caves before, on the Kansas side, but he didn't figure the Missouri caves would be much different. Foxy, on the other hand, had never been in any sort of a cave at all, and was fascinated. She stopped at every intersection and looked down the seemingly endless tunnels, breathlessly admiring the columns that held up the rock ceiling. They almost missed their turn, but since there wasn't any traffic, she was able to back up and jack the trailer around the tight turn and head toward their destination.

Right hand turns with a 53 foot trailer were always difficult, and in such tight confines, nearly impossible. Doc made sure to compliment her on the way she made the turn without damaging the trailer.

Once they found their place, Doc went inside and spoke with the shipper. Their load wasn't going to be ready for several hours, but they were welcome to park in the first loading area and get some sleep. Doc returned to the cab and explained everything to Foxy, at which point she excitedly grabbed his hand and squealed, "Hey, let's go exploring!"

Doc had been hoping for a chance to talk with Foxy about something that was on his mind, so he agreed. He

went inside the office and explained to the shipper that they'd be close by, and once the lady understood what they had in mind, they started walking down the cool, dimly-lit corridor.

As they walked, hand in hand, Doc brought up the subject that he had been wanting to discuss. Not willing to let her know that he already had the glass bulbs of toxin, he lied about some of the details.

"Hey, I've got a question for you. You and me, we seem to be on the same page when it comes to a lot of things, about niggers and Mexicans and the Bible and family and all that. So far, we've been a good driving team, timing our sleep and awake cycles so that the truck is always moving. And you don't have a problem with spiking stuff with poison and denatured alcohol and leaving it where it will be stolen by the parasites."

Foxy nodded as they walked along, impulsively pulling him behind a pillar and wrapping her arms and legs around him in a giant tackle-hug.

"Yeah, ain't it great? You know how long I've looked for a man like you?"

Doc gently untangled himself from her, holding her tightly until her feet had touched the rock floor of the cave.

Doc went on. "Well, you know how, one by one, we've tried to make a difference? I mean, you and me together have accounted for more than our share of the parasites and invaders. But I want to do more! I want to make a difference that we won't be able to tell our grandchildren about!"

Foxy looked at him with a curious look, but clearly interested in what he was saying.

"Hey, buster, I orta warn you about grandchildren! I'm fixed, so don't start all this talk about the pitter-patter of little feet around the sleeper!"

Doc laughed, genuinely relieved to know that there wasn't any chance of offspring. The past few days, they had stopped on more than a few occasions to work off some road-rage or pent-up passion or whatever it was called! He wasn't against the idea of children, but at his age, he was more prepared to handle grandchildren, even if they belonged to someone else! Grandchildren you could take HOME once you got tired of them!

He went on. "Seriously though. How would you feel if I told you that we could make a BIG difference. Maybe a thousand at a time, or even tens of thousands? Who knows, if we were to do this thing right, catch them the next time they have some big ooga-booga rally and do away with hundreds of thousands!"

Foxy turned sharply toward him, her jaw dropping in honest amazement. "No way in hell! What have you done, hooked up with Sheikh Osama or something?"

Doc laughed and softly ran his right hand up the left side of her face, his fingers caressing her ear and running up through her hair. "No, nothing like that. In fact, I haven't DONE anything. It's just something I saw online. I'm not even sure I could make the connection with the folks who are bringing it in. There is this stuff that makes non-whites sick. Most of them die. Whites get sick but don't die. Far as I can tell, these "zebras", being half nigger, will die too. According to the report I read, there are people trying to smuggle it into the US, up through Mexico. Call me a dreamer, but I'd like to get my hands on some of that stuff! Hell, I'd deliver it for FREE! But, so far it's just a thought. I mean, if I managed to

get hold of something that could clean out, say Birmingham or Montgomery or Atlanta, get them completely nigger free, would you think I'd sold my soul to the Devil or something?"

Foxy walked alongside him for a good minute without speaking. And when she did speak, she had a serious look in her eyes.

"Doc, you and I see life very much the same way", she began. "But there's something I haven't told you. Something I maybe should have told you before. You see, I have a sister. And she has mixed babies. I don't expect you to understand it, because you've never been a mother, but those babies, mixed though they are, are my own flesh and blood. And what you're telling me is that you'd be willing to kill my own niece and nephew. Eager, even."

Doc stopped walking and leaned against one of the pillars of rock. He looked closely at his co-driver, the woman who had so recently stolen his heart, who had gotten him to thinking about "forever" again, the woman whose thoughts on race and immigration were so much like his own that it was scary. He scanned her eyes, the set of her mouth, looking for some sign that she was pulling his leg, some clue that she was about to tickle him and yell "GOTCHA!".

No such hint was forthcoming.

"You're serious, aren't you?" Doc felt the energy drain from his heart as the woman nodded her answer. "But I don't understand. You spiked the vodka and told me to give it to the nigger. You helped me put oil of wintergreen in the soft drinks and we sat in the restaurant and laughed as we watched the Mexicans steal them off the side of the truck. You hit that Mexican over the head with the baseball bat, and damn near killed him. You helped me sell the revolver to that driver, and came up with the cover story that you'd found it in

your truck and just wanted to get rid of it fast. I don't know what to say. I thought you would be happy about all this. I thought you'd be on the computer by now, clicking buttons and trying to get in touch with the guys with the stuff!"

"I guess now you don't want to run teams with me any more." The woman, standing there in the semi-darkness of the caves, looked more like a little girl than anything else.

"No, I didn't say anything of the sort!" Doc replied quickly. "I enjoy running with you, and I enjoy your company. It had to happen, sooner or later, we'd run into something that we couldn't agree on. I'm just disappointed that it had to be this. I know it's stupid, because we probably couldn't even find the folks who are bringing this stuff into the country, but I wanted you and me to go down in history, even if our names weren't on paper, to be counted among the nameless, faceless people who helped take our country back from the invaders!"

The woman put her arms around him and pulled him close to her, the conflict evident on her face.

He kissed her and continued. "Look, it was just an idea. Besides, the chances are, if we HAD tried to find these guys with the stuff, we'd have been playing into some FBI sting or something, and we'd wind up in Guantanamo or even worse." Doc held her close and whispered into her hair. "It wasn't the brightest idea I ever had, you know that. What say let's forget about all this and go exploring some more, okay?"

Foxy brightened up at the suggestion, and for the next two hours, they walked up and down the corridors, amazed at the wide variety of businesses that made their homes in the caverns. There were food warehouses, electronics suppliers, controlled climate storage units, government offices and quite a few places that didn't have any kind of sign at all.

After getting lost twice, they finally made a giant loop and came back to the truck just as the red light on the dock came on. Foxy went inside and let the shipping lady know they were back in the truck, and Doc did some quick re-arranging in the cab.

He first removed the key to the aluminum storage box from the keyring, and hid it inside a magnetic box that he had stuck on the bottomside of the truck. He then went through the sleeper and looked for anything that might have been left over from the times when he and Foxy had spiked beer and soft drinks with oil of wintergreen. He made sure the bottle that had held the poisonous liquid was gone, and that the margarine bowl they had used to put the stuff in the drinks had been discarded as well.

Before he had completely gone through the sleeper to his satisfaction, he heard the sound of her kicking her boots against the side of the tank, shaking off the dust and dirt, so he grabbed the qualcomm unit and pretended to be sending in a request-for-directions message.

"Ain't gonna work, down here in the caves!" Foxy grinned at him as he laughingly boinked himself up side the head.

"Oh well, it'll be in the system when we get signal again." He put the keyboard back in its holder behind the passenger seat and gently pulled her into the sleeper and down on the bunk on top of him. "The woman say how long we have before we're ready to go?"

Foxy kissed him and chuckled as she ground her abdomen against his. "From the feel of things, I'd say you're ready to go right now!"

Sometime later, after they had heated water on the dual-fuel stove and caught a quick sponge-bath, they opened the laptop and searched for a WiFi signal. As luck would have it, there were several unsecured routers within range, so they connected and checked email, updated their respective homepages that they maintained for friends and family, and uploaded a few pictures they had made of the mountains west of Denver.

Doc, without letting Foxy know what he was doing, typed in a seemingly random URL and, when the page opened up, looked carefully for a blog that had been to him by the Homeland Security agent he had met in Denver. Not finding what he was looking for, he closed out the page and re-opened the browser into their favourite search engine.

Once they got loaded, they headed eastward on I-70 through St. Louis, then went south on I-57 at Mount Vernon, Illinois, and east again on I-24 near Paducah, Kentucky. They traded places frequently, enjoying the time they spent together, and since the roads were dry and free of ice, they made good time. About dark, they found themselves on the north side of Nashville, so they took the Trinity Lane exit and found themselves a good place to park at the Pilot.

Doc, of course, had to get on the CB radio, so Foxy got in the sleeper and dug out a book that Doc had given her. It was a hard-cover copy of "Soldiers of God", written by Howard Bushart. It had been written as an expose' of the semi-secret religious faith that supposedly unites the hundreds of splintered white supremacist groups into one huge, dangerous and rapidly growing power that would eventually have to be reckoned with.

There was nothing on the CB, which was most unusual for Nashville, so Doc turned off the CB and the Texas Star 500 linear amplifier, and climbed into the sleeper with his

co-driver.

He was in the mood for more snuggling, but she wasn't having any of it. She had gotten deep into one of the chapters of the book, and was clearly more interested in discussing Christian Identity than lovemaking. At least, for the moment.

Foxy propped up on one elbow and looked at Doc, who was sitting at the foot of the bunk, leaned back against the sleeper wall, enjoying a cup of good red wine.

"Okay, I've got a question. Here it says that you folks believe our forefathers were the 10 Lost Tribes of Israel, who were invaded and carried off by the Assyrians. Then our forefathers escaped and wound up in the Caucasus mountains, where we got our name, Caucasians. Then we connected with some long-lost brothers who, waaaaay back when, had migrated from Canaan or Egypt to Britain. That's what I don't get. Where in the Bible does it explain all that?"

Doc grinned. "It doesn't, not all in one place. In Genesis, the twin sons of Tamar and Judah, got a bit mixed up as they were being born. And their nurse prophesied that, since neither one was clearly born first, there would be a breach. It's a long complicated story. But, the one whose body was born first, he got to be the number-one-son. And the other one, whose hand was born first, was left sucking hind teat."

He went on. "In the Bible, the family lineage was super important. The first born son got everything, while the younger sons got little or nothing. And it was predicted that one of the sons would be on top for a while, but later on, the other son would take his place."

"So, the first son, Pharez, I believe, got to be the father

of Israelite Kings and inherited all the money and lands. The second son, Zerah, more or less disappeared from sight. And, as tradition would tell us, his family wound up in Britain. Later on, after the last of the Israelite Kings had been killed, the prophet Jeremiah took the daughters of the last King and carried them to Britain, along with the Ark of the Covenant and some other artifacts, and hooked up with the family of the long-lost brother."

"With me so far?" He laughed as Foxy made a show of pretending to snore.

"Wellll, to make a long story short, ancient Irish and Scottish traditions that go back hundreds of years B.C. speak of a prophet and his scribe, Jeremiah and Baruch, showing up in Ireland and bringing the daughter of a King who got married to the local King, a fellow called Eochaidh or something like that."

"I don't suppose the name matters as much as the tradition. Even to this day, you can order a copy of the genealogy of the Royal family which goes all the way back through the Irish and Scottish Kings and back to Israel, where the line continues back through King David and eventually to Adam, the first white man."

Foxy was still unconvinced. "I could make up something like that myself, showing that I was descended from the Queen of Sheba! What is there to make you believe that it may be true?"

Doc wasn't surprised at her question. "Sure you could. So could I. But the difference is, there are books, very ancient books from 1000 years ago and even older that tell the same story. There are traditions that go back thousands of years that say Jesus and Mary had a home in Britain. They were supposedly carried there by Joseph of Arimathea,

a wealthy man with ships constantly going back and forth to the tin mines in Britain."

"Also, there are several references to the idea that the nation of Israel was going to be divided and someday reunited. God made a promise to David that, no matter what, there would ALWAYS be, somewhere on the earth, a descendent of David sitting on the throne of Israel. Also, the word "breach". The midwife when Pharez and Zerah were born said that the one who put out his hand first had made a "breach" for himself."

"When Zerah put out his hand first, the nurse tied a red string around his wrist. However, the hand was pulled back inside, and the other baby came out first, and became the "elder brother". And to this very day, the symbolism of the "red hand" and a hand tied with a red string are important national symbols in Great Britain. And one of the ancient symbols of Ireland was the Harp of David, which is rumoured to be buried somewhere in Ireland, along with the Ark of the Covenant."

"You or I could make up a genealogy, but it would be hard, short of going back in time, to set up all the traditions that supported our claim."

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK! About this time, there came a banging on the door of the cab. They ignored it, but when the person knocked again, harder this time, Doc got up and rolled the driver's side window down a little, enough to see that there was a young girl there on the side steps, clearly freezing in the thin little shirt she was wearing.

Without asking Foxy, Doc opened the door and let the girl in the cab.

"Hey, you look like you're freezing out there! Come in

and get warmed up!" He sat back on the passenger seat and made room for her to sit behind the steering wheel.

"Thanks!", the girl chattered between her teeth. "It's freezing out there and I didn't know what else to do except knock on trucks! I hope you don't mind."

Doc shook his head. "No, no problem at all. How'd you wind up out there in the snow and ice, without a jacket?" Foxy was still in the sleeper, keeping quiet, so Doc didn't tell the girl about his co-driver.

The girl, in her early teens from the look of her, rubbed her hands in front of the heater vent. She was short, even for a girl, and blonde, with fair skin. He estimated that she was about Foxy's size, around a zero or a one. He couldn't tell the colour of her eyes in the dim light of the cab. She took a deep breath.

"I guess I'm what you'd call a runaway. I can sing, really sing, and things aren't going so well back home, so I caught a ride up to Nashville so I could maybe get a job at a local club, a place where you sing for tips and hopefully get discovered. I've been staying down near the Titans stadium in a shelter. But next thing you know, somebody stole my suitcase and then my jacket and now I'm wearing everything I own in the world!"

Doc nodded in understanding, having heard that story many times before. So very often, young women would leave home and head toward Hollywood or Nashville or Vegas or even Branson, Missouri, hoping to get a job and become a star, but they were like lambs turned loose in the midst of a pack of wolves. To be sure, some made it, but the vast majority of them wound up as prostitutes and hooked on drugs, selling their bodies to anybody carrying cash, sleeping in homeless shelters and in cardboard boxes, stepping

around the corner of a building to use the bathroom, taking baths in mud puddles and with garden hoses, eating little or nothing until they looked like someone from a German work camp.

Doc suddenly remembered his manners. "I'm Erik, but folks call me Doc on the CB radio. What's your name, so I can brag to people once you're famous?"

The girl smiled and stuck out her hand. "I'm Alissia, from a little town in south Alabama. It's about an hour south of Montgomery. You probably never heard of it."

Foxy stuck her head out of the sleeper, surprising the girl enough that a little scream escaped her still-blue lips. "I don't sound like it, because I was born in Vermont, but I'm from Luverne. You live anywhere near there?"

The girl laughed, relieved that she wasn't in trouble with a jealous wife. "Yes, actually I am! The great metropolis of Brantley!"

Foxy caught the girl by the arm and gently tugged on her. "Come on back here, it's warmer! Doc keeps the refrigeration turned on in the front, but in the sleeper I keep it COMFORTABLE!" She loudly emphasized the word and stuck out her tongue at the face Doc was making. "There's plenty of room to stretch out and get off your feet. I've made coffee, or you can have hot chocolate, and we have two beds."

Doc, being quite happy to leave the two women to their own devices, decided that he needed to step out behind the sleeper and "cool down a tire". Trucker slang for taking a leak between the truck and the trailer, in a place where nobody could see what was going on. He got out and did his business, and on an impulse, walked around behind the trailer

and checked the doors, making sure the lock was still in place. He then walked up toward the front, checking the marker lights and air hoses as he stepped through the fresh snow.

Just as he neared the sleeper, a figure stepped between Doc's truck and the one next to it, looking up into Doc's cab. Seeing Doc, the guy paused for a second, and then came further between the trucks.

"Hey, main, dat guh what be up in dat cab, she be mine, know wut I means? She be my guh, an I be feedin da bitch and all dat, an she owe me!" The nigger was clearly not the brightest light on the tree, judging from the way he talked, but Doc was cautious just the same, knowing from past experience that such types tended to be extremely street-smart.

"How much she owe you?" Doc stood his ground, making sure he didn't show any sign of shyness or fear. When the nigger fidgeted and didn't answer, he asked again, in a more commanding tone of voice. "How much does she owe you? I want her for the night. How much?"

The nigger brightened up at the idea of money, and smiled. "Main, fo you, if you keeps her wa'm all night, you be he'pin me out, know wut I means? Fi'dy dolla, dat bout wut I spent on her, fi'dy dolla."

Doc knew already that he had two twenties in his wallet, but he didn't pull them out just yet. The germ of an idea had formed in his mind, and he wanted to try his hand at it. He fished under the edge of the sleeper and found the magnetic box that held the key to the aluminum storage box. With a nod of his head, he motioned to the nigger that he was going to get something for him.

He used the key to open the box, and without letting the nigger see the contents, pulled out one of the styrofoam containers that held a glass bulb cradled against the elements. He closed and re-locked the toolbox and put the key in his pocket. He then turned to the nigger and opened the styrofoam and let him see the glass bulb, and carefully shook the powdered contents around.

"Look, I want the girl, but I don't have a lot of money on me. But you know how it is, I'm the kind of trucker who is always looking for a deal. I buy and sell stuff all the time, cb radios and tv's and computers and chains and truck parts and stuff. Well, I traded for this, out in El Paso. Guy told me it's the real deal! But it's sealed up in glass, so it don't get all wet and stuff. I want the girl, and I'll trade you this for her. All night, though. I leave out of here about 7 in the morning, and I want her til then."

The nigger brightened up as though he had suddenly been given 40 acres and a mule.

"Main, is dat wut I thinks it be??? Dat be sum good shit, real deal! Hell yeah, she be yo bitch til in da mawnin!"

Doc laughed and re-covered the bulb and handed it to the grinning nigger. Without any further discussion, the guy turned and walked back toward the motel that was built beside the Pilot, and Doc climbed back inside the cab.

Foxy met him as he sat down in the driver's seat.

"You wanna tell me what that was all about?"

Doc laughed, and for a moment, considered telling her what he had done, but decided against it. He leaned forward and kissed her lightly, and asked if he could come back into the sleeper and get warm as he explained.

Foxy stepped backward and he followed her, finding a seat down at the foot of the bunk. Alissia was seated in the middle, leaning back against the wall of the sleeper, and Foxy was seated, lotus style, at the head of the bed.

"Well, I met this guy out beside the truck", he began. When Alissia got a look of alarm on her face, he paused, but when she didn't say anything, he went on. "This guy claimed to be with Alissia, and told me I was gonna have to pay if she was gonna spend the night with me. I just happened to have a bottle of whiskey in the box, so I offered him a trade, and he took it." Doc grinned at the girl in the middle of the bunk. "So, I officially own me a teenage girl for the night!"

Alissia had a horrified look on her face at first, but once she realized that Doc was teasing her, she burst into laughter and Foxy joined her.

Foxy, when they had calmed down, looked at Doc and demanded to know the truth. "You didn't give him money, did you?"

Doc opened his wallet and showed her the two twenties that he had gotten earlier in the day, reminding her that she had been with him when he withdrew the money from the ATM. Foxy, being satisfied that he was telling the truth, sat back and sipped on her coffee.

Alissia, not quite so content, asked another question. "Did he really say that he and I are together? I mean, there is this nigger who has been offering to be my pimp, offering to take care of me if I'd "be hi' gurrh", but I won't have anything to do with him. It's not THAT cold out there!" The girl spat out the last sentence with a defiant look in her eyes that re-assured Doc of her honesty.

Doc laughed and gently took the girl's nearest hand in his own. "Yes, he did say that you were "his". But I had this bottle of booze that I can't afford to get caught with if I get inspected, and I gave it to him mainly to get rid of him." When he said "get rid", he glanced at Foxy, who smiled, out of the girl's line of sight.

Doc let go of her hand and went on. "Look, if you want to head back to Alabama, we're headed that way. We get unloaded tomorrow in Nashville, and then head on to Miami for our second drop. I know I haven't asked my co-driver here, but far as I'm concerned, you're welcome to catch a ride with us, if you're interested in heading home."

The girl's eyes teared up for a moment, clearly not wanting to spend another night in Nashville. "You don't mind?" She directed her question at Foxy, who smiled and put an arm around the girl's shoulders.

"You're most welcome to go with us. In fact, I insist on it. By the way, are you hungry? I'm about to starve, and I was about to send Doc inside to get us a sub. I'm buying!"

Alissia put her arms around Foxy and thanked her, and admitted that she was famished, but that she would like to walk with Doc and hit the ladies room.

Foxy decided to make it a party, so they all got their shoes on and grabbed jackets. Alissia took an extra coat that Foxy had stashed in the top bunk, and they headed toward the building, carefully avoiding the places that looked to be icy.

They got their food and returned to the truck and ate greedily, as though they were all on the point of starvation. After an hour of chit-chat, Foxy cleared off the top bunk and made a place for Alissia to sleep, and before long they were

all sleeping soundly.

The next morning, Doc got up and walked outside, brushing the snow off the windshield and checking everything. He made sure the fuel caps were still in place, the air lines still hooked up, and the trailer doors still locked. He briefly checked the trailer lights and hit the brakes a few times to make sure the lines were free of icing.

After asking the women if they needed to go inside the building, he got ready to head on to the receiver for their first drop. He already had the directions to the place, so he pushed in the brake buttons and carefully made his way out of the parking lot and onto the Interstate. He went up I-65 for a mile or so and jumped off the exit and turned into the warehouse. After making arrangements to be unloaded, he backed into a door and came back to the cab.

Foxy was sitting in the front, and she put her finger to her lips, apparently meaning that Doc should be quiet. He glanced toward the back, and Foxy made a motion of putting her head on her folded arms, that Alissia was asleep.

Doc leaned toward his co-driver and they whispered, their heads side by side, mouths next to ears.

"You tell the truth about the booze last night?"

"Yup. I had a bottle stashed in the back toolbox."

"It was already fixed up?"

"Yup. Something I made a while back. Used some stuff I got at the farmer's co-op. Poison that kills nematodes in peanuts. From what I've heard, that stuff is deadly. Farmers use it to kill coyotes, and then the buzzards who eat

the coyotes die too. Why, you mad at me?"

"Naaaah, I'm not mad. I'm proud of you, helping her like that. Lotta drivers would have put her out, unless she got nekkid with them."

"I'm too wore out from you to even THINK about her!"

"Flattery will get you everywhere!" She purred softly in his ear. "But why did you help her?"

"She reminds me of Cherry."

Doc sat up and spoke in a normal tone of voice. "I figure we can be in south Alabama by 2pm or so. If you want to, we can swing through Brantley and drop her off, and head on toward Miami. I don't really want to stop by the yard just yet, because I'm sure there will be ten thousand nosy questions about us driving teams. That be okay with you?"

The woman nodded her agreement and kissed him softly on the lips.

"Did I tell you how lucky I am to have such a wonderful co-driver as yourself?"

Doc grinned and kissed her back. "Yes, but I never get tired of hearing it."

Later on that night, Foxy was sleeping and Doc was driving down Interstate 10 in the panhandle of Florida. They had dropped Alissia off as they passed through Brantley. He had the CB turned off and was listening to something on his mp3 player, and was deep in thought.

He had done something he promised Bill that he would

not do. He had "jumped the gun", and had given the nigger one of the bulbs. And even worse, he had given it to the nigger when the snow was falling, and there wasn't much wind.

Bill had explained that the toxin had an incubation period of several days, a time when it grew inside the body without any symptoms, so he wasn't worried that the nigger would get sick before he had trashed the styrofoam covering and the fragile glass bulb. Likewise, Bill had hinted that the powder had a bit of an anesthetic effect, so an unwary person, testing it on his tongue, would believe it to be narcotics, rather than a deadly bacteria!

As he neared the 297 mile marker, he saw the sign for Interstate 75 south, which would take them toward Miami. He slowed and moved right, taking the lane that would branch southward.

Just after they got on I-75, Doc jumped off the "big road" into a Florida rest area. He took a moment to bring his logbook up to date, knowing without a doubt that Florida would stop him at the agriculture station or the scalehouse. Better safe than sorry, he reasoned quietly.

He then turned on the laptop computer, which was sitting in the passenger's seat. Once it booted up, he brought up the wireless internet program and connected to the web. He clicked to bring up the web browser, and typed in the URL of the blog he had been instructed to check every day.

Doc swore softly under his breath. There it was, in the most recent entry.

"I took today off and went shopping in the mall."

The signal had been given.

Alone Again

chapter eleven

The next morning Doc and Foxy unloaded the rest of their electronics near Miami, off NW 113th place. Their dispatcher had already located them a back-haul, a shipment of scrap paper that would load on US 27, a little way northwest of town. They closed up the trailer and, after a quick stop to get "colada", the large version of Cuban coffee that was basically a whole pot of coffee concentrated into a small cup, they went on out of town, driving alongside the canal and enjoying the 85 degree temperatures in February.

They drove on up past the little truckstop and, following their directions, turned right into what seemed like a cypress swamp! There was no sign, but the smell that came in their open windows told them that there was definitely some kind of recycling plant nearby.

Sure enough, about a mile down the road, the sign pointed them to the left, and they drove up on the scales for an empty weight. The scale lady told them to get on channel 12 of the CB, and that they would be called when their spot on the docks came open.

Foxy was enjoying the warm weather, having shed her long jeans and donned a pair of middle-of-the-thigh shorts

and a black tee-shirt with a truckstop logo on the back. Doc, never having been much for shorts, kept his jeans on, but he too had gone back to a truckstop tee-shirt and his army boots had been exchanged for lightweight walking shoes.

As they sat there, Foxy asked him how he thought she was doing as a co-driver. When he praised her, she looked down at the floor and asked a question that caught him off guard.

"Uhhh, I know it's a little sudden, and bad, since we've only been running teams a few weeks, but do you think it would be okay if I took a few days off? Say, the time it would take you to run up to New York and back, or something like that?" Her voice seemed a bit shaky, as though she halfway expected him to be angry.

Doc wasn't upset at all. In fact, considering the blog entry he had read just the night before, he was actually a little relieved, since he had been racking his brain in a vain attempt to come up with a way to throw out his bulbs without her knowing.

"Why you wanna be off? Something wrong? Is it something I've said or done?"

She shook her head, her soft, reddish-brown hair falling forward over her eyes. "Nothing like that. I just want to spend some time at home, catching up on my rest, hanging out with the kids, that sort of thing. Before I met up with you, I hadn't been home in a while. It's just time."

Doc laughed. "Yeah, driving teams DOES make a body tired! I mean, I don't know about you, but when we're going down the highway, I never really sleep-sleep. Oh, I get some rest, to be sure, but every bump, every sharp curve, every tap of the brakes, I wake up. Most of the time I go right back to

sleep, but it's never as much rest as when we're stopped somewhere for a few hours."

Foxy brightened up and looked closely at him. "Yeah, I do that too. You sure it will be okay? I mean, I'm gonna be leaving my stuff in the truck, because I AM going to keep running with you! Dispatch could probably find you something going straight up and back, if I ask her." At this point, Foxy batted her eyelashes in a provocative way. "I think our dispatcher has the hots for me!"

Doc leered at the woman in a playfully obscene way. "Yeah, but can she lick her eyebrows?" He then went thru the motions of first licking, then smoothing down his eyebrows with his fingers, at which point his co-driver crossed her legs and squealed.

Once she was sure Doc wouldn't be upset, she got the qualcomm unit out from behind the seat and began typing her message. Doc asked her to specify a load of egg-crates, which almost always delivered to a place in Maryland and was virtually an every-day load from Alabama. She gave him a thumbs-up and intently tapped the keys. And sure enough, before long the message came back, that they would bring the scrap paper to Alabama and drop the loaded trailer on the main yard. From there Doc would hook to the load of eggcrates and head north after taking his mandatory 10 hour break.

Doc didn't say anything about it, but he knew in his heart that this would be their last trip together. The woman had been too downcast ever since they had talked about spreading a bio-weapon.

Within a couple hours they were loaded, and while Foxy operated the truck from inside the cab, Doc pulled the handle that released the trailer wheels, and slid the tandems back

and forward until the weight was equally balanced. Once the air gauge on the dash indicated 50 psi, Foxy tapped the small horn and Doc released the handle, which snapped the four wrist-sized steel locking pins back into place.

Once this was finished and inspected, Foxy jumped into the back and started gathering up some things and putting them in her small bag. Doc used his key and unlocked the aluminum toolbox. He tried to be as quiet as possible, taking one of the styrofoam packages out and putting it on the side steps. He then closed and re-locked the box, and while climbing into the truck, unobtrusively put the package down in the corner of the cab behind his seat and covered it with his gloves.

"You ready to head out?" He planned to head back to Miami, intentionally taking the long way, so he could drop off his bulb somewhere along I-826, the western bypass. Then he planned to head north on I-95, take US-60 from Vero Beach going westbound and pick up US-27 and 301 north until he got near Wildwood. Then he planned to take the little connector west to I-75, just north of the Florida Turnpike. That way he could avoid all the tolls, which made the folks back at the home office happy.

Foxy asked him to wait a minute, since she was making coffee, so he passed the time by bringing his logbook up to date and doing a quick test of the brakes. He turned the engine off and, with the buttons pushed in, put his foot hard on the brake pedal and held it down. Federal law said that, during such a test, there could be no air leakage according to the gauge on the dashboard.

Once he was satisfied that their truck and trailer would pass inspection, he pumped the air pressure all the way down, noticing that the buzzer and warning light came on when the pressure fell below a certain point. Then,

re-starting the engine, he watched until the pressure built up to 120 pounds, the usual operating pressure for big truck air brakes.

By this time Foxy was ready, and once she had filled their metal cups and put the spill-proof lids on them, she came and sat up front with him and kept him company as they headed back toward town.

She had never been to Miami before, so she didn't really catch on that he was going the wrong way. Ideally, when he came out of the recycling plant, he should have turned right and headed north on US-27, but instead he went south, back toward I-826 and the main part of town. They traveled along, their windows rolled down, enjoying the warm air and looking at the crazy drivers (Miami traffic really IS crazy, at least on a par with traffic on the Cross-Bronx Expressway!) and the scantily clad women who rode around with their windows down, seemingly oblivious to the fact that their dresses had rode up so high that their underwear was visible!

"Oh, I know why you wanted to come this way! You wanted to check out all the seat covers!" Foxy rolled her eyes in mock contempt, but when they got to laughing she continued. "No, I know you'd never mess with one of them. That's one of the things that makes me love you so much! You may not be perfect, but you have strong ideals. I believe you'd walk away from your own mother if she confessed to having a black boyfriend way back when!"

Doc glanced at her, wondering if she was leading up to something with that last statement. "Dunno", he started. "Your mama is something you can't just abandon, or I'd like to think so. I won't lie to you, if she were to tell me something like that, I would have some serious soul-searching to do! Can't say for sure until I'm put in that position. But I do know that I'd walk away from a wife or a friend or probably a child."

He kept his eyes forward as he said the word "child".

Foxy went on as though she hadn't noticed. "Hey, I'm curious. Since we've got a minute or two, can you tell me where to find anything about mixed offspring and foreign spouses in the Bible?"

Doc referred her to the Strong's concordance, which was back in the sleeper again. Foxy jumped up and headed toward the back, and as she went past him, he also asked her to unpack the laptop and bring it with her, along with the "air card" internet device.

Once he was sure she was in the sleeper, he quickly reached down and picked up the styrofoam protector and in one quick motion, flung the whole thing out the passenger side window and onto the interstate highway. He looked in the rear view mirror and immediately saw a white puff of dust appear as somebody ran over the bulb and crushed it. It was dry outside, and a moderate breeze was blowing eastward, toward the main part of town. Doc suspected that, if there was anything to the powder in the bulbs, it would get blown around and pretty well caught up in the breeze, not to mention the drivers who would catch a nose-full as they drove down the highway.

Foxy re-appeared, carrying the Strong's in one hand, and the case holding the laptop in the other. She carefully placed the computer on the floor between the front seats, and started thumbing through the concordance.

Doc tried to remember where he had read about the subject. "If I remember right, it was in Ezra, maybe, or somewhere along there. Might be Hosea. I'm almost positive it was among what they call the "minor prophets". It was after the return of the House of Judah from Babylon.

The people had started to mix and marry with foreigners, and mixed children had been born to them, and the Lord was angry with the whole nation."

"The prophet talked with the Lord and was told to instruct the people, saying something like this:

All of you who have foreign wives and children must put them away, all of them, because as long as you keep these foreign wives and children, the Lord will not bless your people.

And, as far as I remember, that's exactly what the people did. They each went home and rounded up their foreign wives and children and put them away, and fasted and sacrificed to the Lord, and the Lord forgave the nation."

"Got it! Ezra chapter 10." Foxy was buried in the Strong's, looking at the tiny print and flipping pages as fast as her fingers would allow. She put it down and then fired up the laptop, and did some more searching. After an hour or so, she seemed satisfied, and without another word, she put them both back in the sleeper.

By this time they were a little bit north of Miami, having just passed the exit for Fort Lauderdale. Foxy stepped into the back again and refilled their coffee cups, and they rode along, idly chatting about one thing or another, agreeing that they would both miss the warm weather once they got back north.

About the time they got to Vero Beach and took a quick bathroom break at the truckstop, Foxy decided to get some rest. She climbed into the sleeper and, after coming back and giving Doc a quick peck on the cheek, soon got quiet.

Doc drove out of the truckstop and rolled west on route 60. There was some construction that slowed him down, but overall the driving wasn't bad. There were some people on the CB that engaged him in light trucker-talk, and before long he found himself nearing Haines City and US 27 northbound.

He stopped at the old Haines City truckstop and chatted for a minute with a driver he hadn't seen in a while, and before long was headed north again, through the endless developments that have sprung up along US-27, retirement villages and golf courses and shopping malls and hospitals and everything in between. There were a lot of red lights, and occasionally the road dropped down to two-lanes and construction zones, but he wasn't complaining, since he was saving the company better than fifty dollars by taking the "little road".

Once he got up to Wildwood, he stopped at the big truckstop and used his card to get some fuel. He called Foxy softly, not really wanting to wake her, and when she didn't say anything, he continued on north.

At Ocala, or technically, Zuber, Florida, he stopped and visited for a minute with the people at the Ten-Four CB store. These guys didn't know about his preaching and teaching on the CB radio, but they were without a doubt the best CB shop east of the Mississippi! Doc depended on them to keep his radio sounding "top shelf". One weekend, a few years earlier, he had been stuck there in Zuber, and had gotten to be friends with them. One of the women had taken him home with her, and while nothing had happened, he had forged a link with someone that was one of the highlights of

being on the road.

Foxy still hadn't stirred, so he drove on up toward Interstate 10, and once he got to the rest area just south of 10, he stopped and brought his logbook up to speed again. Finding that he had burned up a good bit of his available hours, he decided to ask Foxy if she wanted to drive a while.

She did, having gotten some sleep along the way, so after she went inside the Florida Rest Area for a quick potty break, she took the wheel and headed then on toward I-10 and points westbound. Doc, having navigated US-27 and 60, was tired, and lay down in the sleeper for a quick nap.

When Doc next awoke, Foxy was sitting next to him on the bunk, her fingers playing with his hair. He smiled sleepily at her, and pulled her down for a lingering kiss.

"Hey, I looked on the qualcomm and found your trailer, the one you're taking to Maryland. I dropped the load of paper and hooked to the new one, number 323199. I double checked the bills. Aren't I so good to you?" She finished up with a big toothy grin.

"Wow, you sure are!" Doc was genuinely happy with her. "You know how the logroom is, now that I'm coming off a team operation I've gotta take 10 hours off duty before I can drive as a single driver. You gonna keep me awake, or am I really gonna get some sleep?"

Foxy laughed softly. "No, babe, if you don't mind I'm gonna head on to my mama's house. It's about 30 minutes' drive from here, and I'll get there before she goes to sleep if I hurry. She turns in pretty early."

Doc wasn't disappointed. "I understand. I mean, I hate to show up at somebody's place after they've gone to bed.

Even if it is my own folks. Just ain't proper!"

He watched the woman as she walked across the parking lot and headed toward her car. Once she got inside and her headlights came on, he went back inside the sleeper. Looking at his watch, Doc estimated that he had slept about four hours, maybe a little longer. Since he was still feeling the effects of having ran team for a good stretch, he located his melatonin tablets and took one, washing it down with a good swallow of water from the 12 volt refrigerator.

He stretched out on the bunk, but couldn't sleep. He hadn't realized it before, but in his heart he knew that Foxy was going home to stay. She hadn't admitted it to him, probably because she didn't want to cause a scene, but the conversation they had had, plus finding the verses in Ezra chapter 10 had doubtless made her angry, and had brought their team operation to an end.

It wasn't the first time he had lost a friend over Identity. He had dated a woman for several years, and there had even been talk of marriage. The woman's two daughters had been all in favor of the idea, calling him their "dad of choice". Doc had even been invited over to meet the woman's mom and dad! But, once he learned about Identity, and had given the girlfriend a book (Soldiers of God) that explained the doctrine, she had started pulling away from him, slowly at first, but before long she had even gone so far as to warn other people that Doc was dangerous!

He had also lost more than one job because of Identity. People that he had worked with had occasionally noticed his Bible in the pickup, and had asked him about his faith. In the beginning, before he realized what knee-jerk reactions most people have to Identity, he had openly witnessed to white co-workers, not seeing the harm in it. However, in 100% of the cases, the whites had gone first to the niggers, and then

to the supervisors.

Doc halfway expected to have a knock on his door in the morning, the security guard or a dispatcher, asking him to vacate the truck while Foxy got her things out without him causing a scene.

"Oh well, such is life" he muttered to himself.

By this time, the melatonin was beginning to take effect, so he rolled over, pulled the covers up around his neck, and was soon fast asleep.

He awoke to the sound of somebody opening the cab door and climbing inside the truck. Thinking it was the mechanic, he didn't speak, knowing that the mechanic would ask him to leave the vehicle while it was being inspected or repaired. But much to his surprise, the sleeper curtain was pushed apart, and Foxy stepped in!

"Hey, ole' woman, what are you doing here? I thought you were taking some time off!"

She shrugged her shoulders, but didn't immediately speak. She put her bag on the top bunk, filled the coffeemaker with water from one of their jugs, set up the filter and grounds, and sat down heavily on the bed beside him, her upper body flopping to the side as though she were completely exhausted.

When she did finally speak, it was in a hushed voice, the fatigue evident in her tone.

"Erik, tell me something." Not good. She rarely ever used his given name.

"Sure, if I can."

"Remember yesterday, the thing in the styrofoam that you threw out my window as we left Miami? What was that?"

"You noticed?" Doc tried not to let the surprise show in his voice.

Foxy laughed. "I'm a woman! I was born nosy! I saw it when you put it in the truck, and while you weren't looking, I took a peek. Reached behind the edge of the curtain and took the top off. A glass thing with white powder in it. I put it back before you had a chance to see."

Doc knew he was caught. "Wellllll, you remember what I said about getting hold of some stuff that we could throw out and kill non-whites by the thousands? That was it. I threw it out on 826 and it busted and flew up in a white cloud of dust. Probably gonna be some mighty sick cubans in a few days. Jews too, with any luck, but the guy who gave them to me didn't specify."

"Did you save one for me?"

Doc jumped as though somebody had touched ice to his back. "Huh?" He knew he probably should say something intelligent or romantic or whatever, but in his state of confusion, all he could do was blurt out the one-syllable question!

"Erik, I went home and talked with my mama, and as it turns out, my sister was there with her mixed kids. I didn't tell her anything, but I sat there and looked at them and her and tried not to cry. Erik, they're not human! I hate to say it about my own sister's children, but they REALLY ARE NOT HUMAN! I stayed with them until she and the kids left, and then I talked with my mom. And before it was over, I knew in my heart that I had to come back here and get on this truck.

With you."

Doc wasn't sure that was what he wanted to hear. He hadn't lived for 51 years without having crossed swords with a woman over her family! He knew it was a losing proposition.

"You sure you want to do this? I mean, I love you and very much want you here with me, but before you make such a choice, I want you to be sure of what is in your heart. I mean, leaving your sister and her kids for me is a big choice."

"I'm not sure I'm worth it!"

Foxy rolled over and put her arms around Doc and kissed him. "Just like you, so egotistic that you think I'm doing this because of YOU!" She chuckled and kissed him again. "No, my dear, I'm not doing this for you. I'm doing this for GOD."

Doc returned her kisses, more passionately. "Does this mean I'm not gonna get any sleep tonight?"

Foxy rolled back over and threw the covers off him. "Tonight? Whaddaya mean tonight? Look around you, ole' man! It's daylight, and your 10 hour break is over! It's time we got rolling toward Maryland!"

Doc grinned and looked at his watch by pressing the button, the blue light casting an eerie glow on his face.

"Dang, I believe you're right! So who is gonna drive? Want me to get us started, since I've had my "ten"?"

Foxy was happy with that arrangement, since she had been up almost all night, talking with her mom and generally mulling over her options. "I'm gonna tidy up in here while you do your pre-trip and update your log. But I'm not gonna go to

sleep just yet. I'll talk ya down the road until we get to Atlanta, anyway."

Doc winked at the woman and reached for his boots. Once they were on, he climbed out of the cab and, almost as an afterthought, reached up and turned the 4-way flashers on. He then walked around the trailer, making sure the landing gear, the legs that hold up a trailer when there isn't a tractor hooked to the unit, were rolled up as high as possible. He then checked the lights all the way around, not wanting anything to draw attention to them with the unique "cargo" they were carrying in the aluminum toolbox..

Finally, he stopped at the toolbox and unlocked it. He then retrieved two of the styrofoam packages and brought them to the cab. He relocked the box and stashed the key in the magnetic box again, stashing it in a hidden place, around the corner of one of the steel frame rails. That way, he reasoned, if he were stopped and inspected, he could truthfully say that he didn't have the key for the box, and had never looked inside it. And, if it were to be cut open, he had nothing in the box that was his own property.

They started rolling northbound, and Foxy sat up front with him, examining one of the glass bulbs with a fascinated look on her face. "So, this little thing has enough stuff to take out a whole city?"

Doc glanced at her and grinned. "According to the guy who gave it to me, he was a part of Homeland Security. He said he confiscated them from a foreigner, a middle eastern type. When he turned in one of them to the lab, he said the guys had a fit over it. They identified it as some military toxin, something that attacks non-whites. It actually makes whites sick too, sick as a DOG. But whites survive, while non-whites don't."

"And yes, far as I know, once it becomes "catching", it could take out any number of them!"

Foxy had a quizzical look on her face. "But tell me, Doc. You know as well as I do, not all white people have a good strong immune system. What if, and I'm just letting my mind wander here, what if white people die from this stuff too? I mean, have you considered what we're about to do? If we throw these things out and even one white person dies, won't you be worried that you'll have a sin on your hands that the Lord won't forgive?"

Doc was a step ahead of her. "Yes, I've thought about that, a LOT. And yes, it bothers me. I've rode down the highway and wondered about that very thing. Old people and kids die from the influenza virus all the time. And this, while it's not a virus, is an extremely contagious and virulent kind of bug. I have prayed myself silly, asking the Lord for any kind of guidance that He will give me, but so far, the only thing I've seen, the only thing that might be taken as a "sign", is that you're back with me."

"I may be tempting fate, but I like to believe that the Lord allowed these things to fall into my hands for a reason. I like to think that he sent you to me. I like to think my troubles with the Mexican boss, that caused me to get back into trucking, came from the Lord. I like to think that the Lord is in control, and guides our lives, gently pushing and prodding us along the path He has chosen for us."

Foxy put the top back on the styrofoam holder and placed it on the floor of the cab. She then stood up between the seats and hugged him as they bounced down the highway. "I wish I had your faith, dear heart. I'd be terrified of throwing one of those things out the window. I like it warm, but not fire and brimstone warm!"

She leaned down and kissed him as they drove down a straight stretch of highway. "HOWEVER, I don't have any problems with watching YOU throw them out the window!"

She went on after taking a swallow of coffee. "So, I'm curious again. Just exactly what do you hope to accomplish by throwing these things out the window? If you leave even a few of them alive, they're just gonna repopulate again. Apart from just killing niggers, is there any end-game?"

"I've got some hopes and dreams, but nothing concrete." He paused for a minute as he drove through the scale-house on the northside of I-85, about mile marker 25. "Anything that reduces the number of niggers in a given area is a plus. What I'm actually hoping for is that the white people who are left will be so amazed at the general lack of crime and drugs that they'll decide they want to keep it this way. Oh, to be sure, there will be the bleeding hearts, but even THEY have to see the difference, once the actual root cause of the crime is out of the picture. And even the government, from local police all the way up to Treasury, once the number of cop calls goes down, and the drain on the budget is gone, I'm thinking that everybody with any authority in this country will let out a HUGE sigh of relief!!!!

Foxy chimed in too. "I know myself how hard it is to be a woman driver out here. You have to park in a well-lit place and get somebody to walk you up to the building if you need to go to the bathroom. Or, you leave your parking space, drive to the fuel islands, do your thing, and when you come back, you've lost your parking space! And it's all because of niggers and Mexicans in the parking lot!"

Doc had a question. "Hey, do we have a plan here? I need your input. Counting these two bulbs, we have twenty-two of them. What do we do with them? I mean, we've got to get rid of them as soon as possible, because

Homeland Security is gonna beef up inspections once the CDC identifies the toxin. Maybe even put a stop to ALL interstate travel for a while."

"We can, if we drive straight through, make it from Atlanta to DC in ten to twelve hours, depending on traffic. We might wanna allow 15 hours, considering that we want to drop the bulbs on the southwest side of town, depending on the winds. That's a pretty decent day's drive, and it's do-able. Along the way we'll have Atlanta, Spartanburg, Charlotte, Greensboro, Richmond and D.C. plus a few smaller towns along the way. Lots of niggers too. My thought is, maybe we could drop one here and there, but I'd suggest keeping half of them until we get to Washington."

Foxy was in agreement with him. "I don't have a problem with that. Atlanta needs some cleaning out, and I'm not crazy about Charlotte, either. Richmond definitely needs some of our attention, but DC is the place that would benefit most from a good enema! Damn shame we're not going to Baltimore!", she added as an afterthought.

Doc winked at her. "We can! Either we go route 50 east of DC and cross the scary bridge, or we can go on up I-95 and at Elkton, double back down the little road to the egg farm."

Doc changed the subject with a final thought. "I've been thinking about some of the Bible stories I read back when I was a kid. I remember how, so many times, the nation of Israel, our forefathers, got mixed up with their enemies and wound up in captivity. And every time it happened, the Lord would bring up somebody to get the people on the right track. Samson, Gideon, David, Samuel, Joshua, Josiah and others."

"And let's not forget how the Lord, once He had a belly-full of the Amalekites, told Saul to gather up the army

and go into their land and kill ALL OF THEM. Old folks and babies, men and women and children, and even all their farm animals! Everything in the land of Amalek that breathed, had to go. No mercy. And when Saul let some of the animals and one man, the King of Amalek, live through the war, the Lord took away his kingdom!"

Foxy, not having been raised in a home where Bible study was encouraged and expected, wasn't as familiar with the stories as Doc, but she knew the gist of them, and didn't have a problem with the concept.

"So, you think we can get them all, eventually?" She wiggled her eyebrows in imitation of Groucho Marx.

"Dunno", he answered truthfully. "The guy who gave this stuff to me said he was gonna send out other teams, other people with toxin, but he didn't tell me where he was gonna send them. In fact, he didn't actually give me a route. He just told me about a blog and told me to look for the statement that "somebody had taken the day off and gone shopping at the mall". He told me, once I saw the blog, to throw the bulbs out where ever I happened to be. I saw that statement on the way to Miami, so there are gonna be other people throwing this stuff out, too."

"Wow!" Foxy breathed in awe. "So we're not alone?"

"That's what the man said. He specifically asked me not to throw any of them out the window until he had contacted some other people and had given them the rest of the bulbs. He didn't actually say how many others there would be, but he hinted that he had plenty of possible volunteers. That evening as we left Denver, when I stopped at the rest area, that's where I met him. So he could have sent teams in most any direction."

"I did kinda break the rules. Remember the nigger in Nashville? I traded him a bulb full of good "dope" for Alissia! But I got the go-ahead message that night, so I didn't jump the gun too much."

Foxy laughed. "Awesome! I noticed when you said you "got rid of" the nigger! Well, can you blame people for being willing to join in? I mean, DAMN, you earn maybe \$800 a week, driving your ass off out here, dealing with the weather and the cops and the equipment and the niggers, and then lose close to \$300 in taxes, and what does it go for? Over ONE HALF of the US Federal budget goes for some form of a handout! I imagine there are a LOT of truckers who would gladly do this stuff, if it would start the process of cleaning up this country!"

Doc was in no mood to argue with her. "Well, dear heart, we're getting close to Atlanta, so are you gonna get some sleep? I'm gonna throw these two bulbs out as I drive around the east side of town, and later on I'll stop and get a few more out of the box. Late tonight, when we're going through Richmond and DC, I'll need you to drive while I do my thing."

The woman agreed, admitting that she was tired, not having slept much the night before. "Get us on up toward Virginia, and I'll take over at exit 4, just as we get into Virginia on Interstate 85. Deal?"

Doc put his arm around his co-driver as she stood between the seats.

"Deal. Get some sleep and when you get up, we'll go make history!

The World Turned Upside Down

chapter twelve

After Foxy had climbed back into the sleeper, Doc drove on toward Atlanta, his thoughts racing. The two styrofoam containers were sitting between the seats, very much within reach, and it was getting close to the time that he would have to either throw them out the window, or abandon his plan.

Doc, even though he was no saint, tended to be a devoutly religious person, deeply concerned in his heart whether he was on the right path or not, anguishing over decisions that others might not have given a second thought. And this day was one like no other in his past!

He would have been delighted if there would have been some way, some philosophy or lesson in morality that would have convinced the non-whites to stop destroying everything the White Israelite people had built up on the planet, but he sadly confessed to himself that no such discipline was to be found. Even the strict doctrines of the Black Muslim movement, as effective as they were in transforming niggers into creatures that at least ACTED like humans, didn't have the wide sphere of influence that would have given Doc and other like-minded patriots a good reason to accept niggers into America as fellow citizens!

No, Doc reasoned, there was no other alternative. Even if the niggers and wetbacks and diaper-heads and slopes were human, and were able to receive the Body and Blood of the Lamb, their actions had sealed their respective fates. Perhaps, he thought to himself, the Ethiopians and other people mentioned favorably in the Bible were different back then, compared with their 21st century offspring.

Words are cheap, Doc believed, but actions speak louder. The non-whites knew beyond any shadow of a doubt that they were hated because they didn't think, talk or act like White people, but did they ever make any effort to become more adapted to life in the land of the White Man? No!!! They, if anything, seemed to go out of their way to rub the noses of the White majority in the fact of their difference, making sure that "whitey" knew he was dealing with someone that didn't conform to the white man's traditional way of life.

If there was any one thing that gave Doc reason to wonder, it was the eyes of niggers, compared to the other animals. Most of the creatures that were commonly identified as animals had eyes that completely filled their eyelids. They didn't have any white showing around the cornea, or coloured part, of the eyeball. Niggers, on the other hand, had eyes that showed white around most of the cornea, much like humans. So, for that matter, did asians and hispanics. Doc's only way of understanding it was to keep in mind that they were, after all, created to be above the animals, even though they did not have the "living soul" that was imparted to Adamic man in Genesis 2.

Doc chuckled to himself. "The missing link, discovered at last!"

Doc had white friends whose eyes happened to be brown. Those people, when he looked into their eyes, had a certain "spark" that could be seen, something that made their

eyes different from a dog's eyes, or a horse's. But niggers? Their eyes had no such light of the spirit. Their eyes were just brown.

Doc prayed as he went down the highway. He didn't speak aloud, for fear of waking Foxy, but in his heart, sometimes whispering the words for effect, he asked the Lord to intervene if it was His will that the bulbs didn't get thrown out along the path Doc and Foxy planned to follow. It would be a simple thing for Doc to be pulled over by the Georgia patrol and searched. The truck could break down. Dispatch could stop him and give the load to another driver. Nothing is impossible for the Creator.

As he came within 10 miles of the I-285 loop that went all the way around Atlanta, Doc tried to relax by taking deep breaths. This was the point of no return. A nigger or two in Nashville, or some Cubans and maybe a few Jews in Miami, that might be dismissed as some kind of localized outbreak, but this, a "bug" that was appearing in a couple dozen or more places all at the same time, couldn't be explained away. It would be recognized as an attack, and would bring about a response from governmental agencies trying to contain the contagion and, later, to identify the person or persons responsible. And most of the time, people who did things like this were eventually caught.

Doc wasn't happy with the logical extension of his thinking, but he was realistic enough to know that the majority of law enforcement would be looking for some White person or group of Whites that had perpetrated this "horrible atrocity" on "innocent people of color". They would not listen to arguments about the destruction that had been done to the country and its people and its industrial base. They would find their man, or men, and treat them the same way they had treated Tim McVeigh and Eric Rudolph.

Doc knew in his heart that it was altogether possible that he and Foxy would wind up stranded, caught up in the lockdown that Homeland Security would surely put in place once the news broke about people getting sick from some kind of weaponized toxin that was being spread by a person or persons travelling on the Interstate highway system.

He passed the 65 mile marker on I-85, and knew he had to make a decision. So, when he saw the sign for I-285, he merged to the right and took the west side, the one marked as the route to Birmingham. A good mile before the interchange, he turned on his CB and reached down between the seats and carefully pulled one of the bulbs out of its protective housing. Even though it was chilly outside, he rolled down his driver's side window and left it open.

Right there, on the top of the interchange, not quite what he would call a cloverleaf but in full view of the Atlanta airport, he used the remote button and rolled down the passenger side window. He used the bulb to "cross himself" in the Catholic way, and lightly tossed the bulb out the passenger window and distinctly heard it as it splintered into little pieces. Once he could let go of the steering wheel, he raised the passenger window again, not crazy about the crossdraft he was feeling.

He hoped his choice of location would pay off. It was one of the busiest interchanges in Atlanta, being the main artery for traffic coming in from the south and west sides of town. Since he had been on the topmost level of the interchange, he reasoned that the cloud of dust would fly up in the air and eventually settle down onto the lower levels, which would disperse the agent in all directions.

Also, just a few hundred feet to the east, Atlanta's huge airport sprawled out over the landscape. Doc knew from reading on the internet that virtually all the air traffic in the

southeast made connections through Atlanta. It was widely rumoured that, even if you died and went to Hell, you'd have to make connections in Atlanta! With any luck, some of the bio-agent would drift that way, or be carried that way by unsuspecting motorists.

He listened carefully, ready to offer an explanation if someone had seen the cloud of dust flying out from under his truck. He planned to say, if asked, that he had gotten stuck the day before, and that clumps of dirt were probably falling off the frame and brake chambers. He doubted that anybody would question his word, since getting stuck wasn't uncommon for truckers.

As it turned out, nobody said anything.

He continued on around the loop, the exit numbers starting out at exit 1 and going up. He drove on up to the Bankhead Avenue exit and, having turned into the truckstop, drove around (down the hill) toward the fuel islands. He didn't actually drive between the pumps, but rather, swung wide and headed back up the hill toward the exit. As he neared the guard gate, he pulled to the side in a convenient place and popped his brakes.

He spoke back into the sleeper. "I'm gonna need more of these things than I thought!" Hearing no answer from his co-driver, he climbed out of the cab and brought two more of the bulbs into the cab.

As he climbed into the cab, he thought about dropping one of the bulbs in the truckstop, but at the last second he changed his mind. Too obvious. Cars weren't allowed into the truckstop. That would clearly point the finger at truckers, which was attention that the average driver did not want or need.

Exiting the truckstop, he turned right and followed Bankhead Avenue back toward the loop. He jumped on heading northbound, and continued on toward the I-85 connector on the northside, what the locals called "Spaghetti Junction". As he passed the intersection for I-75 north, he tossed another one of the bulbs out the driver's side window, choosing a time when there was another big truck right beside him, which would limit the number of people who might see him, as well as put a major swirl effect on the powder.

Having worked his way through the I-75 junction, which was almost always crowded, he continued on his way north, rolling both of the cab windows down in preparation, and was soon on the ramp which would lead him back onto I-85 northbound toward Greenville, South Carolina.

As he climbed up the ramp, he pulled yet another of the bulbs from its protective covering and dropped it out of his driver side window. Moving quickly, he leaned down again and scooped up the last of the bulbs and sailed it out the passenger window, purposely letting it fall from the other side of the truck so that the air currents would get a swirl of dust into the air from both sides of the ramp, which was guarded on both sides by a concrete "jersey-wall".

He knew from experience that this intersection was probably the busiest place in Atlanta, and while it wasn't noon rush yet, it would be in an hour or so. He chuckled to himself as he remembered the days when Atlanta played host to the Olympics. "Now THAT was a cluster-fuck!", he murmured to himself.

Once he came down the ramp he gradually moved to the left, knowing that the right two lanes would drop off in a mile or so at Jimmy Carter boulevard. He used his turn signal and, once he was in the third lane from the far left, he settled in for whatever the outgoing Atlanta traffic would throw at him.

He would rather have hugged the far left lane and avoided the get-on and get-off traffic, but in and around Atlanta, big trucks aren't allowed in the left lane, and sometimes in the left TWO lanes.

He drove on up the highway and after an hour or so, stopped in Carnesville and parked in the fuel islands. He transferred a few more of the bulbs into the cab and got rid of all the empty protective containers. He also added diesel fuel, since Georgia prices were about as low as he was likely to find for a while.

After he and Foxy made a quick trip to the bathrooms, they continued on up the road toward the Carolinas.

Almost as soon as they left the truckstop, the CB crackled with a warning from a helpful driver. "Better have your ducks in a row when you cross the northbound Georgia scales! They're checking your spots and the tension on your suspension!"

"Spot checking!" Foxy let out her breath in a gesture of disgust. While it was true that some drivers performed their jobs in an unsafe manner, it was hardly reason for the cops to aggravate large numbers of drivers! What with the electronic monitoring systems and random drug screens and the strict regulations imposed on companies by their insurance companies, the "bad apples" had mostly been weeded out of the workforce, but the cops still seemed to enjoy creating a huge logjam of trucks at the scale houses.

Doc agreed with her completely. "The thing I hate about this is, when the trucks are backed up past the end of the ramp and on the side of the highway, it's fairly common for a car or pickup to come along, driver not paying attention, and to ram up under the back of the trailer. Happens at least once or twice a year! Not too long ago, that very thing

happened in Indiana or Kentucky. Family of five died, burned to death under a truck. And it was completely avoidable, if the cops had turned the bypass lights on, once their ramp was full of customers."

The truckstop was at the 160, but the scalehouse was on up the highway, about the 173, so they had a few miles to go. As they drove up the road, the reports changed back and forth. One driver said the scales were closed, and another one said the trucks were being allowed to "roll across" at 30 miles per hour. Yet another one said the scales were closed again.

As luck would have it, as they neared the scales, the little transponder unit on the dashboard beeped green, so they drove on past the scales without having to enter. That little black box cost Doc about \$15 a month, but it was worth its weight in gold sometimes!

They both sighed with the release of tension as they crossed into South Carolina. Foxy especially, since she hadn't been driving as long as Doc, was still nervous about being inspected and searched. "I hate it when stuff like that happens! Soon as we get the chance, we're gonna get rid of these things and get 100% legal!"

Doc grinned and reached his right hand across the distance between the seats. "It's okay ole' woman! We drive an almost new truck, and we're both clean cut, well spoken and it's obvious that we have tried to run legal. Logbooks in good shape, and both of them in nice, new covers. Calculators on both. Hours for the last 8 days on the right side of the sheet, for anybody to add up and check. The chances of us getting stopped are so-so, but inspected and searched? Almost nonexistent!"

Foxy looked at him out of the side of her face, not

entirely convinced. "Just the same, I'll be glad once we get rid of these things!"

"You and me both!" he confessed.

They drove on into South Carolina, dropping one of the bulbs in Greenville, one in Spartanburg, three in Charlotte and one more as they went through Lexington, about the 70 mile marker. Later on, they dropped two in Greensboro, North Carolina, and near the junction where I-40 headed on toward Raleigh, they dropped another, sailing it out the passenger window so that it would land near the exit ramp toward the east.

Foxy slept most of the way, but shortly before they crossed into Virginia, she climbed out of the sleeper and noticed that there weren't any bulbs in the cab. "We gonna stop at exit 4 and get me supplied before I head north?"

"That's the plan!", he answered wearily. It had been a long drive from Alabama to the Virginia line. He was more than ready for Foxy to take over and let him rest a bit. He knew that his patience was wearing thin, which wasn't a good thing. Several cars had passed him and, just as they got alongside his trailer, had flashed their bright lights in his mirrors. Even though they meant well, when Doc was tired and they did that, his first impulse was to run them off the road. Years before, he would have done it, but he knew he couldn't do stuff like that any more!

After bringing their logbooks up to date, Doc explained the next three hours to his co-driver. "For the most part, Virginia up through here is a long, straight stretch of road with lots of trees on either side and in the middle. Up about the 70 mile marker you'll join in with Interstate 95 and your mile marker will drop down to 56 or something like that. Just past that intersection, look to your left and you'll see the huge

cigarette factory! Around the 70 mile marker (again) you'll start getting into Richmond. There is the I-295 bypass around the east side, but you'll be too far north to catch it, and besides, we need to go to the west, or through the middle."

"Further on up, at the Ruther Glen exit, 104 I think, there are four truckstops. We may as well stop there and refuel and hit the bathrooms. While we're there, be careful, because those truckstops aren't the safest."

"We won't have any scales until we get up around the 25 or so. After that, the next scales are around the 156. And I think we hit the I-495 loop at the 170 mile marker. Watch the signs very closely, and take I-495 to the west side. Don't take 395, because that will take us right downtown to Independence Avenue. US Capitol on your right, and the Washington Monument on your left. Not a fun place for a big truck to be!"

Foxy nodded and used a black rub-off marker to make some notes on her window. Then she arranged several of the bulbs next to her seat, and drove out of the parking lot. She headed on northbound and before long, Doc stepped into the sleeper.

"Hey, if you run into anything you're not sure about, you know I don't mind getting up!" He put his hand on her shoulder, reassuringly.

"Oh, no problem! I've driven pretty much everywhere else, and by the time we get to Richmond the traffic will have died down. I'll be fine, if I don't run out of these thingies!" At that she shook one of them, a little too violently for his sense of security.

"Ohhhhh, dear heart, don't do that!" He laughed nervously. "I know it's not supposed to hurt us, but I don't

want to get sick, either!"

She giggled and carefully put the glass "thingie" back in its holder. "You're no fun! Bwak! Bwak! Bwak!"

He kissed her on the side of the neck and tickled her, and settled back into the sleeper. However, he was too keyed up to sleep, so he tried to relax and imagine where they were by the sound of the truck. Later on, he estimated by his watch that they had passed the junction of I-95, and a while later he felt the truck slowing down, for what he imagined to be Richmond. When he heard Foxy's window being rolled down, and felt the cold breeze, his suspicions were confirmed.

He made a mental note to hug her, once they came to a stop at Ruther Glen. He had rarely ever been so proud of a friend as he was of his co-driver! While he still had misgivings about what he was getting her into, he reminded himself of something that had occurred to him earlier that day.

When the two snipers were shooting people all around DC and southern Maryland, they had essentially gotten away with it, and probably would never have been apprehended if they had quit while they were ahead. The convenience store attendant they had shot in Alabama was a case destined to be forever unsolved because they had immediately left town! But no, once they got to DC they had to keep on, to get just ONE MORE target, to put one more notch in their belts. And that had proven to be their undoing.

Doc reasoned that, had the Lord wanted him to take out every city in America, He would have arranged to give them more glass bulbs. As it was, they had been given 23 of the deadly containers. That was enough.

Doc heard Foxy's window roll down three times, and three times he heard it roll back up. Then their speed

became more even, without any touches on the brake pedals, and half an hour later the truck slowed down and Doc could feel them take the exit ramp at 104, Ruther Glen, Virginia.

Foxy pushed the curtains apart with a free hand and called back into the sleeper. "Which truckstop?"

"Petro! Left lane!" Doc was familiar with the fueling system that the "red" trucks used, and didn't have to check the qualcomm on this one. Virtually every Petro truckstop in the country was on the list, and if by some coincidence the list had been changed, the truckstop computer would simply reject the authorization of the card before the fuel was pumped. That made it hard on the driver, sometimes, but it kept the driver from having to pay for fuel out of his own pocket at three in the morning!!!

Foxy took the exit ramp and chose the lane to get into the truckstop, and brought them to a smooth stop down on the right-hand end of the pumps, away from the other drivers who generally tried to park close to the building. She brought her logbook up to date, and as Doc climbed out of the sleeper, she opened the driver's door and started to climb down the steps.

"Hey, babe, let me get the fuel. You round up the styrofoam pieces and ditch them in the trash can. While I'm pumping fuel, I'll move the last of the bulbs to the front and relock the toolbox." Doc wasn't completely being a gentleman. He knew that diesel fuel tended to irritate Foxy's skin, and her small hands didn't fit well into his larger gloves. More than once he had seen her pumping fuel without wearing gloves, and he felt bad about it.

Foxy didn't argue. She opened the passenger door, away from the view of the fuel desk and the other drivers, and pulled the loose pieces of styrofoam out of the cab and put

them in the trash barrels. Doc, once he had started the pumps, opened the toolbox and one-by-one, handed the remaining bulbs across the frame of the truck to Foxy, who put them in the cab from the passenger side.

Doc, when he had taken the last of the bulbs out of the toolbox, was dismayed to find that they only had four left!

"Dangit, ole' woman! Did we get carried away or what? We were gonna save ten or twelve for DC, but we only have four left!"

Foxy wasn't concerned about it at all. "If it's true that this guy gave bulbs to several people, it's reasonable to assume that one or more of them will head this way! DC is such a target, such an enemy of our people, the focus of the evil, that anybody who had such a golden opportunity wouldn't be able to pass it up! Surely we'll have some help!"

Doc was honestly surprised by his co-driver's logic, but it was unassailable. "You know, I believe you're right!", he cheerfully agreed.

They went inside and signed the fuel ticket and hit the restrooms, and Foxy filled their coffee cups. The Petro at Ruther Glen always had very good coffee, and they made it nice and strong for their east coast drivers! Most drivers who left the Petro heading northbound were going to have to drive for several hours, sometimes all the way to the other side of New York City, before they could stop and rest. There were more Petro stops along the way, but lots of drivers took US-301 across the Bay Bridge, which didn't offer many places to stop. The Petro people knew this, and cared enough about their drivers to help them any way they could.

Foxy stayed in the driver's seat as they headed north. Doc, knowing that there wasn't a scale-house for about 50

miles, sat in the passenger seat, too tense to sleep.

Foxy spoke first. "Hey, Doc, what is our plan once we ditch these things? I assume we're gonna drop three in DC, and save one for Baltimore. So we go on through the toll tunnel and up to Elkton, and then back down the skinny road to the egg farm. Once we get there, should we send in a message asking to head north? South? Should we go west to try to avoid anything we've dropped along the way?"

Doc gently pulled on his beard as he pondered the choices. "Well, going south isn't my first choice, but I suppose we could, since the wind has been blowing eastward all the way. Should have blown everything away from the road by the time we get back down there. I don't know exactly how long the incubation period is, so I don't want to go north. I'd hate to get stuck up there after the shutdown starts."

"There is a customer of ours, a newspaper on the north side of DC that ships scrap newspapers southbound to several paper mills. I'm thinking we could double back and load there, and stay to the west of our northbound route. From Washington it's just a quick hop over to I-81, and we could follow that to Knoxville, then drop down to Chattanooga, and then to Birmingham and on to the mill. The trick is, we'd have to double back into what might be a cloud of our dust!"

"If it was just me, I'd stay out here on the road and watch the fun, but you're a woman, and things might get ugly. I'm thinking in terms of keeping you safe, so we can brag about this when we're in our 80's!"

They drove on northbound, but once they neared the intersection of I-495, Doc noticed, from flags that were visible from the roadway, that the wind was coming from the east, an evening ocean breeze.

"Ole' woman, I hate to do this to you, but the wind is coming from the east. When you get up here to the 170, follow the signs that say I-95 and I-495 to the east. It's the highest point in the interchange, and it's a little scary if you haven't been across it before. As the ramp goes up it looks like it's turning left, but once it gets on up there, it turns right, toward the ocean."

Doc grinned as he contemplated the good news. "The east side of the loop runs a lot closer to downtown and the government complex. It's about as close as we can hope for, short of taking 395. But with this breeze, I believe we can do the most good if we drop our bulbs on the east side, about halfway around the loop toward Baltimore."

Foxy was agreeable, so they took that route. Along the way, they looked out across the water and could clearly see the Washington Monument and the US Capitol through the driver's side window. About ten miles further up the road, they opened Foxy's window and, one by one, they dropped three bulbs onto the roadway. Foxy could see them as they puffed up into clouds of dust, billowing with the draft of the truck, but being carried westward toward town by the prevailing breeze.

The CB crackled with a friendly voice. "Hey, red-truck, your brakes getting hot or something? I see smoke coming from under your trailer!"

Foxy grabbed the microphone. "Naaaaah, nothing like that, driver! When I picked up this trailer, the landing gear was buried in the mud, and I'm afraid bits and pieces of dirt have been falling off now and then, now that it's dried!"

Several drivers called back. "Hey, lady, I'll be glad to help you clean them landing gear off, if you'll tell me where

you're stopping!" Others weren't so gentlemanly.

"No thanks, but I do appreciate it! Me and my ole' man gotta be down in the boonies of Maryland in a couple hours, or we lose our bonus for this trip. Maybe next time!" Foxy, to be a new driver, had a nice way of deflecting the crude comments that women drivers so often had to endure from niggers and whites who acted like niggers.

They drove on around the circle, and then headed up I-95 toward Baltimore. They decided to take the route straight through town, and to drop the last of the bulbs in the Harbor Tunnel. They stopped once at the Maryland toll road service plaza, and then continued on their way northbound.

Once they got to Baltimore, they passed the turn-offs for I-895 and I-695, and started the downhill slope that took them to the tunnel. Foxy lifted the last bulb to her lips and kissed it, and then turned it to Doc. Once he had done the same, and crossed himself with it, he gave it back to her, and she dropped it out the window as they reached the deepest part of the tunnel, where the curves in the tunnel would hide the view from either end.

They exited the tunnel and went through the toll gates, and drove on through the night, making their way toward Elkton.

The next morning they unloaded about 15 miles south of Elkton, and Foxy got busy on the qualcomm, sending in a message to dispatch. The home office was surprised to find out that Foxy was on the truck, since they had been under the impression that she was taking some time off, but they quickly adjusted the payroll and showed her as active. Within a few minutes, the reply came back, and they were on their way to pick up lighting fixtures in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Their load was headed toward Los Angeles, deliver ASAP.

Three days later, they were sitting in the truckstop just east of Los Angeles, enjoying the warm California breeze and aggravating truckers on the CB. They had found Fallout and his new trainee, a woman, at the lighting fixture warehouse, and he had agreed to meet them at the truckstop next door to the Ontario Mills Mall, where yet another red-truck was waiting on a load back east.

BEEP! The qualcomm unit announced the arrival of an incoming message. Foxy lifted it from its resting place and pushed the "read next" button. The message was short and sweet. "Call me".

Doc, being the "lead driver", hooked up the microphone and headset to his laptop and connected to the internet. He then brought up the voice-over-internet program, and dialed the number for the home office. Never use cellphones when the internet is available for free! Once the receptionist answered, he asked to be connected with dispatch, and was soon on the line with the little fat girl dispatcher who sat in the corner.

"Hey, Erik, are you and Doreen okay? I mean, not sick or anything?" She sounded worried.

"No, we're fine, both of us. And there are a couple of other red drivers here, and they all seem to be okay. Something wrong?" The look that passed between Foxy and himself spoke volumes.

"Well, that's good! I've been watching the 24 hour news channel, and it seems that there is some kind of attack going on! Something like that anthrax stuff, or maybe worse! Folks coming down sick all over the country, although

California seems to be okay, so far. Half of my drivers won't answer their qualcomms!"

"All the brokerage houses have been told by the Feds to shut down and not give us any loads until further notice! So, I'm afraid you're stuck out there for the time being, but I can send you some money if you need it. Also, the load coordinator says you're free to move to a safe place, if you're not in one already." The dispatcher seemed to be honestly concerned about them.

Doc reassured the woman that he and Foxy were just fine, and promised to get Fallout and the other driver to call in, as soon as he could locate them.

He turned to Foxy and took a deep, unsteady breath. "Well, it's done! Folks getting sick all over, except out here in L.A. Hope you don't mind the warm climate, because she says we're stuck. Feds have locked the country down, no interstate travel at all."

The woman stood up from the passenger seat and stood beside him. "Hey, big boy, since we're not gonna be going anywhere for a while, wanna work up a sweat?" She purred the words in his ear, as she stepped backwards toward the sleeper, tugging on his shirt sleeve.

Doc didn't resist. "There is definitely a silver lining to every cloud, isn't there?"

Six months later, things had more-or-less returned to normal, albeit minus forty million non-whites! Doc and Foxy were still running teams, and had just about decided to purchase their own tractor, so they could make more money.

They were working for the same company, which had gotten quite a bit bigger, since so many smaller companies had gone under when their non-white drivers had died.

They had taken a leave of absence, partly to help stand guard with their neighbors, but also because they had both caught a dose of their own medicine, probably when they crossed paths with one of the other people who had been dropping bulbs out the window. For two weeks after they got back to Alabama, they had both been horribly sick, but they had survived with no lasting effects.

Doc wasn't entirely happy with the results of the toxin, since there were still several million non-whites living in the United States, but the effects were definitely visible! As far as Doc could tell, from a purely non-scientific point of view, niggers who had at least 1/2 white in them had a natural resistance to the disease. Those who were quarter or less were more susceptible.

The non-whites who had survived the disease and the two months of near-anarchy had been shocked to the very core, suddenly realizing that their White hosts were a deadly element that could only be pushed so far, and the survivors were keeping to themselves and conducting themselves in a more dignified fashion.

A growing movement of country niggers, accustomed to farming and having skilled trades, had petitioned Homeland Security that they be shipped back to Africa. The Black Muslim faith was gaining ground among the few city niggers that were left, and violent crime was at an all-time low, although there was still a significant amount of petty thievery going around. Even that was attributed to nigger teenagers, who would never quite understand the implications of teasing a sleeping tiger.

While most of the larger cities were being patrolled by regular Army units, the government had almost immediately formed and equipped a number of civilian work corps units, variously assigned to clean-up or security or border patrol. Most of the smaller towns were using men and women from those units as auxiliaries to their own local police and sheriff's departments. The government, in an unusual display of cultural sensitivity, had made certain that the civilian units were deployed among people of their own regional background, reasoning that Rednecks pulling armed patrols in Yankee towns would not be well received, and vice versa.

Of course, the word had gone around that the attack had been the result of white supremacist haters and racists who had somehow gotten their hands on a supply of military bio-toxin. However, it had been minimized by the government and media, since a Jewish man and his wife had been found in their motor home, dead from exposure to the very toxin they were spreading around the country.

The story was given credence by the fact that the Jew, before he had retired, had been involved in destroying such weapons for the Army. Before long, the consensus was that these retirees had been the shakers and movers behind the whole thing, and that they had met a just fate. The CDC had helped out greatly, when they estimated that the incubation period had been as much as three weeks, which would have given the couple time enough to spread the toxin around the country.

Although the government and media may have known better, they chose to go with the flow, and let the issue die with the couple in the motor home.

It was widely rumoured among the white supremacist groups that the media didn't want to risk having the average American making the connection between a Jew and the

greatest man-made plague in history. Being mostly Jews themselves, the media quickly changed the subject and forced the question of "whodunit" to die a quick death.

Doc checked the blog a couple of times, hoping to see some sign that "Bill" was still alive and well, but within a few weeks of the outbreaks, the blog had been removed from the Internet.

The outbreaks had been mostly concentrated in areas east of the Rocky Mountains. Arizona had been hit hard around Tucson, but Phoenix had escaped any serious problems. New Mexico and west Texas had suffered some problems in the larger cities such as El Paso and Amarillo and Las Cruces, but the toxin had not performed as well as hoped on hispanics and American Indians, who were essentially Asian in genetic makeup. Still, the outbreaks had had the desired effect, and millions of Mexicans had scurried across the Rio Grande mudhole, heading southbound with as many of their possessions as they could carry!

Quite a few of them had already been exposed to the toxin, however, and while reports were sketchy and contradictory, one thing was certain: "vatoes" returning from the United States were not being welcomed by their families!

The larger cities had been devastated. The toxin had been distributed to Kansas City, St. Louis, Minneapolis, Milwaukee and Chicago by the couple in the motor home, or so the rumours went. They had been found in Indianapolis, parked just south of town in a truckstop. Ironically, the truckstop was in a town named "Whiteland".

The toxin distributed by the couple had caused severe casualties, but when Homeland Security locked down the cities and surrounded them with National Guard troops, the people trapped therein had spread the contagion back and

forth amongst themselves, and in some areas the death rate approached 100%.

The same scenario was repeated in other large cities all across the country. The non-white populations of Atlanta, Nashville, Knoxville, Louisville, Cleveland, Toledo, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Richmond and DC had been virtually wiped out. Dallas, Houston, San Antonio and Amarillo were forever changed. It was rumoured that people fleeing from the cities, before the lockdown was imposed, had spread the contagion to many other, smaller communities as well.

Trucking and rail and airlines had been under a complete lockdown. Doc and Foxy had spent nearly a month in Ontario, California before they had been allowed to head east. Even then, they had been stopped a dozen times along Interstate 10, specially trained military medics demanding that they give urine samples so that they could be screened for active cultures of the bio-weapon.

Interestingly enough, the cellphone and wireless internet systems had not been affected at all, which Doc attributed to the fact that most high-tech workers were either white or higher Asians. From day one, Foxy was able to keep in contact with her family back in Alabama, and while her sister's kids had gotten deathly sick, they had not died.

Most of the nation's utilities had survived as well. Electricity, natural gas, telephone and cable television systems were predominately maintained by whites and asians, and apart from the vandalism done by surviving non-whites, the utilities were actually in better shape than ever, owing to the reduced drain on their grids!

Doc learned that his mother was safe and happy, hanging out with her sister and watching the news channels

like a hawk. She had been worried about some of her friends who were in the nursing home, but there had been a huge corps of white volunteers, relatives, friends, complete strangers and even teenagers who had pitched in and had taken care of the elderly people.

All over the country, incorrigible kids and grouchy old farts and everybody in between had stepped up to the plate. Meals were taken to old people who lived in the country, and rides were given so that they could keep their doctor's appointments. When the weather got warm, young White people by the tens of thousands, answering a call over the local radio and television stations, had volunteered to go out and help local farmers plant their crops. While they were inexperienced and had to be closely supervised, they were eager and willing and more than made up for the lack of migrant farm workers.

Later in the season, they had returned and helped harvest the crops that couldn't be brought in mechanically. The grateful farmers rewarded them with all-night keg parties and all the fresh veggies they could carry, which was deemed more than sufficient by the hordes of white kids who were delighted at finally being able to get outside and enjoy the fresh air and sunshine without having to deal with niggers!

More than a few white teenagers, once the cultural stigma was gone, were willing to speak out and tell the whole world that they had stayed inside and played video games because it hadn't been safe to go outside in times past. While they had been updating their personal pages and tapping keys in chat rooms and getting fat, they had secretly been yearning to get outside in the sun and enjoy themselves! And now, thanks to the couple in the motor home, they could!!!

Of course, there had been isolated instances of niggers

and Mexicans who, once they realized the attacks had been planned and executed by Whites, had rioted and stormed into White areas, killing and raping and setting fire to everything they couldn't carry with them. However, before long, whole White neighborhoods had begun to organize, and even though many of them didn't own guns, they had ingeniously devised weapons and defensive devices that they used to good effect against the gangs of would-be looters.

All across America, Vietnam Vets and Gulf War Vets and even a few from Korea and World War II offered their services and experience, which were put to good use. The Vietnam Vets especially, putting aside memories of how badly they had been treated by their countrymen, stepped up to the plate and helped build many thousands of improvised, low-tech-but-deadly weapons and put them in places where niggers would be likely to find them.

Many an unwary nigger, venturing into a white neighborhood in search of something to steal, had been found with dozens of arrow-holes in his carcass, the victim of teens who had dug out their old fiberglass recurve bows and had borrowed a couple of Dad's razor-tipped deer arrows.

For a while, until it got to be so commonplace that nobody cared, the big "thing" was for white teenagers to pose with a dead nigger or wetback and post the picture online. Whole "community defense" web pages were set up for that sole purpose, promising that no IP addresses were recorded.

Even the geeks and nerds got in on the fun. Pages on the internet explained how to mix sulfur, charcoal and saltpetre to make black gunpowder. These enterprising young fellows located the components and poured the various percentages of them into mom's coffee grinder. While moms all across America were less than pleased, the resulting powder, while crude, made a highly effective explosive.

One particularly brave fellow, a collector of antique books, had been digging through a 60 year old set of encyclopedias when he came upon the process for making nitroglycerine. He located nitric acid, sulfuric acid and glycerine, and mixed them up in a quart mayonnaise jar. However, when he attempted to pour off the oily liquid that formed on top of the mixture, he didn't realize just how unstable pure nitroglycerine can be, and wound up getting blown through a brand-new hole in the side of his doublewide!

Fortunately, he was expected to recover, although his hearing would never quite be the same, and his wife had filed for divorce!

In one place down in Alabama, a crafty former military guy had rigged an AR-15 up in a tree, and had loaded its magazine with tracer ammunition. One night, when the niggers stormed down the dirt road leading toward the rural White neighborhood, the old soldier had tugged on a string that was attached to the trigger. The niggers, believing themselves to be under attack from the trees, fired wildly into the air with their guns. Meanwhile, the wily country boys had picked the niggers off, one by one, from behind old cars that had been dragged up the road by a farmer with an old Ford tractor. The cars had been donated by a tobacco-chewing old mechanic who had kept them up on blocks for years, creating an eyesore that had been the subject of many a complaint by his neighbors.

The old boy, spitting out his chaw, told them with a grin, "I told you I was gonna someday put them thangs to good use!"

Others were more aggressive in their defense. The word went around that, if the cap of a soft drink bottle was loosened without breaking the tamper-proof ring, the bottle

could be squeezed and some of the soft drink could be poured out. Then, while the bottle was still squeezed, if the neck of the bottle was dipped into certain agricultural pesticides, enough could be sucked into the bottle that it would become deadly, without giving a tell-tale taste to the contents.

Until the non-whites caught on, it wasn't unusual to hear that a whole gang of them had drank the soft drinks and had died from the effects. And even after they caught on to the trick, the infinitely more creative Whites continued their attacks, drilling a tiny hole in the bottom of cans, squeezing out the soda, injecting poison with a hypodermic needle, and soldering the hole shut! This technique was also used on cans of food, although the hole was drilled underneath the paper label, which was then re-glued to the metal.

Once a supply of the soft drinks had been suitably prepared, they were carried to a place where they would be "stolen" by niggers or Mexicans, and the next day would bring the news that yet another dozen or so had bitten the dust!

Law enforcement was, for the most part, unable to do much about the problem, since a large percentage of their ranks were already dead from the toxin. In some southern cities, fully 80% of the police were nowhere to be found, dead from the toxin or mysteriously "out of town". The practice of hiring tens of thousands of non-whites and putting them into uniform had caused untold misery to White people across the country, but once the police departments became overwhelmingly-white patrols, the abuses had virtually stopped.

For the first time in nearly half a century, police were greeted with enthusiasm, welcomed into a neighborhood, and even into people's homes! There were even reports of people who had risked life and limb, laying down a deadly hail

of lead in defense of a wounded officer!

There were problems from Army units who, being mostly niggers, had separated themselves from their White officers and had stolen large amounts of ammunition and supplies. As luck would have it, the standard regimen of Army vaccines had given some protection from the contagion. However, as could have been predicted by astute observers of such types, once they engaged local White citizens in an attempt to take over a rural area, the White citizens, defending family and home, held together as a cohesive unit, whereas the niggers had broken ranks and ran once they encountered a determined resistance.

It was a matter of near-unanimous agreement that, in areas where the locals owned guns and were familiar with their use, the niggers and Mexicans did not cause any trouble. However, in areas where it was common knowledge that the general population was disarmed, there were reports of horrible atrocities committed by roving gangs of non-whites. There were stories of attempts by gangs to enter a home in certain gun-free cities, but interestingly enough, the homeowner had stashed guns and ammunition in anticipation of such an event. There were pictures on the internet that showed dead niggers all over front lawns and even on the sidewalks!

One day in early October, Foxy and Doc were sitting under the shade tree in front of Doc's place down by the river. Tim, Doc's brother, had joined one of the civilian work corps units, and was off somewhere helping maintain order and infrastructure. There still wasn't any electricity or running water or telephone lines running to the place, but Doc, with the help of a neighbor, had pounded a pipe into the ground until he had found artesian water. Using the water that

flowed from the pipe, he had rigged up a water wheel that turned a gear, which turned another gear, which turned an alternator. This in turn charged batteries, and they had enough electricity to operate a radio, an LCD television and LED lights in the top of the building.

The water that flowed out of the water wheel was then directed down several rows of vegetables, keeping the ground nicely watered. When the garden had received enough, the water was diverted into a small pond that Doc had pushed out with a borrowed Case skid-steer.

Foxy leaned back in her chair and stretched, enjoying the mild autumn day. "Hey, ole' man, reckon how long it's gonna be until we get bored and go back on the road again? Aren't you getting the itchy gas-pedal-foot yet?"

Doc looked at his new wife in mock surprise. "What? So soon? We're still on our honeymoon!" They had gotten married as soon as they had recovered enough to stand up that long!

Foxy ignored him and went on. "Yeah, so soon! I mean, you've been driving for nearly 20 years, but me, I'm just getting started! There is so much out there that I want to see! Especially now that it's mostly nigger-free! And I've been getting emails from Cherry and Alissia and Fallout's old lady and several others, and they're all on the road again! Yeah, even Alissia! Things at home were still bad, so she hooked up with a "red" driver and now she's out there! I miss them! And they haven't seen us since we got married!"

Doc groaned but didn't say anything.

Foxy leaned close to him and, catching his eye, winked at him. "I hear that the niggers in southern California are getting uppity again! And you know what? I only threw out

TWO of my bulbs in Richmond!"

Doc's face lit up like a kid on Christmas morning. "Go call the little fat girl!", he exclaimed as he jumped out of his chair. "We're going to California!"