

LIMPING TO PARADISE:
Adventures in the Spiritual Realm

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INTRODUCTION

This story begins with me at the age of 58, white male, 6'2", 210, former weight-trainer, looking maybe a bit like an athlete gone to seed. A slight limp from surgery in my 20's, a slight paunch from booze and neglect, glasses, no tattoos, no piercings. I was noticeably missing a tooth in the beginning of the story, and later I would drop the watch and wear only a medium-sized cross around my neck, on the outside of my clothing.

Nothing that happened in my life before this story begins has much bearing on who I am now, but I'll share that I had a life of ups and downs, successes and failures, met a lot of wonderful people, and the only time I really think about those times now is when I remember something I need to apologize to God for.

I was adopted shortly after birth, was baptised and raised attending a Christian church, and was just about the laziest Christian you can imagine. I figured out at a very young age that the world was far too complex to be accidental, and that God and The Bible seemed the only logical answers. As I got older, I rarely attended church or looked up to talk to Him. I was a believer who took it all for granted, and if someone had told me that demons were real, I might have laughed at them.

I lived for over three years unhoused, and spent 63 days in several mental facilities over the course of one summer, all by my own choice. I've participated in hundreds of group trauma sessions with strangers at the end of their ropes, have heard and absorbed thousands of the most terrifying traumas of their lives, and I didn't really start reading The Bible until after I knew it was true.

PWR

Psych Summary

Well, it's gonna come up sooner or later, right? My bet's on sooner.

I was going through my Mom's stuff after she passed, years after my Dad had gone. I found a letter from a psychiatrist to my parents about me. The paper was yellowing, and she'd hand-typed well over a thousand words—a REAL Psychiatrist, maybe my first and only—of her opinion of my situation. I vaguely remember her, she was a very nice and sturdy German woman with a heavy accent, and she gave written tests. What a concept! The letter was from 1965, so I was five or six. She said I was a good and smart kid, and then she wrote a line that has stayed with me. “Unfortunately, Peter seems to have developed a personality that his parents find incompatible with their own.” Huh.

In my late twenties, I began a long odyssey of moronic misdiagnosis and heavy medication. Only one time, in the fifteen years I was treated for ‘acute depression’, did anyone suggest another option. This was a Nurse Practitioner who worked alongside my shrink. She said hey I wonder if you have bipolar disorder, and the shrink walked in as she said the words and talked right over her. He might have even pushed her out of the way. So they stacked me up with effexor and remeron and the latest anti-depressants for many, many years and waited for my bipolar to blow. And waited, and waited...

When I came to California, the first doc I saw gave me a twenty question quiz and came back in five minutes laughing, saying you have bipolar and they were giving you California Rocket Fuel! I said what's that and he said we only use that when someone's sitting on the edge of a bed with a gun in their hand. I said gee whiz. He gave me lithium as a mood stabilizer and I quit drinking for 16 years. Not intentionally, just noticed a few days later that I hadn't had a drink and stuck with it.

I was helped with bipolar depression symptoms—I no longer had moments of deep despair and suicidal ideation. It also helped tamp down the mania, which was a mixed blessing. Bipolar mania is the most powerful substance on Earth—if it could be bottled, it would be the most valuable item in existence. But...because we can easily excel in highly competitive business environments and perform certain tasks at a ridiculously high level during manic episodes, we can easily succumb to flights of fancy. ‘If I’m SO much better at PowerPoint when I’m manic, why can’t I be better at flying from rooftops?’

Most folks in the manic state engage in risky behaviors—they’ll drink more, drug more, spend more money, gamble, chase women, etc. I’ll just say I’ve never been much of a gambler. I’ve never been in a fight or been arrested because of bipolar, or anything else, but I’ve certainly been rude and dismissive. An a-hole.

And then I saw some things that made me feel differently about my place in the cosmos, and I stopped thinking that it was all about me, and that was the end of my bipolar disorder, maybe seven years ago, toward the beginning of this book. Of course I miss the higher gear, but that was a nice glimpse of how fast we can expect to go at the Next Level.

I was also diagnosed with ADD about twenty years ago, and that has continued to be a thorn in my side. Just now, I finally feel that I have a manageable situation and I don’t want to continue to rag on shrinks here—plenty of time for that elsewhere.

Readers may choose to regard this work as fiction, non-fiction, based on a true story, the ravings of a lunatic, or anything in-between. Names have been changed to protect both the innocent and the guilty.

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Chapter One: ORIGIN STORY

Day One

The first time I ever saw a demon, I was dragging it out of a motel room by its feet.

In the last few months of my 59th year, I'd become despondent. I'd experienced a lengthy period of misery and misfortune, and had come to a breaking point. A neighbor had opened my front door and run off my beloved cat, and I'd worked myself into a murderous rage. I called 911 and, when asked if I was a danger to myself or others, I answered "both".

As I departed the apartment complex, strapped to a gurney in the back of an ambulance, I looked up and told God that I knew things would get better because they couldn't get worse. I felt absolutely certain that He heard me, even though He hadn't heard from me in quite a while.

After arriving at a mental care facility, I was immersed in the 5150 protocol. This means two-person rooms in a locked-down, sterile atmosphere, with 12 rooms and 24 souls to a wing. Plenty of security, nurses, nurse's assistants, and general staff.

The day is broken into four group meetings, with breaks and meals scheduled around them. Or the other way around.

The first day, I was reluctant to join the groups. I could already feel myself healing just from being away from my previous situation, but I quickly understood that the groups were essential to the process.

And as I began to show up to groups, I witnessed amazing things, remarkable things. Healing things.

The third night I was there, I had a new roommate. We'll call him 'Liam', which means 'resolute protector', and he was there to treat his Gulf War Syndrome. He was ex-Special Forces, and had served three tours in two different theaters of war. He was also a Hollywood guy, and was in the facility because the cops had grabbed him up and delivered him, and he also mentioned he'd been having trouble with his wife. He was about 50, good looking and charismatic.

We developed a friendship, and we had common interests. We both wanted to 'do good', and try to help people, especially the homeless. He said he wanted to focus on helping homeless vets and had a kind of homesteading plan worked out, which I thought was practical and maybe even brilliant. We talked about God a lot, and discussed building and growing a church. I thought he'd make a magnificent preacher, with his booming voice and authoritative demeanor.

He also told me he was a founding investor in a soon-to-go-public business venture and that he could help fund an idea or two of mine. He told me his company had a new and special product, had found a way to refine Marijuana by removing all the elements and effects that no one wants. They had a refining 'machine', as he described it, and sales of the machine could earn a person tens of thousands of dollars in commissions per sale. I had high-ticket sales experience and liked the sound of that very much.

We eventually made a plan to go to his parent's place in Oregon to open a new territory for the CBD product his company was introducing. We could stay with his folks while building our route. Sounds great, right?

He told me he needed my help to get away from his wife, and made me promise to help him get out of the state of California and away from her. I agreed, of course, and for some reason didn't find it odd that a Special Forces soldier was scared of his wife.

I'd watched him do some things, help people, quietly, in the moment, in private, during breaks between sessions. Things that maybe we all could do, but don't think of doing. Speaking quietly while giving reassurances that everything will be okay. A patient, helping other patients. It made me care even more about him and want to help him get to where he wanted to go. I thought he was a very special and gifted person, and still do.

When I was released from the facility, I researched his claims as well as I could and it all looked legit. I gave away most of my stuff and packed up what was left, as I eagerly stepped toward a bright and shiny new future. After years of hopelessness, I was all in, with no looking back. I had only a couple hundred dollars, but Liam had promised I wouldn't need money—everything was set up for us.

He was released a few days later, called me to confirm we were on, and drove over from Burbank in a rental car to pick me up in Riverside County. I hadn't driven or had a license for a while, and this would turn out to be part of the story.

We left late and headed east, and I didn't realize until much later that this might not have been the best way to reach Oregon. I just figured he knew how to drive home to his folks. There were signs for Las Vegas, and I mentioned I'd never been and never intended to go. I'd quit drinking years earlier, didn't gamble or visit hookers, so I didn't see the charm of the place. Still don't, and neither did he.

We decided to stop for the night, still in California, and checked into a cheap roadside motel. When we got to the room, he suddenly got nervous and said he shouldn't have used his credit card because his wife might find him. He made me promise, again, that I wouldn't let her get to him. I promised, again, and I meant it.

My mood was very upbeat, as I had embarked on a grand adventure toward an unknown but potentially inspiring future. It was a long way from where I'd been a few weeks

earlier. His mood was nervous and fearful, and I tried my best to cheer him up. I was too excited to sleep very well.

At precisely 6 AM, there was a tremendous pounding on the door.

My friend bolted to his feet, said it's her, it's her, and ran into the bathroom, locking the door.

I kept the chain on, opened the door, and saw her. He'd shown me pictures of his wife on the drive. In the photos, she looked like a petite and very attractive woman, an athlete. At the door, she looked like the angriest person I'd ever seen. I could tell it was the same person, but barely. You know when actors in movies act crazy or angry and produce a 'mean mug'? Or...have you ever seen a person in an actual full-on rage? This was nothing at all like those things, a different pallet altogether.

Her face was contorted with rage and hatred, and she immediately lit into me. I was missing an upper tooth and was a bit...depleted...from years of neglect, but still...she was unbelievably cruel and nasty. I told her to F— off, that I would never let her in and told her to go home. She was screaming at me to get out of the way, I kept telling her she had no chance, that it would never happen. I used a LOT of profanity in an attempt to discourage her. Finally, I slammed the door in her face.

He wouldn't come out of the bathroom, so I had to talk through the door. I said I think she's gone, he said no she isn't. I looked out the window and she was parked in a large SUV directly in front of the window to our room. There was a passenger in the front seat, and a little boy in the back. She began revving the engine, way too hot.

She came back to the door, and I opened and blocked it. She was yelling at Liam that his son was here and just wanted to see him. I told her to F— off and beat it. My friend in the bathroom never made a sound. I told her I was going to call the cops if she didn't

leave. I was baffled that the cops weren't there already, with all the maniacal screaming and engine revving.

She got back in the SUV and STOOD on the gas. Something kept it from coming through the window. The SUV wouldn't release, it just pulsed. I opened the door and showed her the phone as I dialed 911. I told 911 what was happening and was told they were rolling to the location.

She stayed where she was with the engine howling. I called 911 again, was told the very same thing, and nothing changed. After a while she drove across the parking lot and parked where she could see our door, and we could see her. I called 911 and told them about that, and they said they were sending a unit. Every call to 911 was like a brand new call, very polite and helpful as I provided the information again, and eventually I called 11 times without anyone ever showing up.

She returned and parked in front of our door. I walked outside to tell the child that his Dad loved him and everything would be okay. He was strapped into the middle of the back seat, seemingly catatonic. A six year old. She got out of the vehicle and somehow made her way to the other side of it, and made a break for the room.

She beat me to it, and got inside. I caught up to her and grabbed her by her shoulders from behind, just inside the room. She turned toward me so that my hands were on her upper arms. She slid down to the ground to get away and my hands slid down her legs to her ankles and feet. I grabbed her by her feet and dragged her out of the room on her back.

As she was pulled across the threshold of the doorway, the bone structure under the skin of her face began to shift rapidly back and forth. She emitted a sound I still can't describe. Her face became fully distorted, like a cartoon of an electrocution, and I had a full few seconds to appreciate what I was looking at. I pulled her several feet out onto the sidewalk, and stepped rudely over her to go back into the room.

Then I heard this mewling coming from outside the door, and I looked out the window. There she was, looking kind of like the picture I'd seen of her, normal-ish, rubbing her arm and saying I'd hurt her, in the voice of a little girl. I told her to shut up and go away, which sounds mean, but c'mon. She drove back to where she'd been parked earlier.

And, then...I had time to think about what had just happened. In those moments, she had looked like nothing I'd ever seen. No special effect could account for it, not even close, and I had a single thought when I saw it, the same thing *anyone* would think, whether they believed in such things or not: DEMON.

My buddy was sitting on the side of the bed next to the door and seemed to be in shock. He'd either heard or seen the whole thing. I was elated, triumphant. I was saying THIS answers every question about everything! Demons are real, they can be dragged around by their feet, they're not in charge of anything, it's proof of the Gospels! And to KNOW all of that, to have seen it personally...what an amazing gift!

The fella who had been in the front seat with her came and knocked on the door. He spoke privately with my friend, who he knew. I wasn't invited to listen, so I sat on one of the beds with my arms raised in victory and joy. I'd call that the Rapture state, and I've remained more or less in that state for the several years since the incident, except I've lowered my arms. It didn't stop there, none of it, not by a long shot, but this was the inciting event.

A cop finally called and asked how it was going, and I told him she was still posted up across the parking lot. I asked him where he'd been for five hours, because it was now after 11. Five hours. He said maybe you should wait for an opportunity and then make a break for it. I said okay, because what else can you say to that?

After another hour or so, she drove off. We didn't know if she was lurking somewhere, but we figured that was as good a time as any. We got back on the highway, but now

things had changed a bit between us. He was sullen and standoffish, and it felt to me a little more like work and a little less like an adventure. We passed a sign that said 'Las Vegas 2 miles'.

We continued driving past Vegas and through the desert. I've looked at maps since then and still can't explain why I didn't at least ask if he really knew the way to Oregon. We kept our heads on a swivel, watching for her and anyone else that might mean us harm. He told me more about his history with his wife, and I soon figured out that she'd gotten her talons into him when he was in high-school. Since then, she had sabotaged opportunity after opportunity for him, belittling him and making him feel worthless the entire time. I was like, yeah, she's a demon, I assume that's what they do. Somebody had seen him DO something amazing or divine or miraculous when he was very young, and she'd been assigned to him to keep him from manifesting his full glorious healing potential.

When he told me she was the first and only girlfriend he'd ever had, all this information combined to rush up at me and I just started crying, pouring down tears, despairing at all he had suffered through. His existential torment, the shame of failing to execute simple plans for success solely because of her, the memory of turning down exciting and lucrative offers she wouldn't allow him to accept.

Suddenly his face was right up in front of mine, studying me very closely, and I realized he was checking to see if I was fake-crying. I said what the hell, watch the road. We were suddenly in Utah, and the terrain changed instantly from flat desert to twisting mountain roads, like another world entirely. I was wondering if a demon could toss a car at someone, and was turning frantically to look back and to the sides.

I said listen, brother, now you're finally going to have the wonderful life you deserve, you're going to find a great woman who loves and supports you, everything is out ahead of you now. You're young and talented and you can control your own journey. I said

look, we're in Utah—I think you're allowed to have **several** wives here! I was joking, of course, but maybe it was the wrong joke at the wrong time.

As those words emerged from my yap-hole, the car immediately felt as though it was rolling down and forward, tumbling straight ahead, end over end, and not a second later we were back on the road passing the very same 'Las Vegas 2 miles' sign from many hours earlier. That was it and all for him, and he pulled far off the highway and into the sand. He was deathly pale, his hair stood straight up on his head, and he never said another word.

I knew the cops would see us and I stepped out of the car to wait for them. As soon as my feet hit the sand, I had one thought: THIS is an away game. I've since read that others have had this same sensation when they first step on Vegas turf, and I knew that nothing would ever be as it had been.

The cops came, an ambulance was called, and I told my buddy that I would come find him in Vegas, that I loved him and was still going to help him get home to his folks. He did not respond. I watched him go, strapped to a gurney in the back of the ambulance. He looked utterly...unraveled.

I couldn't legally drive out of there, and the cop said I could ride into town with my stuff on the wrecker when it came by to tow the rental. If I'd had a license, I probably would have returned the rental car to LA, and then...what? I had nothing.

It was getting dark as I stood looking out at the desert, and I realized I was homeless. I asked the cop how hot it was, because it was broiling. I asked if it was 110 or so, because I've lived where that temperature is not uncommon. He said it's 85, and I thought oh, boy.

The cop told me which facility they were taking my friend to, the wrecker came, took me and my stuff to a cheap motel in Vegas, and then things got weird.

Day Two

This is what I had learned between 6 AM and 6 PM that day:

- a) Demons are real, and
- b) you can drag them around by their feet, and
- c) be careful what you say.

I rode into Vegas with the wrecker guy, as he towed the rental vehicle into town. I told him the paltry sum I could afford for a motel room, and we headed to a part of Las Vegas I never saw again after that night. NOT a place for tourists with money.

As it is in so many countries in the world, developed or not, I could actually SEE the playground for the wealthy from the killing fields for the poor. Everything is lit up in Vegas, so the Strip was clearly visible from the street of dilapidated motels and hopeless, pay-by-the-hour refuges I ended up on. A couple of miles but light-years away.

We found one I could afford, and I unloaded all my stuff from the rental car into the parking lot of the motel. And it was ALL my stuff, because I'd been moving to a new state to begin my new, exciting life. I had a big screen TV that I had to talk the driver into keeping, because I knew if there was one thing I wouldn't need—now that I was homeless—it was a big screen TV.

The proprietor of the motel was an older black gentleman who didn't seem pleased to see me. He reluctantly gave me a key to the first room on the end and I dragged my remaining items into the place. I got everything inside, then lay down on the bed with my head spinning.

I thought about my buddy, who I'd promised to help. The cop had told me the name of the facility they'd taken him to, and it was nearby. I thought about my buddy's wife, who

was a Demon, or had a demon, or both, or whatever. I thought about how I'd promised him I would get him away from her, and how badly I'd failed. I decided that no matter what, I'd find him and help him, because I'd promised I would.

As I leaned back on the bed, I noticed a series of noises coming from just above my head. I turned to look and saw that the mattress on the bed had a gap between the top of it and the headboard. A considerable gap. I put my head over the hole and could hear voices coming from down there. They sounded far away, and not at all happy. The mattress was pulled up as far as it would go, so I figured this hole might be some kind of portal to Hell, and I decided to go out instead of hanging around in there.

I walked up to the corner where there was a major intersection with a convenience store. There was a heavy fella parked in his wheelchair by the gas pumps who asked me for a light, and I gave him one. He was older, black, and suffering. He was a Vietnam veteran without control of his bladder. He asked me if I could push him across the street to get to the hospital on the other side of the intersection. This happened to be the same hospital where the cop had said they'd taken my friend. Perfect, right?

I thought man, this is working out fine. I can help this fella and at least try to connect with my buddy. So I began the process of pushing him across the huge intersection in his wheelchair. And we worked it out with the traffic lights, and we made it across the intersection, and then everything changed.

As soon as we reached level ground, across the highway and down to the sidewalk level, he lit into me. I was pushing the wheelchair as delicately as I possibly could. We were on the sidewalk that winds around the entire massive hospital facility. There were lots of bumps and imperfections along the way, and he would cry out in pain at the slightest jolt, and I eventually realized that he was just messing with me. I noticed that his voice would change from time to time, and that he would turn from appreciative and thankful to full-on insulting and nasty, and back and forth.

I took it for a while, then finally had it. I started yelling back at him when he would change, and was thankful that no one could see me yelling at this poor old guy in a wheelchair. It was full-on nighttime, and we kept rolling on the sidewalk toward what looked like a lighted entrance a few hundred yards ahead. It stayed a few hundred yards ahead, even after we turned at the end of each city block. We kept going around and around the building, and never found a way into the facility.

When it began to get light, he said just take me to the VA. I agreed, and we boarded a bus in that direction. We got out near the VA, only to be told that it was closed due to the Memorial Day weekend. I asked him where he wanted to go, and he said he didn't want to go anywhere but to the VA.

We went into a convenience store, and as soon as we got inside, he began abusing the staff. Just vicious, over the top verbal abuse. I tried to drag him out, but he wouldn't go. The clerk called 911, and said the cops were on the way. I said the cops are coming and he said don't let them take me. I said I wasn't sure what I could do, and he said you promised you would help me.

The cops came, and he continued to be obstinate and abusive. They called for an ambulance, and he was yelling at me as they loaded him in the back. "F— you! Look what YOU did!"

I told the cops I needed some in-patient care as well. They asked if I was a danger to myself or others and I said sure. They said you won't go to the same facility as this guy, and I said it doesn't matter. I had another guy to look for.

A rescue vehicle came for me, I answered a couple of questions in a certain way, and for the second time in a month I was strapped to a gurney in the back of an ambulance.

They took me to a 5150 facility, not the one they said my buddy had gone to, and checked me in. Immediately after check-in, we got on an elevator and went down what

seemed like quite a distance. The door opened into a small room with four cells with windows. There was a lot of staff down there, but no one else in the other cells. They said we're going to catheterize you, and I said how about I just give you a urine sample? They said, no, that's okay.

I looked at the cell I was in, with one five-point restraint bed, and realized I might have stepped in it.

I looked at the staff milling around, and saw them begin to change. I could see shadows of creatures or something on their backs, and saw that the things were vying to get to the top of their spines, where that knob is. I thought...demons. Another kind of demon.

I focused on two individuals in particular. Across the room was a massive fella, a huge black man with a face that might have been carved out of a cliff in Africa. A majestic, awe-inspiring face, but one that wouldn't play well in public. He had just one of the creatures on his back, and his face began to change very quickly.

Much closer to me, right in front of me, was a petite little nurse's aide. She had four of these things on her back, but she wasn't changing. All she could do, or would do, was turn in a tiny circle with her head down. She just kept turning very slowly, her eyes averted, unwilling to join the catheter party.

Around the room, the others were changing. They were nurses, security personnel, whatever. All were being affected by these predators on their backs. All were tasked with catheterizing me, and all were getting on board and gearing up for the mission.

I realized that this must be it--I'd run out of time. I was about to reap what I had sown, and I knew if they could accomplish this task, they could do anything else they ever wanted to do to me. I thought this was the proverbial end of the Earth, and I stopped being scared. If God was going to take me out of the Game like this, I knew I deserved it. I had one chance to do something.

So I said "Our Father..." and the entire room lit up like a Christmas tree. The creatures were glowing a dull reddish color, and their victims—the staff—became confused and unable to do anything. As soon as I saw what was happening, I picked up the pace and volume and intensity of the prayer. I used the Lord's Prayer like a weapon, and it paralyzed every single individual in the room.

I saw four sets of fingers trying to pull open the cell door from the outside. They couldn't do it. I kept bringing The Prayer, and they continued to be stymied. This went on for several minutes, until they finally got the door open. I was taken back out of the cell and back upstairs unscathed. I wasn't catheterized or damaged in transit, and the word I'd use for my treatment is 'gentle'.

I was kept in that facility, a more or less normal 5150 environment with a few bizarre anomalies, for several days. I got to know the big fella, and we shared a big hug when I was discharged. He was a sweet guy, and he was always very nice to me.

It took me some time to digest all that happened in there, but when I'd spent enough time on my own, later, by myself, outdoors with only God to talk to, I reached some conclusions.

First, those demons wanted to rape me. That was the deal there. As a fella, we get used to protecting ourselves from the other direction. Because demons are not like us, they don't think like us. They're idiots, to be frank.

Second, nobody in that room downstairs was a Demon, not like I'd seen before, they were just people with massive unresolved trauma. Because they'd never healed, they had left a door open that a demon could step into and animate them like a sock-puppet. None of them appeared to have any recollection of the underground incident, and all were very helpful and kind to me throughout my stay.

So I knew there were two kinds of demons. Professional, and transitional. People who are Demons, and people with a demon inside them.

I thought about the big guy and the little girl. What different lives they'd had! The big guy was in his sixties, with a lifetime of suffering behind him. Not only was he black, he was too big. His face was off-putting, to say the least. He wasn't just isolated by his color, he was isolated from his own people because he didn't look like them. He was big and strong, but not athletic. He couldn't even make his size work to his advantage when he was a kid on the playground. It took only one demon on his back to send him into action, because he'd had a lifetime of suffering behind him.

Now, the little nurse's aide. She was in her early or mid twenties, and from a culture that rewards and encourages accomplishment. She may have been Korean. She was smart and pretty and was making her parents proud every day. She told me she wanted to be a doctor. She'd already had a lifetime of success and high accomplishment, of brilliant academic performance and parental support. She'd had four demons on her back, and would not play ball at all. Was she Christian? I don't know. Would it have mattered? I don't know.

Both of these individuals, and all the other participants, were kind and helpful to me in the aftermath. They clearly had no recollection of the odd events, and I wasn't about to bring it up. I'd already learned everything I'd ever need to know.

Takeaways

After less than 48 hours, I knew everything. I knew there were two broad categories of demon, and that each could be controlled and dominated.

In the years since, I've had hundreds of interactions with the Opponent, in both guises, but I never learned another important thing. I've seen plenty of antics, and been a part of other supernatural stunts and skits. I've learned some of the things demons can do. I've had conversations with the Old Boys, and had them claim different traumatic events from my past. I've manipulated and demoralized demons of both kinds, but after a time, there was no more animosity between us. We're just on different teams, and everyone seems to know how the Game winds up.

The thing to remember is this: once you understand that human beings are faced with an implacable enemy, one they can't see and might not even believe in, a tireless and endlessly cruel opponent...once you know what people are up against, it's EASY to love them. All of them.

Chapter Two: SHIPWRECKED IN VEGAS

What Happens In Vegas

When I first set my feet down in Las Vegas soil, I knew right away that it was hostile ground, and I've since learned that my experience was not unique. It's unlike any other feeling I've ever had, and it is all-encompassing. If you're a Christian, and you land in Vegas, you might instinctively know that everything that follows will be informed by this fact: Vegas is where God allows the little guy to squat.

Knowing this going in will help you make sense of any bizarre or otherworldly situations and interactions you might witness or participate in.

So when you cannot put together a text on your phone to save your life, or the city bus never shows up or, worse, flashes messages related to what you're thinking about, when seemingly well-meaning people mislead or directly lie to you, when you're presented with option after option designed to unravel you or place you in danger, keep in mind the following fact: demons, devils, what have you—they have no power of any kind over you. They can confuse and frustrate you, but they can't make you hate or sin. Only you can allow that. If you're a Christian or otherwise working for God, your Vegas journey might be unusually rigorous and grueling. You're on foreign soil.

I'd promised Liam that I would find him and help him, so after failing to locate him in the first 5150 facility, I made plans to visit some others. In the meantime, I tried to adjust to the homeless life. In Vegas, there is a specific part of the city where the homeless queue up and find help. It's several long city blocks wide and deep, and within that area can be found all the traditional helping entities: Salvation Army, Rescue Mission Alliance, Catholic Charities, etc. All those programs can assist with document gathering and shelter placement. And food. And phone-charging. And bathrooms.

I was there during what was described as one of the worst heat waves in city history. Lunch was served at one of the helping entities at the top of a long steep hill, and I remember whining and mewling to myself about the heat as I climbed. Then I looked to my left and saw a fella pushing a double baby carriage up the hill, passing me as he went, a determined look on his face. I've never forgotten him, and I've tried to adjust my complaining accordingly ever since.

I found a church out of the homeless zone that I could sleep behind, and in between excursions to mental facilities to search for my buddy, I filled up legal pads with thoughts and observations. I prayed and thanked God constantly and asked for guidance and direction.

I found the next 5150 facility and said what I needed to say to gain entry. I was there for 9 days and in that time I was able to expand my knowledge of the Enemy while increasing my appreciation of the 5150 template for healing. After figuring out that almost everyone locked up on my ward had a Biblical name, the first unusual event was being placed in a rather large room with patients in hospital chairs. Each person had a line in one arm and a line out of the other, with blood bags suspended over their heads. It was obvious what they were trying to do—transfusions. I thought these idiots are trying to find the God-gene or something.

The nurse was attempting to place a needle in my arm and it was taking too long. I looked over and looked into her eyes, which were fixed on my face rather than the task at hand. She was digging into my arm, watching for my reaction, and had a look on her face I would witness many times in the future. She looked HUNGRY. I felt no pain, just movement beneath my skin, and she eventually gave up.

One patient was a very tall fella—6'10" or so— with a very famous Vegas name, and he seemed to be able to do whatever he wanted. Whether you've ever spent time in a locked facility or not, you'd probably know that patients can't just lie around on the floor in hallways and verbally abuse patients and staff as they walk by, but that was this guy's

shtick. Just lying there on the floor in front of a nurses station, laughing and giggling with his hands behind his head, his legs stretched way out into the walking paths, a constant barrage of the meanest, cruelest personal insults imaginable raining down on anyone who happened by.

Maybe his family had funded a wing of the hospital or something, I don't know, but after a while I'd heard enough. I lit into him and made fun of him, defending the quality and hardworking nature of the staff he was abusing, reminding him that he had no value and no purpose, etc, etc. I was as mean to him as he was being to others, and the 8 or 10 staff members in the area burst into applause. Momentarily satisfying, but it didn't move him off his spot.

From that moment on, every single evil stupid thing out of his mouth was met by a Godly counterpoint from me, and I made him as miserable as I could. I understood that he was a Demon, or had a demon, or spoke in the Demon's voice, and I had the responsibility of demoralizing and diminishing him in any way that I could. HE was locked in there with ME, and he knew it. George decided he wanted us to call him 'Jorge' with a Spanish pronunciation so I called him Whore-Hey in a way that he couldn't stand.

There was a ridiculous over-representation of people with Biblical names in there (and no Liam). At one point I counted 23 out of 24 traditional Biblical names on the ward. Timothy, James, John, Aaron, Adam, Paul, etc. There was one fella in there named Michael, and I was learning that Ol' Scratch hates 'Michael' even more than the rest of us, with good historical reason. This poor fella seemed to have a diminished capacity, just sweet and gentle and innocent as could be, so of course whore-hey latched onto him and was always whispering in his ear. Michael asked me if he should believe what whore-hey was feeding him and I said of course not, whore-hey was a demon, and was out to do him harm.

For the next three mornings as we walked down the hall to breakfast, there was Michael sitting by the aisle with whore-hey's arm around him. He had a freshly sutured cut high on his forehead over his left eye, and his hair had been shaved up to make room. Each day, a new cut higher on his head, his hair shaved to make room. Like I said, looking for the God-gene. They couldn't make him angry or hateful no matter what they did to him, and they just couldn't figure it out. Later, I asked some fellas at a bus stop if they'd ever seen anything odd in any of the 5150's. One guy said you mean like them cutting on people's heads? I said yeah, that's what I mean. Not a secret, apparently.

My last day in there, before I went to 5150 court to try to get released, there was a noticeable lack of tension in the air, like some pressure had been lifted. I picked up a piece of a newspaper from a table (don't know how it got in there) and I read about an infant who'd been shot and killed the night before. The article said they hadn't yet determined if the cop or the mother had fired the fatal shot, but the baby's name was 'Messiah'.

Back on the street, I had a couple of almost identical experiences just a week or so apart. In both instances, I was sitting on the bus at night, maybe halfway down the aisle, when three rowdy young fellas—gangsters—got on. In each case, they took one look at me and seemed to salivate--some old white guy with a rolling suitcase, a backpack or two, a guitar—easy pickings. Immediately, all three fell into horrendous coughing fits, and clawed at the door to escape. Nearly identical events, with slight demographic differences for the would-be perps. This exact situation occurred yet again, many months later, in a different state, and I write about it later in an article called 'Protections and Perspectives'.

Long before I'd learned anything of spiritual value, I'd read about people tormented by gangstalkers on reddit and quora. There were always folks in the comments making fun of the victims for being crazy. I knew, just from the existence of 'Bumfights', that there were certainly people who would do something like this to others, especially after the advent of cell phones. If you don't remember Bumfights, there was a fella who would

give a dollar or two to homeless folks if they would fight each other or otherwise debase themselves on camera. He sold these compilations on VHS tapes, and had quite a booming business. This guy was so malevolent that he was booed off the stage by an audience of the similarly spiritually compromised on the Jerry Springer show. This same little fella then went on to get arrested in China trying to smuggle baby body-parts out of the country.

He eventually landed in Vegas, naturally, and I assume he resumed his demonic work there, among his peers. Anyway, it's pretty easy to notice when you're being followed, especially when they want you to, and it's really easy to follow a homeless person when they're on foot or traveling by bus. So I noticed the fellas, made sure I waved at them or tipped my hat, and dismissed it. I don't really know how long they persisted because I stopped looking.

The reason normal folks can't get their mind around gangstalking is because they cannot figure out why anyone would have that much interest in them. They don't know that this type of thing--making humans fear or doubt--is a demon vocation. It's their job, so don't take it personally. In fact, you might even feel a bit of pride, because demons only focus on high-value targets. They don't follow atheists, because atheists are already in the bag of their greasy master.

In my third and final Vegas excursion into the 5150 world, they really didn't want to admit me. I obviously couldn't tell them that I was just looking for my friend, and maybe they'd been disappointed in how the last two admissions had worked out. They finally let me in and we went almost immediately in an elevator down under the ground. We emerged into an operating theater, where patients were strapped down on five-point beds and had teams of four hooded figures working on their guts, two on each side. They were fully awake, eyes bulging, their mouths wide open, straining and apparently howling and shrieking in pain and torment. It was set up like a huge emergency room, where the partitions had been pulled aside so everything was visible. Thankfully, I was spared the audio because I'm sure that the screaming would have instantly undone me.

I walked around the whole area hoping I wouldn't find my friend, and I didn't. I stopped and sat on a chair and watched a woman sitting cross-legged on a hospital bed. Someone said “Mary” and she slowly started burning and turned black and finally to ash. Suddenly, all of her that was left appeared to shoot straight down and she was no more. I walked over to the hydraulic bed she'd been sitting on and there was a golf-ball sized hole with smoke trickling up and out.

After a while, I was approached by a fella in a white lab coat. He was carrying a clipboard and was rather imposing, clearly in charge. He reminded me a little bit of the evil doctor in Indiana Jones, with a round head and quite a bit of an Alfred E Neumann “what me, worry?” look going on. He said “have you seen enough?” and I said yeah and he said we'll get you out of here. And that was that—no 72 hour mandatory hold for me.

Back on the street, I started to take a greater interest in the plight of the homeless. There were people from all walks of life, suffering because they were outdoors instead of in. Workers inside the check-in area for the dinner venue withheld cold water bottles for entertainment while people begged for them. Someone dropped dead on the sidewalk while waiting to get into the dining area. I started taking notes on a Mobile Resource Van idea.

I visited a couple of churches and noticed I was now particularly sensitive to worshipful gatherings of His children—I became choked-up and overly emotional during the service. Then I visited a black church and began to understand the very special relationship African-Americans have with our Father. I couldn't make it through the first hymn—I was completely overwhelmed by the presence of God in there. I was openly weeping, tears pouring down my face, and about to start sobbing, which I thought would ruin the service for everyone else. I made it out of the pew and to the door and a couple of young ushers said hey man, you're in the right place and I said I know, brother, I know, God bless you but I gotta go.

Vegas is designed in every way to defeat and demoralize us. I don't know what is stored in the back rooms of the endless number of pawn shops, but I can guess. Not just the most important and valuable worldly things a person can collect in a lifetime, but souls as well. There are many by-the-month motels that charge the absolute most money they can from the homeless and disenfranchised, the precise amount that leaves their guests with nothing but misery despite being 'housed'. At that time, in 2018, they charged between 875 and 950/mo, which left many folks who live on disability or SS a couple of hundred bucks left over, if that. Housed but helpless.

One day, I was walking in the homeless sector and saw a sign taped to a pole: One bedroom, shared kitchen and bath, \$500/mo. I thought man! That sounds too good to be true!

In A House of Human Trafficking

I'm a bit hesitant to explain how easy it is to traffic the homeless, but streaming services, especially Netflix, have been producing full tutorials on how to commit terrible crimes for years, as part of their tireless service to the Devil. They even made their own movie glorifying and celebrating the taking and trafficking of homeowning seniors called 'I Care A Lot'. There is some basic demon tradecraft in the script, but they're very careful not to reveal that the plan requires bent and demented judges in order to be successful. In the movie, the judge is unaware, but in real life, the judge is always the main perp. There is a LOT of money at stake, and a corrupt judge is essential to the plan.

The homeless are trafficked similarly to the way migrant workers are trafficked—a migrant comes here through illicit channels, and owes everyone from the coyote to the plantation owner. They're paid only what is left after deductions for housing, the company store, and the criminal element. They can never catch up or get ahead, so they are effectively owned by the plantation and the criminal network forever. They are exploited in every way, especially if they have children who can be sex-trafficked to help 'pay down the debt'.

With the homeless, they only need to have their SSI/SSDI/pension/employment checks signed over to make the housing entity the payee. The pitch is simple: "look, we'll just handle all your financial responsibilities and give you the remainder in cash". To someone struggling to handle all the responsibilities of adult life, combined with debilitating mental illness and the abject hopelessness of life on the street, this can seem like a wonderful service. "YOU'd do that for ME?" But then, especially in an area surrounded by desert—but anyplace with rivers or fields—you are at the complete mercy and whim of the landlord. If you cause trouble, they can just 'sequester' you and continue to collect your funds. This practice is also common with housing contractors, nursing homes, rehab facilities, in halfway houses and by the month motels. Not all of them, but plenty. So if you're ever presented with a legal document by a landlord you also work for, and asked for your signature, you know what not to do.

I was presented with that document immediately after arriving at this house, and declined mainly because I was not planning to stay in Vegas for long. I knew I had to return to California in order to receive prescription medication that I felt I needed in order to regain my grip on my life. They tried a couple more times and I declined each time, but mainly because I wasn't planning to stay. I didn't know what I know now.

'Single room, bathroom and kitchen access, \$500/mo.' I called and met with the guy John, a middle-aged black fella with an easy smile and a lively sense of humor. He acted as though this was a kind of altruistic, help-the-homeless type of effort, and I just thought it was great. I met his wife, who also seemed sweet and friendly. The room itself was in a three bedroom apartment in the corner of a run-down motel, and I never figured out if he owned the motel or if he was just sub-letting a few rooms. I told him he should consider running for local office, and we shared a laugh.

My first afternoon there, he told me I would have a roommate but it would only be temporary. I said I hope so because to me the difference between a shared room and a private room is about \$500. In other words, I had NO money to spend on a shared room. I stepped outside, estimated the temperature to be around a thousand degrees, and figured I could hack it, there in the air-conditioning. I paid him for a week until we could figure it all out.

I met a few of his other clients (guests?) and they were all in varying states of suffering and duress, but happy to be indoors and out of the heat. Early in the evening, I'm in my room reading and a large fella, big and powerful, a very hard guy, steps into the room. He says I guess I'm supposed to stay in here, and I said okay, there's the other bed. He was all tatted-up and looking very dangerous and unpredictable. I thought well...let's see what happens here.

He told me he'd just come from California and was going back the next day. I said that's weird because everyone here is homeless with no other place to go. I asked if he was

here for me, and he didn't answer. So I immediately started telling him about demons and some of the other things I'd encountered in Vegas and reminded him that demons have no actual power over anything. I made him understand that I wasn't scared and never would be, which seemed to take the wind out of his sails. He started smoking meth and I declined to join him. Our window opened up to the back yard area and I saw the landlord and others creeping around out there, trying to see what was happening. I made sure to turn my back to him and stayed that way, completely vulnerable.

I asked if he was supposed to DO something, what with all the attention we were getting. He said do you mind if I turn off the light and I said sure, why not. So we sat there, me with my back to him, sitting on the edge of my bed looking out the window, him behind me smoking meth on the other bed. He said can I sit next to you and I said sure but no funny business. He kind of laughed and we sat there next to each other, looking out the window into the back yard, dimly lit by the moon. I started feeling bad for him, because he'd come a long way and wasn't going to be able to do whatever he was supposed to do, and I told him that. I asked him if this was really his journey and if he couldn't make a change and try to do good things instead. I didn't know the things I could have said that might have actually helped him because I hadn't learned them yet. Eventually, he went back to his bed and I fell asleep. He was gone in the morning and I was still there, unkilld.

The next day, John said I'd be moving to the 'big house'. I asked if I'd have my own room there and he said sure, so I loaded my stuff into his truck. We traveled from the dingy part of town to the outskirts of Vegas, to a very large and nice two story house set back into an upscale development. Those Vegas Tiger Guys had a place right down the street with their names on the gate.

I was pointed to my room, which was occupied by an older black man named Ed who was as disappointed to see me as I was to see him. When he calmed down, we figured out we'd kind of been duped into thinking we'd have our own room. The room was large enough to accommodate all of our stuff and two beds, but it certainly wasn't a single

room. I didn't care as much as he did, and when I tried to advocate for him to the landlord I learned that he was an ongoing issue for them. That was when I met John's girlfriend, who was quite a bit different than John or his wife. Sherilyn was black, in her thirties, very energetic and excitable, tall and slim and overbearing, very quick to anger, and I immediately figured out that she was the brains and the brawn of the entire operation. Gone was the illusion of a charitable effort—this was a business. She drove a Mercedes and dressed and acted like she had money, but was always complaining about her lack of money.

I met the housemates, a pretty young girl Lori who seemed meek and very stressed, a disabled woman in her 80s Linda who was sweet and focused mainly on making sure her phone was always charged, a burly trans girl Mel with a heavy noon shadow, my irritable 86 y.o. roommate Ed who said he'd been a R&B bandleader in Ventura County(!) decades earlier and who liked my guitar playing and encouraged me to play more, a haggard and tormented but pretty lady Michelle in her mid-forties, an older fella in a wheelchair, and at least a couple of older guys in their 60s who stayed mostly upstairs and rarely interacted with the rest of us.

There may have been more, because it was a big house. There was a large open outdoor porch area with a pool table where a few of us would hang out. Mel was an expert pool shooter and when I started talking about some of the demons I'd encountered in Vegas, she said “you gotta get their NAME!” in her deep booming voice, in a way that made me believe her. I said I usually just ignore or dismiss them, and I told her about raining down The Lord's Prayer and the effect it had, and she said “Peter! You gotta get their NAME and THEN you can control them!”. I've never forgotten that, and it turned out that she was right.

After maybe ten days, it all started to unravel, and it unraveled quickly. One night, Michelle came to me and said that they'd promised to fill her prescriptions but hadn't done it yet. She said she needed her meds and was suffering greatly without them. She said she had no money because she'd signed her disability check over. She said she was

scared of Sherilyn who had yelled at her when she'd asked about it. She showed me a copy of her prescription and I've never seen anything like it. On a basic, ordinary, prescription pad were listed eight to ten of the most powerful anti-psychotic meds there are.

They were handwritten into the margins and between the lines. I said your doctor is a f-ing criminal and should be hunted down. She said yeah, that's too many medicines, isn't it? I said it is and I'd see what I could do about helping her get at least some of her meds. Later that night, I saw a demon-looking fella out of central casting sitting with Michelle and making her uncomfortable. I asked where he'd come from and told him to beat it out of there. He did, but when I walked out in the morning Michelle was still out on the porch and was obviously under the influence of something, maybe heroin.

I called Sherilyn and asked her about the meds for Michelle. I'd had a pretty decent relationship with her up to that point--she'd even asked if I wanted to be 'house manager', though I'd told her repeatedly that I would soon be leaving. She screamed at me to mind my own business, and I didn't react well at all. I told her she had a responsibility to her tenants and I wondered if elder care services would be interested in what was happening with Ed and the others. She said well you haven't seen Ed around, have you, and I realized I hadn't seen him for a few days. She said Ed had been talking about calling the authorities, too.

I took that as a threat and decided I would be leaving that week. I told Mel about that encounter and she said she'd accepted the house manager role but was now rethinking it. We agreed that something wasn't quite right, and Mel said she thought we were the only two in the house that hadn't signed over our money to them. She said I needed to talk to Lori, because something was happening with her. I found Lori and asked if she was okay, and she said she'd been told that she would need to sell her body because she was behind on her rent. I said no, that's not gonna happen. I told her to reach out to anyone she knew in the area and find someone she could stay with for at least a few days

until she could get help from social services. I said I'd be leaving in a day or two and I promised not to leave her behind.

Sherilyn came by in the afternoon and I told her I would be leaving the next day to return to California and that I didn't know when I'd be back. She became enraged and stomped off, and before too long I heard the unmistakable sound of violent slapping. I walked toward the noise and saw her whaling on the wheelchair fella, who seemed to be firing insults at her as he took his beating. I yelled WHAT is going on, and she screamed “f— off, mind your own business!” Then he said “yeah, f—off, mind your own business”, so I did.

That night, I spoke with Linda, who must have been in her eighties. She said Sherilyn had threatened to take her phone away if she didn't stop complaining. I realized that she needed her walker to get anywhere and that the nearest bus stop was at least a half a mile away, all the way out of the development and on the highway. Then I finally understood, at long last, the risk that some of these folks faced. Without access to a phone, and not mobile enough to go for help, she would instantly go from tenant to trafficking victim. Utterly helpless and without hope. I told her I would stay in touch with her and try to help.

The next afternoon, I had my stuff out in the driveway and was getting ready to go to a motel near the bus station for departure the next day. Sherlyn drove up and said she'd be ‘happy’ to drive me. I said that's okay, I'll just call a cab. She said no, I insist. I guess she thought she could scare me, so it felt like a challenge. I said sure, why not? So she had her friend—another successful-looking black woman—drive, she sat in the front passenger seat, and I sat in the back. She was turned around facing me and firing a steady stream of racial and other insults at me, and I was more or less ignoring her. We stopped at a house on the way and she went inside. I asked her friend why in the world she hung out with this monster and she said she's not always like this. Sherilyn came back out and told me that this was another of her properties, and she had them all over Vegas. I asked what happened to Ed, and she said we had to downgrade Ed. I asked

what was happening to the wheelchair fella she was whaling on yesterday, and she said they were going to move him to another property.

Then I started telling her about the demons I'd encountered in Vegas and how I'd learned they were weak and easily manipulated. How they would be crushed in the end and there was nothing to be done about it. She leaned toward me and her face began to change until she showed me her full demon face, ghastly and hideous. I said I've seen all that before, you have nothing new. Who cares? God wins, demons lose, as it has always been. Unlike the face I'd seen when dragging my buddies wife out to the sidewalk, which was full of desperate panic and had been clearly unintentional, her display was fully controlled and receded as soon as I continued making fun of her. She turned around and stopped talking, while I explained that when I came back to Vegas, I was going to make a mission out of destroying her operation.

I got out at the motel and said see you soon! No response. I checked in for two double beds and texted Lori that I'd be coming back to get her that evening. I told her she could crash at the motel that night if she wanted and confirmed that she had a place to go the following day. Later I called a cab and remember riding over thinking this is kind of crazy, that I was going to help someone escape her captors right here in America. Ridiculous. I was hoping that no one would be there when I got there, but as we texted, Lori said that they weren't going to let her leave. She said Sherilyn was there and she was angry. I said put your stuff by the door, we're going to make this very quick and easy.

I didn't tell the cab driver anything except keep it running. I got out, went to the door, and had to knock several times before Sherilyn answered. I pulled open the door, pushed past her, went into the hallway, grabbed Lori's stuff, and told her to go out and get into the cab. She did. Sherilyn was yelling that she owes us money and I said something like that's what civil court is for. I pushed past her for a second time and went back out to the cab, and that was that.

I have no idea what the cabbie must have been thinking because Lori was scared and kind of in shock and babbling about all the stuff that had been happening. When we got back to the motel, she told me about her grueling life and how she'd ended up there. She asked aren't you gonna hit on me, and I said no, I think my hitting-on days are behind me. She seemed hurt that I wasn't trying to get with her and I had to tell her that of course I found her attractive but that I was on a spiritual course that prohibited me from acting. I was struck that this poor girl had been trained to believe that her body was her only asset, and I felt so sad for her.

The next day, as I was waiting at the station for the bus to California, I received a text from Linda's phone that said 'she won't be talking to you anymore'. I tried to call but the phone went directly to voicemail and eventually was out of service. I pray that those girls and all those folks at the houses were able to find safety and comfort.

Chapter Three: RETURN TO CALIFORNIA

The Canyon Ridge Experience

I'd returned to California for one main reason--I needed a doctor who would accept my California insurance and write me a prescription for ADD meds. I'd taken them for many years with success and I thought they were the final piece to the puzzle. I was happy with my bipolar meds for the first time ever and thought if I could just focus up I'd be able to help some people and accomplish some goals. I planned to return to Vegas and start the Mobile Rescue Van project.

But I needed a doc and a script and was having a heck of a time. I traveled by bus, stayed in motels when I could afford it. showered a couple of times with shampoo and a jug of water out by a dumpster, and it didn't help anything showing up to doctors appointments with a rolling suitcase and backpacks. I was also running into run-of-the-mill shrink corruption. One guy said his 16 year old daughter had just been told she couldn't continue to take her ADHD meds that had been helping her for years, so he wasn't going to help me. I had a few choice comments to make about that, but it didn't help anything.

Finally, I found a shrink who would get me started back on the medicine, he just needed me to get an EKG done and bring it back to him. There was a medical center right next to his office, so I walked over and told them what I needed. While I was waiting, a nurse took me aside and asked me some basic psych questions. "Do you feel like harming yourself?" was the one she was most interested in, and I guess I didn't answer no with enough confidence. And to be clear, I'd been through a LOT in Vegas and the two weeks sleeping rough in unfamiliar places had also taken its toll on my mood. And I was exhausted.

She said I'd like you to teleconference with a psych doctor and I said okay. They put me in a room and the doctor came up on the TV. She was very bright and friendly, listened to my recent experiences and difficulties, and suggested that I go in-patient just so I could get some sleep and regroup, and I said okay. She said she'd keep me on the Cymbalta because I'd said it was working, and she added an anti-depressant and a mild sleep aid. She said she couldn't write me for Adderall because I wasn't her patient. She noted that I'd run out of Cymbalta that day, and told me that it was very, very important that I never, ever, suddenly stop taking that particular medication.

I said cool, thank you, and it wasn't until weeks later that I was able to return there for my EKG and my records. When I examined the records, there were two columns about meds. Column A listed the three meds that the tele-doc had recommended, that we had discussed, and the second column listed what had actually been prescribed to me—five different medications, none of which were recommended by her, and none of which were Cymbalta, which ended up explaining at least some of the events that occurred at the Canyon Ridge Psychiatric Hospital in Chino, California from the 15th through the 31st of August, 2018.

(In this section, I'm going to go into a bit more detail about the 5150 process than I have before because, when correctly administered, 5150 can be a miraculous life-saving treatment. It is designed to literally take a person from 'I want to die' to 'I want to live' in a few short days, and it's remarkably effective at doing at least that. All 5150 programs share a specific design and daily schedule, with minor variations. I've seen people emerge from this treatment with an entirely new lease on life, and I've seen some folks get better even in an abusive environment. What if we could remove the abusers from the staffs? How well would it work then? Basic 5150 protocols are an essential element of the upcoming Paradise Project healing initiative. More on that later.)

So I was transported, yet again, to a psych facility. And, the more I thought about it, this felt more like the first time, a few months earlier, when I'd really needed help. Too much had happened in Vegas, and I was just struggling with the day to day of homelessness in

unfamiliar surroundings. Wandering the land is great and I wouldn't trade those days and moments for anything, but wandering around looking for a doctor with no greater plan than just 'receiving treatment' was debilitating.

The first unusual thing that happened after I got to Canyon Ridge was having to strip off all my clothes in the office in front of several employees, including women. It didn't help that they were talking and laughing like it was just another day. In the other facilities, I'd just been handed a gown and some sticky-socks and been left in a changing room. For the first of a hundred times, I wondered if I'd made a mistake going in there.

I was placed on Unit 2b, which shared a large nurses station with Unit 2a, which I learned was for older folks and more acute cases, like dementia. Each of the Units was a mirror image of the other— our large hangout room for snacking or watching TV was immediately in front of the nurses station, and theirs was directly across from us. Each unit had twelve rooms running down a hallway, six to a side. Walking the hallway in the opposite direction led to offices and small conference rooms for the group sessions. The doctors office was located in the opposite Unit, as was the med station. On both sides was a large, maybe eight-foot wide glassed-in display next to the nurses station, listing all the legal protections patients could expect, presumably for potential investors and families of prospective patients. Listed in large-type were the phone numbers of ALL the various options in case of an emergency, with at least five different official-looking contacts available.

Each unit had 24 guests, 12 patient rooms, two guests per room. There was a chalkboard with everyone's names on it and what room they were assigned to. The names changed all the time as folks came and went, some there for three days, some for seven or ten or more. There was an outdoor smoking area which was accessed through the main room. Each day was broken into three meal times, four group sessions, with several snack and cigarette breaks.

In every 5150 facility I've visited, cigarettes are provided to those who don't have their own. I asked about that at one place and they said it's stressful enough in here without anyone trying to kick a habit, and this place would blow sky-high without cigarettes. There are regular smoking breaks scheduled between the group sessions and after meals, and I started back up smoking at the first facility I visited, after 15 years without them. And the power and significance of the smoke breaks are not lost on staff, who could weaponize the privilege when it suited them, and did.

I started meeting some of my fellow patients and was amazed at how successful and accomplished most of them were. There were more women than men, and there were managers, business owners, an artist opening a gallery, a top training agent for a multinational corporation, and so on. All were more successful than I was—I was the only one who didn't have a place to live—but they were also successful as a group, and in general. And they were sweet, and kind, and lovely, and without them...there's truly no telling how bad it could have been for me.

There was a type of fellow I'd encountered many times before in other similar facilities—a decorated soldier, like my buddy Liam, but twenty years younger and a veteran of more recent conflicts. Every 5150 facility has these military guys, who are just having real trouble adjusting to a world without war in it. They're finely tuned instruments without any tunes to play, a weapon without a target. The things they are great at are not in demand in the civilian world, and even leadership skills will be overlooked if a person doesn't seem to be...comfortable...around regular folks. He said from the first day he'd be out in three days—the minimum—and I urged him to stay at least a week, and I know he was still there when I finally departed more than ten days later.

There was a guy with his arm in plaster, in a sling, and I said what happened to you? He said the staff had beaten him up and broken his arm. I said this staff, right here? He said yeah, they'd originally put him in one of the other wings because they'd thought he was slow, and when some staff had tried to order him around rudely, he'd said something

back to them and got beat up. They hadn't realized he was some kind of bigwig in the local school administration because he talked very deliberately, and now he was going to sue them for lots of money. I was just amazed and blown away that he was still in there after all that. He said you know what you should try? I said no and he said you need to soak your feet in Epsom salts. He said it's just amazing how much better you'll feel. He said they'll let you do it while you sit right there in the nurses station. I said I'd think about it.

The next day, he was still going on about it so I said, sure, why not? I sat in the middle of the nurses station with my feet in a foot-bucket with warm water and Epsom salts or whatever they'd put in there. As I relaxed, I started to hear what everyone was saying and began absorbing everyone's pain and trauma. On one side, the 'challenged' side, 2a, folks were scared that they couldn't talk to their families or worried about some health concern, and there was the sound of crying and desperate hopelessness. On the other side, my wing, people I'd started to get to know were suddenly coming unglued and weeping openly, talking about giving up and ending things, and when one sweet girl came running past, screaming like she was on fire, I stood up and went out of the nurses station and back to my room.

I was in some kind of near dream-state, and I watched as I twisted up a bedsheet, wrapped it around my neck, threw it into the door hinge, stood up on the toilet, and dropped toward the ground. I was aware that I was choking, and I knew that I'd need help soon. I also started questioning why this was happening, and remembered that not only wasn't I sad or depressed, I was working for God! If anything, I was TOO happy most of the time. How would HE feel about this dark episode, and why wasn't I scared or desperate?

After a period of time that felt like a safety code violation, someone came and discovered me and pulled the sheet off my neck. The staff was mad at me and they placed me in a tiny cell right next to the nurses station. There was a very thin plastic-covered mattress,

one threadbare blanket, and one thin pillow, also plastic covered. And it was freezing cold in there, even more so than the rest of the facility.

I later figured out that they'd--seemingly intentionally--run me dry of Cymbalta, a known high-risk suicide med during withdrawal. They were instead giving me five other meds that the tele-doctor hadn't ordered, for reasons that remain murky. And they'd let me--sorry, encouraged me--to take a foot bath that had who knows what in it. This remains one of the most disturbing and confusing events of my life, but I should stress that I haven't spent too much time thinking about it, because it has no easy explanation. It happened, and now I've told about it for the first and last time.

David, the soldier, would sit around and talk about all the security weaknesses in the facility, and all the weapons he could make out of stuff that was just lying around. I'd heard this kind of talk from nearly all the other soldiers I'd encountered in those places. And yes, he made some interesting points when he noted that their outdoor access security had flaws and blind spots, but I pointed out to him that most of us would be caught right away if we managed to get out and that we'd then be sent to jail, which would surely be worse than this place.

One time, he said he had a question for me. He said he'd been stationed in Afghanistan or Iraq, I don't remember which. He and his patrol had kicked in a door and found a young boy, maybe 10 years old, tied face-down on a table. He'd been raped and beaten and abused, and as the patrol moved into the house they discovered the three men responsible. They put them on their knees and had a discussion among themselves. Then they shot each one in the head, rescued the boy back to headquarters, and the last he'd heard, the boy had made it to the States and was steadily recovering. His question to me was--how does God feel about this? Was that a sin he could recover from, or not? I gave my opinion, which I stand by. I told him that even though they'd paused before executing them, I thought this qualified as a heat-of-the-battle incident, and was likely forgiven right on the spot. It might have been different if they'd detained them, took

them to HQ, locked them in a cell, and then decided to end them. He seemed relieved and I hope he was.

Sitting in the groups, I heard folks share the worst moments of their lives, watched the group absorb their pain, and witnessed steady recovery from those who participated. I figure I spent 63 days in 5150 facilities that summer, and I've heard and absorbed the trauma of hundreds of suffering souls. I learned that there are a lot of ways that women get trafficked, that domestic violence doesn't always involve striking, that men get raped more often than we think, and I learned that no one survives an abortion.

There was nothing at all to read anywhere in that place, except a very worn issue of Homes and Gardens magazine from October of 2017. I know this because, again, it was the ONLY reading material on property. Every other facility had at least a small library, because there is nothing to do between sessions. There were no cell phones in there, of course, and any facility that allows personal phones is not trying to help you. I've heard that those places exist but have never visited one.

They also didn't have any writing instruments except crayons, which was incompatible with my ADD, which had required me to make and compile endless notes throughout each day for several years. I asked for a pen and was told no, only crayons were allowed. I said that's impossible, prison inmates were allowed to write letters all day, and they weren't using crayons. They said no, sorry. I said who can I talk to about this and they directed me to my very first 'patient advocate', a 'profession' I would rather quickly come to hold in deep contempt. I called the fella and asked him to help me get a pen or a pencil. He said nope, we don't do that. I said c'mon, you're lying right now. Why are you lying? He said he'd said what he said and was sticking to it.

So I went to the display case next to the nurses station with all the helpful emergency numbers on it and began to dial. In Canyon Ridge, the staff at the nurses station can control the phones remotely. They can block the phone from getting a dial tone and prevent you from calling out, they can disconnect calls at their leisure, and they can

choose to not inform patients when their family had called, all of which they did regularly. That wasn't the problem I was having--I'd discovered that ALL the emergency numbers were bogus. Of the five numbers listed, two were out of service, one was an answering machine for a business, one just rang and rang, and one was for a completely unrelated city department.

When the nice lady who answered told me that, I shared my dilemma with her. I asked if she could look up the number for the patient advocate for San Bernardino county. She gave me the number and I called and finally reached 'Tally', a high-ranking 'patient advocate', who really couldn't believe they wouldn't give me a pen. I said yeah, I know, right? She agreed it was absurd and promised to do something about it. She asked if anything else was wrong, and I said well...things are getting a little bit weird. She said are you in danger, and I said I thought things might be trending in that direction. It was a Thursday, she said let's talk on Monday, I said that'd be great, and that was the last I ever heard from her, and not for lack of trying.

I'd noticed that they'd started messing with my sleep, but I didn't quite realize how serious it could get. I was closed into my cell each night, which had a closed-circuit camera trained on me at all times. Two monitors were in the nurses station, one for each of the two cells they had. There was a door into my cell that no one was supposed to touch unless I was out of the cell, and there was a heavy traditional hospital door that opened to the outside hallway. Those doors can be adjusted to close at whatever rate is deemed most useful, depending on location. You don't want certain outside doors to slam shut quickly, and you don't want certain inside doors to close too slowly. When I'd first been placed into the cell, I noticed that they were coming in through the outside door to my cell area as a part of their nightly rounds. Every fifteen minutes, a nurse's aide would walk the hallway. They would pad quietly down the hall, looking into each room to make sure everyone was safe and sleeping. The doors to the rooms were kept open, the interiors very softly lit, so they were able to perform this task quietly and efficiently.

In my case, in my cell, even though they could just look on the monitor and see what I was doing, they were ‘unlocking’ my outside door and stepping in to look at me. They would rap a metal key or something against the metal of the door and it would wake me up every time. The door was never locked, so I knew from the start the whole thing was a stunt. The antics of the spiritually compromised. At first, I could count to seventeen waiting for the door to slam loudly shut after they'd departed, but I tried to work with that and almost got used to it. And rather than let on that it was bothering me, I held my tongue because screw them.

But then one night, I counted up to 45 before it closed and I realized that things might get really bad. They'd changed the closing rate on the door in order to extend and multiply my suffering, and it was now the weekend and there was no one to call. And for some reason, that extra thirty seconds of waiting for the door to close was excruciating, and I was suddenly under duress in a way I hadn't been before. And that happened four times an hour, every night, all night long, for the duration of my stay.

I told the shrink about it, again, mentioning the change in the door-closing rate, and he could not possibly have cared less. You might think that a trained psychiatrist would be particularly sensitive to one of his bipolar patients being deprived of their sleep—sleep loss being the key aggravating factor for inducing a manic-state—and would quickly get to the bottom of it, offended that these hourly workers would DARE to mess with one of his patients, but you'd be wrong. He actually took the time to walk the hallway with me like we were old buddies while discussing this, his way of showing the staff that it was open season on me, that anything they did to me was just fine by him.

Unlike other facilities I'd spent time in, Canyon Ridge was staffed mostly by morbidly obese women. At least, that was the case on Unit 2b. It doesn't take a social scientist to understand that morbidly obese women suffer more in our society than any other demographic, and it isn't close. So why in the world would a mental facility hire so many frontline workers in this category, knowing they would face more casual abuse during their daily work than they could find anywhere else, at any other job? The answer is that

human suffering is the food they thrive on, and they don't care if it's patients or staff who are suffering, as long as there is suffering. I should note that I encountered at least three other tragically obese women working in other facilities who were the kindest, purest souls imaginable.

I had been mentioning the forced sleep deprivation to the facilitators of some of the group sessions, thinking that maybe they could do something as mandatory reporters. They were not Canyon Ridge employees but rather highly skilled professionals from Loma Linda who were contracted to do a job and were very good at leading these group sessions. But they turned out to be of no help. I think 'mandatory reporters' are just about as useful as 'patient advocates' which is to say they aren't. Never, not once, did I raise my voice or lose my temper, as the pressure continued to build.

There was fallout from my treatment—people were quitting their jobs. My case-manager left her job and never returned. The original patient advocate left, to be replaced by another equally useless one, who also quit. The general staff was short at least two people, sometimes three, on every shift during my last week. I politely asked the head nurse, a very pretty Asian lady, if she'd originally gone into the profession in order to torment and abuse the helpless, after I saw her refuse to give a woman a blanket even though it was freezing in there. She was so mad I thought she'd come over the desk at me.

I tried repeatedly to call Tally back, but her lackey didn't know when she'd return and he said he couldn't help me even one little bit. After being poisoned for the second night in a row, I told him I was in real danger here, and he basically said I hope you'll be okay. Yeah, me too.

How does one know when they've been poisoned? There are only a few ways, really. The most common way is probably when someone suspects something and has the coroner do a complete autopsy on your dead body, and the other way is when you've been in a completely controlled environment for more than ten days and your blood pressure

suddenly shoots up way higher than it had ever been before—even from coke or meth--and it happens shortly after dinner and meds for three nights in a row. And then you confirm it by abstaining from food and meds on the fourth night, when nothing happens.

Maybe because they weren't getting enough suffering out of me, or maybe it's just what demons do, they started abusing others in front of me. It started early on, when they wouldn't give a woman with a terrible headache an aspirin. I lit into them and refused to shut up until they helped her, which they finally did. Another time, I emerged very early from my cell and into the lobby by the nurses station, where I watched the entire shift pointing and laughing at the folks on the other ward. Several of the elderly were over in their dayroom, up early and presumably waiting for breakfast, while four or five nurses aides stood in the nurses station making fun of them. Literally, pointing and laughing at old folks. I said, very loud, “THIS is how you spend your time? You have nothing better to do?” They weren't at all ashamed, but they were very angry at being caught.

I had learned in my first days there that some of the ‘dementia’ patients were faking it. An old fella whispered to me “they're abusing us over here” and I told him I'd try to help him if I could. They weren't unable to speak, they were afraid of what would happen if they did, so they pretended that they couldn't. How's *that* for living out your golden years? I watched an old woman slowly make her way to the phone to call her son, and I watched an aide at the nurses station watch her slowly make her way to the phone, using her walker. When she finally got there, the aide said NOPE! You're too late! And laughed as hard as she could. She was all alone at the time, so that pain and heartbreak she'd just caused was just for her to savor, like a delicious private meal.

Somehow Tally had been able to convince them to give me a pen, but when I went to the desk to get it, I was met by a frightening creature. Huge like a linebacker, angry as a rattlesnake, loud like thunder, this monster was ‘Regan’, who was apparently in charge of things around there. She screamed what do you think you're doing? I said getting a pen to write with. Tally from the county said I could have a pen, and she bellowed “I

know Tally” in a way that confused me, at least at first. I later learned that this...lady...had previously been the patient advocate at Canyon Ridge, which made perfect sense.

To be a patient advocate in any mental facility, let alone a hellhole like Canyon Ridge, you have to be part of the team because otherwise they'll drive you out. You don't have autonomy like Internal Affairs does in a police department, your office is in the same hallway as those you would be investigating. These are your peers, ostensibly your friends, so your real job is to tamp down complaints and discourage anyone from going to an outside agency, where they'd just meet Tally and be further discouraged and dismissed. Regan had been so good at squashing complaints and complainants that she'd been promoted to head demon. What a racket.

So now that I was on Regan's radar, and all the folks who could help me get out of there had quit, she announced that she was my new case-manager. Awesome! She called me into her office and proceeded to insult and belittle me for an hour or so. She informed me that no one cared about me, no one from my family had even tried to contact me while I was in there (a lie), she literally asked me what was even the point of going on, and waited for an answer. I said I have a lot of things I still want to do, and she burst out laughing. I said well thanks for the pep talk, I'll just be on my way. She said you know we have to find you a halfway house or something before we can let you go, and I said don't worry, I'll figure something out. She said no, I'LL figure something out.

Apparently, she figured something out and I was told on Tuesday that I'd be leaving on Friday. There was a young nurse's assistant who usually worked the day shift who was the sweetest and coolest staff person there. We all thought she was the bee's knees, not least because she had memorized all our names. No kidding, even though we'd circulate two or three out and two or three in nearly every day, she would call us all by name. She was a young and pretty Asian lass with a ready smile and I told her she could make a quarter of a million dollars a year just working as a maitre de in a high-end restaurant. I think she had higher aspirations.

On Wednesday night, after the third pantomime of the nurses aides sitting me in a chair in front of the nurses station and hooking up all the heart-monitor and blood pressure accouterments, as they'd done the two nights previous when I was in distress, I returned to my cell and fell fast asleep. Nobody woke me up, and in the morning I figured out that our favorite nurse's aide had worked the night shift and had allowed me to sleep. Well, you'd have thought she stole everyone's paycheck, because the other staff were openly treating this girl with disdain and disrespect.

The cigarettes went mysteriously missing, which caused a near panic, and the other staff blamed her for losing them. And I watched as this girl absorbed abuse from the patients, and I was there later in the day when one of the other staff treated one of us like dirt and I saw her start to laugh, as the others were.

And that's called 'breaking the staff', demon style. There are some folks who accept work in places like that (nursing homes, prisons, etc.) for the specific purpose of abusing the helpless—we call them 'demons'- but I think most folks feel that they have an opportunity to help others when they take the job. Over time, as they continuously absorb the trauma of others with no way to offload it, they can succumb to the group dynamic, as was demonstrated here.

I'd been poisoned on Monday, again on Tuesday and Wednesday, and I didn't eat dinner on Thursday and concealed my meds without taking them that same night. During the day on Thursday, after having the first partial-night sleep in many days, I made my way to my cell and fell again into a deep slumber. I had what I believe to be a lucid-dream, and my two lost cats were suddenly there with me, crawling up on me, getting along with each other in a way I don't think they would have ever done had they met. I woke up in complete and utter joy, and I knew that losing those cats was my own enduring trauma, and that it had finally been addressed. I was crying my eyes out, sobbing, experiencing all the relief and love and healing at the same time. I'd forgotten I was on-camera in the nurses station, so when I walked back out of the cell and onto the

floor, everyone in the nurses station was pointing and laughing at me. They thought they'd broken me, when in reality I'd just been healed. I might have taken the time to disabuse them of their notion, but I was still very shaken so I just kept walking.

I asked my soldier buddy what I should do if the massive Samoan security guard came after me, because I really didn't think they would just let me walk out. I'd made plans with all the other patients on the wing for a class-action lawsuit against the facility, because they had all suffered along with me for almost two full weeks. They had all gone in there, at the lowest point of their lives, to get help and instead they'd been forced to witness their friend being systematically abused. I caught a few of the girls crying, over ME! They'd been short-changed on care like I'd been, and at stake was their very lives.

I thought I'd be able to find a lawyer, a crusader for all that is good and right, someone who burned at the very thought of elder abuse, and he or she would help us get at least some measure of justice. That's really what I was thinking, believe it or not. Delusional, of course, because I hadn't met any lawyers yet, and it turns out there aren't any lawyers like that. He said I don't know what you could do, maybe run away? I said run away where? It's a tiny cell. What if I just punched him in the neck, and he said what neck? Yeah, good point.

Sure enough, that night, Thursday night, at maybe two or three in the morning, the huge Samoan security guard came into my cell. I felt immediately sad and let down, because I'd talked and joked around with that guy the whole time I'd been in there. In the preceding 12 or so days, no one had ever been in the cell with me because it was illegal, or so they said. They'd always wait for me to leave before entering to check it out.

This guy just waltzed right in and stood over me, his legs pushed up against the cot. I was lying on my side with my back to him, and I had to fight off the urge to crack wise. "Fancy meeting you here" or "do you come here often", those kinds of things were swirling around in my noggin. I stayed silent and he stayed leaning on my cot for at least fifteen minutes before he left. I wondered then, and I wonder still...how many bodies are

buried on Canyon Ridge property? All I would have had to do was try to stand up and he'd have had all the excuse he needed to snap my neck like a twig. It's easy to make the homeless disappear.

In the morning, I checked in at the desk for how long it would be before I could leave. Everyone behind the nurses station looked shocked to see me. Like, flabbergasted. Panicking. Their job when someone checks out is to compile all the records from the stay and hand them over to the patient. They looked like they hadn't even considered doing that yet, even though they'd known all week I'd be leaving. So I ate breakfast and went to the first group meeting. After that, I went back to the desk and said how's it coming along. They were still milling around and no one could give me an answer. I said let's get the doctor out here. The good doctor, the real author of all this misery, came out and started yelling at me. He said if you don't pipe down, you won't be able to leave. We'll keep you here indefinitely.

I went to the next group session which was held in the break room, right in front of the nurses station. I was sitting next to another patient, a new guy, when one of the aides got my attention and started circling her finger around her temple, the universal sign that little kids use for 'you're crazy'. I asked the guy next to me if he was seeing this and he said yeah what gives? I said welcome to Canyon Ridge. Then one of the patients, a sweet fella who'd been with us for well over a week but had never piped up in group before, who we thought might be of diminished capacity due to his low-energy and no-sharing, started talking. Turns out, he was just fine and was finally ready to share with the rest of us.

I raised my arms over my head in thanks, and several others had equally visceral reactions to this seemingly miraculous event, with some of us in tears. As if on cue, one of the very large aides who'd been monitoring the group leapt to her feet--as much as she could leap, anyway--and stopped the session. She quickly wheeled in an old style projector, dimmed the lights, and started showing some ancient PSA film. I looked at the group facilitator and she was as baffled as I was. I eventually realized that this single

event was as instructive of the Canyon Ridge experience as any of the overt abuse—there was simply no provision there for profound healing, and they would actively and aggressively prevent it whenever they had the chance.

They still weren't making any progress on getting me out of there, so I went to the phone and called Liam. I'd finally reached him in the weeks before Canyon Ridge, and found out that he'd been returned, of course, to his wife. He seemed miserable and didn't buy it when I told him I would help him escape again. Why would he? I'd failed him already. So I called him and said, very loudly, these sumbitches are gonna keep me here forever, and he said what do you want me to do. I said nothing, that's okay, don't worry.

I hung up the phone and announced “my Special Forces buddy is going to come and help me get out of here” very loudly, and there was suddenly a whirlwind of activity behind the nurses station like nothing I'd ever seen. It reminded me of yelling the Lord's Prayer in Vegas, it was that immediate and dramatic of a reaction. But it was a little bit confusing, until a few days later, after getting out, when I ran across a news article about a soldier who'd been released from a mental facility in California, had gone home, loaded up, returned to the facility, broken in, and stalked and executed three members of the staff before taking his own life.

I wanted to call and tell his family that he was absolutely justified in what he had done, but that wouldn't have been entirely accurate. I wanted to tell them that anyone who'd been treated like I knew he'd been treated would have been entirely within their rights as human beings to gun down those monsters, but that wasn't exactly right, either. It sounded like maybe someone, or more than one, on the staff had shown him their real face, their demon face, in which case he had no choice, as he saw it. He couldn't let those creatures feed on any more innocent blood, and so he stopped them the only way he knew how. I didn't know for sure so I couldn't comment publicly, but I can say that I feel a lot worse for that fella than for the ‘victims’, just based on all I've witnessed within the four walls, and deep under the ground, of in-patient mental facilities.

If you're treated with just a modicum of civility—not even kindness—most folks will emerge from 5150 in a far better state than they entered, and nobody—and I mean, nobody--is going to complain after the fact if their treatment is just and fair. So when you see all these in-patient mental facilities with their 2.0 ratings on yelp, their score bolstered by obviously planted reviews by staff and their buddies, you may safely assume the place is crawling with the Enemy, in his many guises.

To this day, I still recommend that folks go into a 5150 facility when they're at the end of their rope, but my advice is to keep your head down, go to all the sessions, share your trauma, absorb the trauma of others, and keep your mouth shut about anything you might witness, at least for as long as you're in there. There is NO oversight in those places, no one will come to rescue you, nobody cares if you tell what happened, there are no hero-lawyers, but if you can be very selfish and focused on your own recovery only, you'll likely emerge refreshed, with a new lease on life. And whatever you do, don't tell them you're Christian, for obvious reasons.

With The Old Boys in Chino

I figured that ol' Regan would select a delightful halfway house option for me, so I mentally prepared myself in the cab on the ride over. As we kept on driving into San Bernardino, and the street scene got bleaker, the cab driver asked me if I was sure this was where I wanted to go. We weren't even there yet, and she looked worried. I said leave me your number just in case, and she did. We arrived in a dilapidated-looking area, with tiny houses with large angry pit bulls in almost every yard, music blaring in Spanish. I tipped the driver and told her I might be calling her soon. I opened the fence and stepped into the yard of the address I'd been given, and it just felt empty. Most of the other yards around had dogs barking maniacally, but there was no apparent movement here. I knocked twice and got no response. I suddenly realized that I didn't really want anyone to answer, so I turned around and headed out. As I walked out of the area, I passed several hard-looking Spanish fellas who may or may not have belonged to the same social club. I waved at them, they glared at me, and I called the cabbie back.

She took me to a decent hotel just outside of Chino, and I paid for three nights in advance. My plan was to finally get some sleep, call a lawyer, report what I'd witnessed to the cops, and figure out what to do next.

The hotel was arranged in an L-shape, so the rooms were to the right and in front of me and the open parking area to the left as I walked. My room was on the second and top floor, in the corner of the L. I immediately noticed a large police presence, and the activity was focused on the second floor where my room was. What now? When I walked up the stairs, dodging cops going about their business, I saw a very young couple who were handcuffed and sitting on the walkway in front of the room next to mine. This triggered me for some reason, and I started telling the kids it would be okay, don't worry. The cops were incredibly kind and understanding and didn't shoo me away, which I'd have done if I were them. I asked the cop in charge—who looked REALLY in charge—if there was any way they could maybe get counseling or something instead of going to jail. He said don't worry, we know what to do, and maybe you should go into

your room. I said but look how young they are, this could ruin their lives, blah blah blah. He again encouraged me to put my stuff and myself in my room, which I did.

Maybe a half-hour later, there was a knock on the door. It was the top cop, and he said Peter, come here, I want to show you something. Almost everyone else had gone, including the kids. I walked with him to the adjacent room and he pointed at the bed. On it were at least 60 sandwich-sized baggies, laid out in neat rows. He said each of these baggies has meth, fentanyl, and syringes. He said this is how people are being killed around here. I started tearing up and becoming emotional. He said it's okay to have empathy and sympathy for the kids, we do too, but this is what we're up against. I started trying to apologize to him and to all the cops still there for interfering, and he said it's okay, don't worry about anything. He gave me his card and told me to call him if I needed anything, and it wasn't until later that I wondered how he knew my name.

I fell into a deep sleep for a long time, and when I woke up the next day, I started looking through the stuff I had from Canyon Ridge. I had everyone's phone and contact info from maybe thirty patients and from a few of the off-property healers as well. I thought man, if I can't make some legal noise about all those abuses with all this info, it would be a monumental fail. I called the Chino police department to make a report on what I'd witnessed, and the person who answered seemed to be paying attention. They gave me a case number and said I could call and add to the report by referencing that number. I thought man, that was easy! I then went online and found an attorney group specializing in personal injury cases with a focus on in-patient abuses, and filled out the questionnaire. More progress!

The following day, I thought about extending my stay because I didn't have a plan yet. I went to the desk but my card was declined. My monthly deposit hadn't registered yet so I had maybe twenty bucks to my name. I started to panic, as one does. The hotel proprietor, a middle-aged Muslim fella, said so you're leaving in the morning. I said I'm sure I'll have money by then, but if not then yes.

Back in the room, I remembered a couple of other items I wanted to add to the report I'd made, so I called the Chino cops again. I gave the case number and they said we have no record of your call or your report. I asked how that could be, and I felt his shrug through the phone. I said can I just make a new report and get a new case number and he said I guess so, so I did. But now I had NO hope that help was on its way for the patients still suffering at Canyon Ridge. Not that I was going to give up...

Maybe now is a good time to mention that the city of Chino hosts not only this spectacularly abusive mental facility, but TWO prisons that are nationally famous for the rape and torture of inmates. So there is a profound and powerful existential demon that lives in the very earth of Chino, where so many have suffered needlessly, affecting all who work in those facilities as well as law-enforcement. Chino cops must field an endless stream of abuse reports from folks who've been released from these facilities and, just as it is with 'patient advocates', their job is to make them go away.

The next day, I still had no money. I told the hotel fella this had never happened before (or since, for that matter) and he said well, there's nothing I can do for you, and I said I know. I said if it's okay, I'm going to post up over in that grassy area on the other side of the parking lot, where there was a seldom-used side-road. He said I guess it's okay if you're not on the property.

So I took my stuff over there, a backpack, a guitar, a rolling suitcase, and made myself comfortable on the grass. I didn't really consider that the money might never come, and I busied myself reading the Bible. I'd never read it before like that, with keen and probing interest, and it occurred to me that I'd had to be shown the truth of it BEFORE diving in. Pretty weak.

As soon as it got dark, a fella rode up on a little kids stingray-style bike. Then another fella, right behind him. Similar look, similar bike. They both looked South American, with very dark skin, could have been anywhere from 30 to 50 years old, and would be so nondescript in a street scene that they could easily go unnoticed. They planted

themselves under a nearby tree, maybe 30 feet away. One of them pointed across the street, where several tall streetlamps illuminated a business. One of the lights flickered out, then back on again. Then the other guy did the exact same thing, and I thought...here we go. They had my full and undivided attention.

A car drove slowly by, with a hard-trap beat blaring out. One of the fellas pointed at the car and the music changed. He spoke for the first time and said “this is one of mine”, and I had to listen hard to figure out what he meant by ‘his’. ‘Hard-trap’ is the most dangerous and foreboding beat-style there is, the soundtrack to the murder of young inner-city black kids all over the country, the obvious work of the demonic and demented. Maybe there are exceptions, but I've never heard anything except seething hatred rapped out over that beat—hatred for bi—s, and ‘hos, and cops and whitey. And, of course, the n-word, over and over and over, a noun, a verb, whenever a word is needed, it's always that one. It's as though when someone writes over that particular beat, the Devil takes every bit of talent they have and twists it to his purpose.

What my new little friend had done was change the beat from hard-trap to a different hard-trap, the difference being when each 32-bar segment was ready to resolve, the high-hat would go off-time, just for the last two measures. He said do you hear it, and I said I do. I was very impressed, I have to admit. I realized that these guys were here for me, to connect with me. I hadn't had to provide any bona-fides, but they had.

So this began a two-day interlude that concluded rather spectacularly. A third guy showed up, a little white guy with a very round head who came and went, and he was odder still. I started recording our conversation and asked everything I could think of. I asked questions that I thought I knew the answer to, and some I had no opinion on. We were talking about the War, about the battle between God and the Devil. They took their side, I took His, and I tried to stress the hopeless nature of their entire team, to see if I could get them to cross over.

One fella asked to write in my legal pad, and he started writing numbers. He wrote all the way over to the margin, and I thought he's just going to fill this thing up. But no, he stopped after a few numbers on the second line. He said "that's my score this time". I looked at the number and realized he couldn't be talking about souls, because it was far more than had ever lived on Earth. I realized that he was talking about all the pain and misery he'd caused, through his actions, each individual moment that caused someone to suffer needlessly. A scoreboard of trauma caused, with a precision and specificity of scoring rivaling God Himself.

So, a demon spikes a drink at a party, that person is rendered helpless, they are then coerced into sex with a stranger, their husband finds out about it, they break up, the kids are suffering, one turns to drugs, the other becomes a bully and abuses other kids, the husband gets in a car-wreck from grief over the breakup, the woman blames herself and doesn't understand what happened....and on and on, compounding for years, each tendrill of suffering spinning outward, affecting everyone in their orbit. Kids, friends, family, community, all diminished by one single demon stunt. How many points for that one simple action? Now multiply it by all the actions taken against all the people he'd targeted, over the lifetime of this one Game.

It's important to keep in mind that while these guys were working tirelessly for the Enemy, and against all that I love and hold dear, I felt no hatred toward them or anyone else, and they showed no rancor towards me. I'd passed enough tests so far, in Vegas and now at Canyon Ridge, that I'd graduated to a level where they could come and sit calmly with me and exchange thoughts. We weren't buddies, we're just opposing players in the same Game.

All three of them sitting around, and one of the Spanish fellas says hey do you remember _____, referencing a desert city where my darkest moments of abject misery had occurred. I said yeah, and he said that was me. I said huh. The other Spanish guy next to him says you remember Canyon Ridge, I said yeah, that JUST happened. He says that was me. I said you're an a-hole and you never even got me to swear or raise my voice at

them, and then the first guy said do you remember this...and somehow, this little Spanish-looking fellow turned his eyes into my 90 year-old Mother's eyes when she was drowning right in front of me, tortured in her own old-folks home for hours, when a nurse refused to intubate her and I'd had to stand by yelling and begging for something to be done. The straining in her neck and face as she slowly drowned without drowning, the desperate, plaintive look in her eyes as she silently implored me to do something, anything. This guy had it down, the whole picture.

The nurse on-duty had claimed it was against policy to intubate DNR patients, which turned out to be a lie. I'd lacked the spiritual knowledge at that time to...adjust...her, and I'd lacked the general backbone required to grab her and FORCE her to do it, and it wasn't until shift change that my Mom was finally intubated and allowed to die in peace. This guy was able to simulate her eyes and her face so accurately because he was there, a dozen years earlier and thousands of miles away.

We went out walking and we passed a closed convenience store with the lottery results displayed on the window. Each of the Spanish fellas pointed at the signs and kind of spun the numbers until they stopped. One said these are my last five scores, and the other said these are my last six.

I told the white guy that I thought I might have met the little guy in Vegas– the guy in charge at the last facility–and he said really, what did he look like? And I started saying well he was tall, and the fella started laughing. I realized that he was right, the guy hadn't been tall, just very imposing. Then I realized that this guy was a perfect copy of the doctor at the hospital, complete with the round what-me-worry face, and I realized I hadn't caught it because he was missing a tooth. I didn't pursue it any further, but my suitcase with all my contact info and my guitar turned up missing, and I thought that guy might have somehow grabbed it when I was distracted with the other fellas. I didn't know how he did it, or even if he did it, but it got done somehow. All my clothes and a laptop as well, gone. And I didn't see the round-headed white guy again.

On the late afternoon of the second day in the grass, I noticed that the recorder was still going. It was at nineteen hours and I realized that a) I hadn't charged my phone and b) this wasn't going to work anyway. Sure enough, I stopped the recording and the file disappeared into thin air. The fellas came back around dark and said let's walk over to the little strip-mall around the corner. When we got over there, everything on our near side was closed. The storefronts on our side were down a few stairs, with the walkway down several feet from the knoll we were on. The last store entrance was around an L-shaped corner that ended at a wall. A dead-end. They said hey let's go down in there and I said sure why not. As soon as we got down into that cul de sac, the tiny area started filling up with hard-looking men. These guys looked as though they'd crawled up from under the earth, and I think they had.

They each had a powerful and unique scent to them, like different kinds of burned wood. My sense of smell had long ago been destroyed by misadventures, and it was shocking to be completely inundated by powerful scents. I figured out that they probably wanted my help to get out of something, and one huge guy stepped toward me. His way of 'confessing' was to say "I like to use number four sandpaper" and he put an image of what he'd done to women into my mind, and when I saw what he was up to, I said look I'm not here for that. I said you guys have to talk to the Father if you want to be forgiven. There must have been at least ten guys stuffed into that tiny space, there was an onslaught of horrible images of suffering, and I was trying to figure out if God wanted me to DO something. I'd been talking with the fellas about whether the fallen could be forgiven or saved for the past two days but I hadn't reached a conclusion. Even to this day, I hope they can all be helped.

I've since met plenty of folks in the fallen state, and none of them think they can be helped, but here was a whole collection of them who apparently held out some hope, and I hadn't helped them, so there is the feeling of maybe leaving something on the table. After a while, they dispersed, my buddies went with them, and that was the last I saw of them. I walked across the parking lot and sat down under a tree, just taking in what had just happened.

A compact vehicle pulled up in front of me and across the little side street. Someone got out, and I could see they had hairy legs and hooves. The tree hung down so I couldn't see his upper torso or face. He was stamping his hooves on the pavement, apparently angry that I wouldn't go over to him. Unfortunately, I'd developed a habit back in Vegas of never walking up to the Enemy to engage, and always forcing them to come to me. I never did stand up and walk over, I never saw his face, and after a minute he got in his car and left. If I have a mild bit of regret about not trying harder to help those fellas in the strip-mall, then I probably have a bit more regret about not engaging with the guy with the hooves.

I walked back over to the grassy area in front of the hotel, and noticed that a bunch of cars were arriving in the parking lot. Men dressed in traditional Muslim garb were getting out and entering one of the rooms. I thought that was interesting, and suddenly the hotel owner walked up and gave me a twenty dollar bill. I said hey thanks, I'll pay you back as soon as I can. He waved it off and walked away. Almost immediately, a fella walked up from the street and asked if I wanted some meth for only twenty dollars. I thought that was awfully convenient and I said no thank you.

A Muslim fella came over from the room and handed me a white plate with an apple on it. Oddly, the apple had a bite out of it. I sat the plate on the ground and looked at the apple. It sat there for a while, without turning brown, as I tried to figure out the gag. It figured it was some kind of test or something, but...to what purpose? Suddenly, I thought screw those guys! I picked up the apple and took a bite of it, because screw those guys. Then I sat there looking at the apple not turning brown, now with two bites out of it, and realized that was not the proper message to send, so I picked it up and ate the rest of it. Obviously, in hindsight, the correct response would have been to leave the apple untouched, so I'd clearly failed that test, but still...screw those guys.

The guy came out, picked up the plate, and handed me another one with some kind of nasty-looking food on it. I thought this is 90% likely to be poison, so I ate some of it just

to show 'em. It was terrible but I didn't start choking or expire on the spot, and the fella came back and picked up what was left. Then something I can't quite explain happened—I was sitting there thinking about all that had happened that night and all the other days and nights and I started wondering what I would think if I was in some position of authority, and I wondered if Muslims could be forgiven by God for their treatment of women, and I suddenly thought no, I don't think they can be. As soon as that thought formed in my head, the door to the hotel room flew open and all the guys filed out and started to leave. I thought wait a minute, wait a minute, and quickly walked over into the parking lot, but they drove around me and out of there and I've wondered ever since what the heck that was all about.

From Chino to Pasadena

After thinking and praying over it, I decided my interests would be best served by remaining in California, rather than returning to Vegas still homeless. I remembered what a very dear friend had told me about Ojai, many years earlier. She said it was a very spiritual place, a place of 'high-resonance' and that she'd been happy there until she'd had issues with some of the other residents. I can't imagine what those issues could have been, because she was one of the sweetest people I've ever known, was very good to me, and she was murdered just as we were getting re-aquainted after a couple of years apart.

I stopped hanging out in front of the hotel and started wandering the area. I still had no money and my bank remained bewildered. I found a church and they gave me some rosary beads that came with instructions for use. I went to a library and looked up Ojai and Ventura County and came to believe I was being called there. That night, I called the local cops, told them I wanted to make a report about Canyon Ridge, and was transferred over to Chino cops. *sigh* I asked about the report I'd made—twice—and they said they had no record of it and my case number didn't exist.

I said I wanted to make a report in person, and they said they'd send a car. They did, and it parked a bit away from where I was sitting on the ground in the middle of a huge parking lot of a sports complex. I saw two cops get out, one looked squared away and professional, the other looked...not like that at all. Squirrelly's a good word. He looked squirrelly. The good cop stayed with the car—of course—while the squirrelly cop wandered over to me. I started telling him about the elder abuse I'd witnessed and the sleep deprivation and I noticed he wasn't writing anything down. I asked him why and he said it's all right up here, and pointed to his head. I asked for a case number and he said he doesn't do that, but I could call the station and get one. I said but that's not working and he shrugged, told me I couldn't sleep there, and went back to his car.

The next night, my last one before departing the area, I had an almost identical experience when I called the station, still had no case-number, demanded to make an

in-person report, and two different Chino cops showed up. These cops were both like the second cop the night before, looking like they might have just come from a costume party. They were kind of making fun of me, neither one made any move to take notes about my complaints, and as they drove off I realized they'd kept my ID card. I called the station about it but no one got back to me. Absolute disaster. When you're homeless and without ID, you've lost your personhood, and nothing can get done until it's remedied.

I looked at a map and made a plan to walk in the direction of Ventura County. I wanted to be out in the wilderness and unbothered, so I could think about all that had happened, continue to read the Bible, and talk to the Man Upstairs. I charted a route adjacent to highways but with plenty of open ground. As I started walking, I was instantly reminded that my shoes were cheap, my feet were still damaged from the heat in Vegas, and this part of the journey wasn't close to being over.

I walked over acres of land and finally stepped from the woods into a housing development, and noticed that there were no cars moving or people anywhere. It was dark but not too late, and there was no activity of any kind. I saw that instead of street numbers on the curbs in front of houses, there were dates. Like 'September 27th, 1965' and so on. I walked around and found one with one of my key dates on it, so I walked up to the house and knocked. Then I realized I didn't know what would happen, and I didn't even know what I wanted to happen, so I backed away and walked out of the area. I've since speculated that maybe this was a Paradise town, because Angels need a place to stay when they visit the world, don't they? Should I have hung around? Gee whiz, I ding-dong-ditched 'em!

My money finally came through, and I rented a motel room for a night. I couldn't sit still in the room, so I went out walking around the area. I noticed a cat on the sidewalk out in front of me, and recognized my sweet little long-haired cat, then realized as I got closer that she didn't look right. She looked like she might have crawled out of a grave, and she was trying to lead me off in a different direction. I refused to follow, and then another

cat appeared and this one looked like the second cat I'd lost, also possibly raised from the dead, also trying to lead me off the path. What in the world?

I went back to the motel room, and decided to say the rosary for my very first time. I followed the instructions, worked the beads, and read the awesome and powerful prayers. At the precise moment I concluded, my phone started making a ding ding ding noise and when I looked at it there was like a celebration overlay with balloons and party streamers, as if I'd hit a jackpot in a gaming app. My first instinct was that it was some kind of demon stunt—which is a sad commentary indeed—because I'd been surrounded by the Enemy for so long that I'd started defaulting to the darkness. The timing was right in-stride, so I should have assumed an Angelic origin.

I went back outside for a smoke and a car immediately pulled up in front of me. It was a luxury four-door, and the back door handle was right next to my hand. I leaned over and saw there was a very kind-looking woman at the wheel looking back at me, and my thoughts went immediately to a family member who was not yet saved. I thought I didn't want to leave that person behind, so I didn't open the door. She waited, then drove away, and I knew I'd missed a chance to learn something important. What hubris, what arrogance, not to trust in God, after all the things He'd shown me and all the ways He'd protected me. My journey was starting to be defined by the things I **didn't** do.

The next day, I walked into a small convenience store and started making a coffee. The fella on duty came and stood next to me and started yelling angrily at me in Arabic. I had no idea what his problem was or what he was yelling, so I finished making the coffee and paid, as he continued to yell. After I got outside, I wondered if he'd been angry at me for being homeless or maybe for using too many of the flavored creamers. I admit, I like a LOT of flavored creamers in my coffee, and maybe he thought I was carving into his bottom line.

I dismissed it until the next time it happened, and the time after that, and the time after that, all within three days. Sometimes one guy, sometimes two. All told, I've been

screamed at in Arabic in convenience stores seven times. The last three incidents happened many months later at a store I stayed near and where I was a regular customer. I never know what they're trying to tell me, and I only know to listen for a very famous two-word phrase, which I've never heard. Rhymes with balaboo bakbar, or something. The last time it happened, the guy kind of smirked at me in a not unpleasant way as he took my coffee money, as if to let me know it's nothing personal, just part of the Game. I know, brother, I know. No hard feelings, ever.

I perused real estate opportunities in Ojai, found a ranch I liked, and called the contact person. I told her my name and that I'd eventually purchase the property, but it wouldn't happen right away. She was very sweet and respectful and I wouldn't care to even hazard a guess at what she must have been thinking.

I had a few opportunities on this walk to sit all alone, for hours, out in nature, with a Bible, and try to figure out what was happening to me. I started asking a couple of generic questions and opening the Bible at random to read the answer. And, sure enough, the pages I'd opened up to and the passages I started reading seemed to answer my questions very directly. So I was a little bit nervous when I finally asked the real question I wanted answered: WHAT is going on?

I opened The Book at random and began reading Romans 8:28. "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified."

And I thought well, there it is, just as it had seemed to be all along. I'm on His team, working toward victory, and His hand is upon me.

The Pasadena Event

Or... 'Coming Face to Face With The Game'

I've always wondered if I would include this incident in the story, because I wasn't sure that He wanted me to talk about The Game that much, or at all. Describing the spiritual truths of God and Jesus as part of a Game seemed reductive, or possibly distracting. If the job is to help folks find and love God and Jesus more than they do, then revealing events that might seem to diminish the wonder of spirituality could work at cross-purposes.

I've come to believe that He wants me to share ALL of it, in the hopes that some of it might connect with someone new. After all, Christians aren't going to move away from Christ because I've talked about The Paradise Game—they'll either discount it and move on, or maybe...they'll pursue a warrior role and lean in and learn something new.

Atheists and others are already drifting out there, in a hopeless or ignorant state, so how can it hurt them? They're not going to hate or dismiss God more than they already do. They're not going to fail more than they're already failing because of anything I might say, and maybe...they'll start looking at the issue with renewed vigor. One can always hope.

I arrived in Pasadena with my feet in a sorry state. After spending the hottest summer on record in Vegas, feet burning all the time, I'd then walked and walked and walked some more. I decided to have them looked at by professionals, and made my way to the emergency room at a Pasadena hospital.

I walked in after midnight, and they were not happy to see me. I'd become used to this, as a kind of beat-up and desperate-looking homeless dude, so when they sat me on a rolling bed at the side of the lobby, I prepared for a long wait. I had my stuff with me, a new rolling suitcase and a couple of backpacks. I knew that much of the open and casual

hatred was directed at me because I was homeless, but I'm always aware of any additional hatred that might come my way. Unusual hatred. Spiritual hatred.

It didn't take long for things to get...odd.

A nurse came by and said we're not going to help you. I said why not, I have insurance. She said it doesn't matter. I said sure it does. She said it doesn't and went away for a long time.

She came back and said she was going to take some blood. I thought well, here we go again. And for the third time in my life, I had a nurse or phlebotomist digging around in my arm with a needle, ostensibly trying to take my blood. And failing.

And just as it happened the other times, when I looked at the person to figure out what the problem was, she was looking me in the eyes instead of at my arm as she dug around. And just as it had been before, I never flinched because I felt nothing. We just looked at each other, right in the eyes, as she dug a needle around inside my arm. She was wearing the standard smirk folks sometimes have when they're abusing you right to your face and really want you to know.

She gave up and wandered off. When she came back, she told me I had to leave. I said no, you're going to at least look at my ruined feet. She said we're not going to do that, and we'll call the cops. I said that's fine, I'm not leaving.

I sat there thinking about the rules of the Bible, how we're supposed to play ball and acquiesce to authority. I realized I wasn't going to do that. I thought about the first mental facility I'd visited, months before, how they'd treated me well and helped me, and how they'd had a real nurse on duty.

When she came back, I told her they could deliver me to that facility—Charter Oak—if they weren't going to help me. She said no way, you need to go. I said I'm not going anywhere, unless it's Charter Oak. She laughed and left me there.

and then...

As it was starting to get light out, a security guy came around and said you have to leave. I said no. A few minutes later, a full-blown cop with a badge and gun came and told me to leave. I said no, I'm NOT leaving. They can take me to Charter Oak, but I'm not leaving. He sort of reached toward me, then stopped and walked away.

He came back after a while and said c'mon, let's go, give me a break. I said look, I've already explained. I'm not leaving here, unless I'm going to be delivered to that other hospital. That's it, that's all.

I felt bad and a little bit guilty, and maybe I still do, but if the hospital had just done their job and at least pretended to treat my foot issue, I wouldn't be writing about it now.

I continued to sit there, on a cot in the lobby, with the nurse or the cop occasionally walking by and insulting or vaguely threatening me. "You'll see what's gonna happen..." Yeah, I guess we all will, because I'm not leaving.

Then there was a bizarre interlude where a giant—a real-life circus-style giant, well over 7 feet tall, maybe 500 pounds, was paraded in front of me.

He was VERY slowly led, or taken, from one area across the lobby and through a door that was directly in front of me. He looked extremely sad, abused and downtrodden. He kept his head down, and said nothing. He had to duck way down to go through the door, and his captors immediately emerged back into the lobby, leaving me with the belief that he was right there behind the door in front of me.

I talked to him, telling him it would be okay, that I would help him, that God loved him, that I loved him. This was some kind of spiritual event, and his victimization and suffering felt like they were sending some kind of message to me. Like “this is what we can do to you” or “THIS is what we do”. He never answered me, but I could hear him breathing and knew he was right there on the other side of the door.

Finally, a remarkable individual appears in front of me. He’s a cop, but not like other cops. Not like ANY other cop or human being. He’s massive, seems to be made out of granite or something, and looks like he might have been born in uniform as a baby and it had simply grown with him.

Some kind of Spartan, a one-man SWAT team. I've met a couple of other Angel cops who took charge of things and acted on my behalf, but while those guys looked nothing like other cops, they also didn't look like this guy. He leaned in and looked at me with what I can only describe as love and concern, and said “Hey Peter, are you doin’ okay? Are you ready to go?”

I said sure, where are we going? He said you wanted to go to Charter Oak, right? I said yes. He said that's where we're going. I said great. So I walked out with him, alongside him, not arrested but accompanied, and past all those who had refused service to me. He even helped me carry my stuff out.

When we got out to his car, he said I've gotta put these cuffs on you. I said okay, and he cuffed me in front, which was nice of him. I slid into the back seat on the driver's side.

I noticed for the first time that there was a fella in the front passenger seat. This guy was NOT a cop, but rather the greasiest, weasely-ist human creature I've ever seen, before or since. Some kind of caricature of a demon, with a look of dull hatred and abject stupidity that only a demon can present. He wasn't a ‘sprung’ demon—he was certainly angry but

didn't look like some kinda special-effect—this was just his resting face, straight from the bowels of Persia.

I wasn't concerned or really interested in him, because I knew I was safe and protected. My immediate feeling at the time is still my feeling today--I'd broken or breached some part of an apparatus, and representatives from both sides had responded to the incident. By my refusing to obey, or demanding a different outcome, or painting outside the lines of The Game, something had given way.

We drove mostly in silence, and when I mentioned that Chino cops had refused several times to take police reports about the crimes I'd witnessed at Canyon Ridge, the Spartan Cop stared HARD at the demon weasel. The weasel never said one word for the entire ride, and I had the impression that he wasn't allowed to speak.

When we arrived, I got out of the back seat and stood there with the Spartan. He removed my cuffs and said do you have everything you need? I said yes. He said do you have your ID and everything, and I said no! A Chino cop had stolen my ID the last time I'd tried to report those crimes. I'd completely forgotten until he asked.

And this big beautiful guy, this Spartan, this Angel, leaned slowly down into the car and stared at the weasel for what had to be 15 seconds or more. I couldn't see the look on the weasel's face, but I can't imagine that it remained unchanged.

I took my stuff in there and checked in for an experience that would be rather dramatically different from my past experience in that facility, and not in a good way. Not in a Vegas way, and not in a Canyon Ridge way, because I never feared for my life, but not in a good way.

The first thing was happening as I walked into the waiting room. There was the terrible shrieking of wood being sanded down, SO loud, and I saw that a crew of three had a door set up on a couple of sawhorses right in the open hallway next to the waiting room.

Obviously, they could have taken the door somewhere else and worked on it, but instead they were doing it where they could cause the most trauma—right next to a waiting room of already traumatized people, young and old, going through the worst moments of their lives, checking in to a mental facility, I said you guys are a-holes and they just grinned malevolently at me, to let me know they were doing it intentionally.

I sat down next to a young teenage girl who was sitting with her mom. She had some face-piercings and tattoos she didn't need and she looked very scared. She flinched, like the others did, every time the sander would fire back up. I told her that she was in the right place, that this place had helped me before, and she said the last time she was there they'd ripped out her nose-ring with a pair of pliers. I said something like oh dear and shut my mouth.

After I checked in, I immediately noticed my wing again had an over-distribution of Christian names. Not just an odd anomaly--23 of the 24 patients in that group had traditional Biblical names. Now, I know, to a dead certainty, that Christians and especially those drawing closer to the Father--near-Christians—are under much greater duress from the little guy and his minions than are other folks. Ask anyone making the journey to Catholicism especially—the closer they get to graduation, the tougher things are for themselves and often their families. The Devil and his flunkies often panic and show themselves—if anyone is paying attention, it's right there to see. But Biblical names are not necessarily an indicator of Christian beliefs, so it just seemed very bizarre, just as it had in Vegas.

I met the doctor and almost did a double-take. He looked like he could be related to the weasel from the car-ride from Pasadena, and it took me a few moments to assure myself that it wasn't the same guy. I explained that I'd had a difficult recent journey and was just looking for some rest and treatment for my feet. I realized at that moment that I was seeking treatment from this 5150 facility in order to recover from the last 5150 facility, which I'd gone into in part to try to recover from the Vegas 5150 facilities! I told him I'd be ready to leave after the 72-hour hold was up, and he said that shouldn't be a problem.

I witnessed some casual patient abuses, such as a large elderly black man forced to wear a hospital gown so short it didn't cover his genitals. I piped up and asked loudly what was the problem—they couldn't give him a gown that fit? I yelled about elder abuse and he said thank you and I told him that it wouldn't stand and that I'd help him. I was still living under the impression that I'd be able to find a heroic lawyer and make all these miscreants, from Canyon Ridge and everywhere else, pay for their abuse and change their policies. As it turned out, this was a very childish understanding of the world.

There was another unusual feature of this particular facility. In the day room, where most folks hung out between meals and group sessions, there was a big-screen TV. All the facilities have one, but they're rarely used and always strictly monitored. I'd watched movies and athletic events in other places, but this place had only one channel and never changed it.

Have you ever seen that show where folks don't know who the father of the baby is? A giggling demon leans forward and paints the picture of this poor girl, struggling to raise her baby, while potential fathers hang around waiting for the test results. The demon draws every bit of pain and angst out of the participants before finally revealing the father, if he's there. The girl is always crying, the fellas are freaked-out, the audience laughs at everyone's pain, and the demon laps it all up like mother's milk. ONLY the demonically-influenced would ever think this was appropriate to show to 5150 patients, already at the end of their rope.

When my three days were up, I met again with the 'doctor' and said I was ready to go. He said nope, we're going to keep you. This was a Friday and I said so I can leave tomorrow, right? He said we'll see, and I said what about our discussions previously during the week—had he been lying the whole time? He said he didn't have to explain anything to me and I said I think you DO have to explain things to me, and then he darted out of the office and ran down the hallway. Ran away. From his own office.

I found out later that he'd called my daughter and told her I'd threatened him, which was an absolute lie. If he'd felt threatened, he could have called security and they would have restrained and separated me from the other patients--it's a very common situation in those places, with routine protocols, and yet he'd never done any of that. When I checked out, I demanded that they provide me with the incident report, and after waiting an hour and a half they said they couldn't find it. Sure.

Just for the heck of it, I tried to talk to the 'patient advocate' about the situation, and was again amazed at the corrupt and useless nature of that position. He said he didn't know anything about it and he said he was leaving for the weekend. I said so they are illegally keeping me here, and he said yes, it really does look that way, and he'd be back on Monday.

My feet did get some treatment, and I spent much of my time there focused on my primary and most important goal when I got out: acquiring an ID. Nobody can do ANYTHING in this world without an ID, especially if you're homeless.

When you check into a mental health facility, all your belongings are inventoried. Unless you're homeless, this doesn't amount to much stuff. Your personal effects, stuff you have on you, valuables like watches and wallets, are sealed in a large manila envelope that is taped shut in such a way that when you write your signature across the tape, it'll be obvious later if it's been tampered with. Standard procedure, and seemingly foolproof. This envelope is then placed into a safe, and you watch them do it.

When I was handed my secure envelope as I was leaving the facility, I opened it up, got my stuff out, put on my watch, looked in my wallet, and my I D card was right on top, in the first slot, the very first thing I saw.

After a while, the relief I felt at miraculously recovering my ID from some far-away dirty cop in Chino and having it returned like that was tempered a little bit by the knowledge that it couldn't happen like that at all, not without actual divine intervention—how could

it get into my wallet in the sealed envelope in the safe without ALL of this being some kind of game? I realized that I might be compelled to tell of these events and reveal the game-style nature of the journey, and I worried about it for a long time. Did He really want me to tell? And if so, in what way? How, exactly?

END PART ONE

Chapter Four: VENTURA COUNTY

Welcome to Ventura County

As I rode in on the bus, I wondered if things (spiritual things) would slow down or maybe ease up a bit. Nope!

As soon as I got off the bus at the Ventura Transit Center, I walked across the street and a little fella with a wild head of hair carrying four HUGE recycling bags walked by. He appeared to be struggling under the weight of them. Even though I was exhausted, and had a rolling suitcase and a couple of backpacks, I couldn't help but offer to assist. I asked how far it was to the recycling station and he said not far and that he'd pay me. I picked up one of his bags and began to follow.

We walked and walked and I realized I'd been had. We ended up on a seemingly endless side road with no traffic at all. This guy walked illogically and impossibly fast, and left me far behind. I'm a pretty fast walker and (had recently become) a very experienced walker, very tall with long strides, and this little guy was leaving me in the dust, far behind, like I was standing still. He'd wait, I'd catch up, and it would happen again, his little feet splayed out at the toes, churning like a machine, leaving me far behind.

We walked together for a while and he said do you have a cigarette and I said no. He said do you want one and I said sure. He walked to the side of the road and reached down into some leaves and came up with a fresh pack of Marlboro Lights. Then he crossed the street, reached back down, and came up with a pack of matches. We finally reached the recycling center, he short-changed me on the money, we said goodbye, and I realized that his purpose had been twofold: to remind me that the Game was ongoing, and to wear me out. He'd succeeded at both.

I ended up in sweet little downtown Ventura, by the Mission, where Father Junipero Serra had founded the city in 1782. I asked a city worker where homeless people went and he sent me up the Avenue to a church. There I met my first Saint, a very distinguished elderly black man: Luther of Ventura. I learned that he'd come to Ventura and established his church during the sixties and had cared for the homeless and disenfranchised ever since. A black man, in Ventura County—hotbed of Klan activity, especially at that time—helping the homeless. Unimaginable courage in the service of Our Lord. He was aged and diminished enough that both standing or talking were difficult for him, so I hit my knees in front of his chair, hugged him as gently and warmly as I could, and whispered in his ear “He loves you SO much”. His eyes got very wide and I think he recognized me as a messenger. I hope so.

I was told there was another person known for caring for the homeless and was recommended to visit Santa Paula, and meet with another Saint who had rearranged her life and her journey in order to care for the homeless. I witnessed her incredible, boundless energy and selfless dedication to caring for others. Kay of Santa Paula and Luther of Ventura taught me that it's the work that is most important, and that it's in changing people's lives for the better that we can most please our Father.

It's wonderful to know Him, and of Him, but that gift is an obligation. The pure blind faith of his human creations warms His heart like nothing else, but those who have higher knowledge have a responsibility to help his children through their difficulties and assist them in achieving and retaining that faith.

One late night, I was hanging out by the Rescue Mission, grounded and leaning against an adjacent wall maybe fifty yards from the entrance. I heard a car coming, very loud, and a large four-door sedan suddenly screeched to a halt right in front of the Rescue Mission entrance. I thought, well...here we go. Someone got out of the car with what looked like a shotgun, opened the trunk, and fired one blast into the darkness. SO loud in the utter silence of that area at night. Then he got back in and they screeched their tires again as they left. Huh. My first thought was there are going to be cops here very soon, because all that noise must have been heard by someone. I thought about taking off, but didn't.

After a few minutes, a tall and slender woman came walking up from that direction. I hadn't heard or seen her coming, but she was suddenly right there. I said hey what's up and she sat down in a way I've never seen before or since. She went from standing fully upright straight down into the lotus position in an instant. Just dropped down into it. I said how you doin and she said did you see that? I said if you mean that shotgun blast into the trunk of the car, yeah I saw it. What's the deal? She kinda shrugged her shoulders and asked if I needed a pair of jeans. I said no, I have a pair of jeans but thank you. She seemed feral and not quite of this world. She said you can never have enough pairs of jeans and I said I dunno, I think maybe you can. She said well, I'm just going to leave these with you. She stood up suddenly—just as smoothly and effortlessly as she'd sat down—and placed them, neatly folded, on top of my rolling suitcase. And then she walked away.

When I got ready to head back into the recesses of the alleys in that area, in order to sleep more safely, I noticed that the jeans appeared to have bloodstains on them. I wondered what it was all about—was I being set up for something? I sort of dismissed that because cops hadn't even shown up to investigate the shotgun blast. I chalked it up as just another demon stunt, more elaborate than most, and left the jeans out by the next dumpster I came across.

I took a bus ride up to Ojai, met with the lawyer at the top of the Google listings, and was told that without video evidence of them beating me, I had no case against Canyon Ridge. I said there were 50 or 60 witnesses and other peripheral victims and he said it didn't matter. I kind of gave up at that point. A couple of years later, another attorney in an online forum said no, that wasn't true at all, you didn't have to be beaten to prove abuse in a psych facility. Which shyster was lying? Probably both.

The first time someone tried to run me off the road with a double-cab pickup truck, I was surprised. Not surprised enough to alter course or change direction--I'd seen too much to feel fear and I'd even lost my ability to startle. Still, it was a bit unnerving to see a truck in the opposite oncoming lane change direction and head directly toward me as I walked on the other side of the street dragging my rolling suitcase. I could see that the driver was wearing a mask (long before covid) and I could see that his truck was new and had never hauled anything, so I assumed that Daddy had provided the weapon that his bent spawn was now using to terrorize homeless folks.

The second and third time it happened, pristine double cabs as always, I actually changed direction slightly to walk directly at them, because now I was steamed. Each time, they bailed out, changed direction, and escaped as quickly as they could while I yelled vile insults after them. When I enquired of a group of older fellas at a picnic table at the Rescue Mission if they'd ever heard of such a thing, every single one of them, maybe six or seven hard guys, said they'd ALL been hit by a car or truck, some more than once. What? I'd been screamed at and insulted from passing vehicles in every place I'd been, from Vegas to Chino to Pasadena, that's just a basic part of the homeless experience, but no one had ever tried to hit me with their vehicle.

Another night, I was resting on cardboard in an alley behind a building, next to the tracks in Oxnard. There were two older gentlemen who had told me about the sweet location, and both of them were extremely physically disabled, with broken backs and other profound limitations. They were both asleep when a double-cab pulled up, a couple of 20-somethings jumped out of the cab and grabbed bats from out of the back

and started into the alley. I was sitting up and not at all asleep, they saw me, turned around, threw their bats back in the truck bed, and drove away. Apparently, they preferred their victims to be asleep and completely helpless. It wasn't until years later, after I was re-housed, that I found out there was a Ventura County hate-the-homeless group on Instagram with 40,000 members. I'd seen two guys walking one night who were all beat up and battered and I asked what happened. They said they'd been beaten with bats by scumbags who name-checked this hate group. First I'd ever heard of them.

I'm going to interject here—Ventura County is absolutely teeming with wonderful, caring people. The social services are staffed with skilled and caring professionals, and there are scores of churches filled with loving Christians who donate their time and money to help others. The general public also volunteers and donates their hard-earned money to worthy causes, and our people are generally very friendly and good-natured. Our crime rates are the lowest in the state for communities our size, and Ventura County is probably one of the most likely places for the Rapture to begin.

That said, we have many hate-groups here besides the aforementioned hate-the-homeless group, and they aren't shy about displaying their moronic beliefs for all to see, whether it's calling in to City Council with Jew-hate, or flying banners on overpasses proclaiming white supremacy. It's because we have an existential demon in the very earth we walk on, left over from when Ventura County was a hotbed of Klan activity. Yes, that Klan. I sometimes tire of hearing Californians talk about how the South is racist, because the very same year I moved down there from the north, as an older teen, and met my first black folks, and realized everyone down there knew each other and worked together, Ventura County Ku Klux Klanners were marching right out in the open, in public parks. This is the existential demon that lives in the earth beneath our feet that possesses our hate-groups, whose Dads and Grandads marched for hate and infected their offspring. They don't hate and attack black folks too often because there are so few of them here (wonder why) so they hate the homeless and vent their rage on them, a group without any civil rights protections or cops they can trust.

Another time I was crashing in an Oxnard park that I'd been warned away from. "Black folks'll getcha" and "cops'll getcha", that kind of thing. I slept there for a week, unaccosted. One night, around midnight, it was pouring down a torrential rain, I was lying on the ground under a tarp, and a young black woman (30 or so) was running by. I said hey you can get in here, and she came in under the tarp. She said thank you for the shelter and asked if I'd help her make sure she made it to court the next day, at nine in the morning. I said sure, why not? It was midnight now, we'd catch an early bus to Ventura and handle it. I'd be happy to help.

We talked about this and that, and then she told me about being in this very park a few weeks earlier. It was the middle of the day, a few friends were hanging out, and cops had descended on them. She said she'd been pushed up against the fence and wasn't even sure if she'd been tased or not, but she knew that something had happened, because she woke up in an Oxnard hospital with her wrist handcuffed to the bed.

A cop was standing next to her looking down at her and his hand was under her gown, inside her, raping her. A nurse or orderly walked into the room, saw what was happening, and backed out slowly. She said the cop leaned down into her face and said he could do anything he wanted to her, and she would never be able to do anything about it. She described the cop so vividly and specifically that I know I met him a few weeks later at a homeless event. Of course.

We got on the bus in the morning and made it on time to her court date, which ended up being postponed to another day. She knew some folks there and we said goodbye, and she thanked me for helping her. I felt very blessed that she shared that trauma with me because that's one of the ones we never tell. And getting **those** out are the key to all the healing. She couldn't tell her Dad or her Mom or her brother or her boyfriend, because they'd lose their minds and maybe ruin their lives over it. And she couldn't tell the cops. She knew I couldn't do anything for her except hear her, believe her, and absorb some of her pain, and that was enough. I was placed right there, at that specific place, so that when she was running in the rain in the dark that night, I would see her, and she would

see me as a friend. That's a GOD event, without question. I mean, it's ALL been God stuff, but this was a bit more obvious and far more rewarding than usual.

Another night, just across the street from that same park, I was hanging out by some office buildings, thinking about sleeping, and a couple of cops walked up. They said you can't stay here and I said I know it. There was a heavy office chair embedded deep in the ground sideways for some reason, and one of the cops looked up at the building and said I wonder what happened here. I said maybe they'd had a meeting with Suge Night and it had gone sideways, and we all busted up. I've included this only because I'm pretty sure it's the funniest thing I've ever said.

Yet another night, I traveled by bus up to a place of very high-resonance called Ojai. This was the place my dear departed friend had talked about so much and part of what had drawn me to Ventura County. I'd been up there a couple of times before and been blown away by the seeming nearness and clarity of the stars, and was quite taken with a town with seemingly hundreds of tiny boutique stores and about 17 parking spots. A unique and magical place, and also the location of the ranch I'd expressed interest in to a broker while wandering in the wilderness. As soon as I got off the bus, early evening, still some light left, a cop pulled up and asked how I was doing. I had a backpack and guitar only, having stashed my rolling suitcase and other stuff, but I was still unmistakably homeless. I said hey, I just want to look at the stars, and he said have a good night. I said thanks, you too.

I walked into Libby Park, a sprawling and very well-kept area with tennis courts and picnic areas and little nooks and crannies where buskers can perform, with an amazing outdoor amphitheater where I feel sure spiritual things will one day be discussed and decided upon. I walked through the park to the last of the picnic tables, planning to enjoy the night, play some guitar (electric but unplugged) and head over to the dispensaries in the morning. I'd heard that Sativa strains of weed could have a positive effect on ADD symptoms, was in the process of exploring those possibilities, and was planning to purchase a vape to replace the one I had which was about done. (in the end,

when all was said and done, I figured out that sativa does indeed have a focusing effect on ADD, but it also gets you high and therefore dilutes and negates any additional focus one might attain. Worth a try, I guess, but ultimately unsuccessful)

I chose a picnic table off to the side and started tuning my guitar. This location was heavily wooded, and it had turned into night—full dark, save for the low lights around the footpaths. There was a sudden commotion, and I saw a fella walking with four angry black dogs. They weren't huge but plenty big enough, maybe 60 or 70 pounds, and they were barking maniacally at an older couple on the footpath and scared them back in the direction they'd come from. These dogs were not on leashes and appeared to be vicious and unhinged. He walked over and sat down at the nearest picnic table, maybe 20 feet away, and his dogs sat down around him. Nothing about the scene felt right, and I thought, well...here we go.

He said hey you want to sit over here and I said sure why not. Might as well get things started. I gathered up my stuff and made my way over, making sure to walk directly through the dogs, invading their space, as I sat down on the opposite side of the long table. They raised their heads to look at me, but never piped up again for the rest of the night. He was drinking and offered me a beer, which I declined. Almost immediately, three fellas came into the clearing from the path that led back to town. They all knew each other, and one guy had an acoustic guitar with him. He said he'd just performed at a venue in town and that he'd met a guy who wanted to sign him to a contract. I said wow, that's great, congratulations. He said can you play and I said yeah and he said maybe he could get me hooked up with that guy because there was big money involved. I said go ahead and play something and I'll try to add to it. He turned his back to me and started to play a simple chord progression. I couldn't see his hands but could hear open strings but couldn't find the key for a minute. I finally landed on 'F', started playing some blues fills, and he stopped immediately and said you can play. He set his guitar down and I saw he had a capo at the first fret, meaning he'd intentionally tried to mess with me. Son of a...

One of his buddies, a tall fella with little Thomas Dolby glasses, said you can call me The Scientist. I said sure, and called him 'the scientist' for the rest of the night. In the spiritual world, just pitching the scientific, let alone claiming a proprietary relationship with science, is a massive red flag, and I realized this was some kind of clumsy little coven of moron-demons.

The guitar fella kept pitching a world of riches and success, just at my fingertips if only I wanted it, the guy with the dogs kept drinking and yapping about embracing the darkness, the scientist was getting pissed off at my relentless belittling of his idiotic viewpoints, and one guy never said anything at all. I wasn't preaching but was instead sharing anecdotes from Vegas and Chino, and asking them why they didn't try to pray their way out of the coming debacle. It had to be pretty rough for those fellas.

I brought out my vape and shared it around the table. They started to drift away and lie down for the night. Suddenly, the fella with the dogs hopped up on all fours on the end of the picnic table. I was seated at the opposite end and he kind of crawled the length of the table. I kept my eyes locked and slightly averted and he came up very near my face. He studied me and seemed to look up into my nostrils, his head shifting back and forth as if examining a foreign species. He picked up my vape and said 'I'll take that' out loud, and then went slowly back down and off the table. In reverse.

I pretended I hadn't seen anything and even asked where the vape was. He started looking around and said he couldn't find it. In the morning, as I prepared to head off to the dispensary, everyone was asleep except the scientist. So I said to the scientist hey the scientist, be sure to tell your little buddy I watched him take that vape like he was in slow motion. And I laughed. An hour or so later, I walked past them headed back through the park. I walked over to say thanks for the fun evening and the guy with the dogs would not even raise his head. He was ashamed and mortified that he'd been caught, and his smirking buddies had undoubtedly ragged on him mercilessly.

I went back to that very picnic table a couple weeks later, in the middle of the day, and noticed a large stuffed teddy bear stuck in the tree above the table. I looked closer, stood up on the table, and saw a little wooden board swinging in the breeze. I leaned up closer, extended my arms, took out my phone, and took some pictures of this little sign that was suspended from a tiny branch by intricately tied fishing line. The board had some weird kind of writing and little symbols scratched into both sides of it. Nothing so obvious as a pentagram, but full-on gibberish. I wondered if it said “this is where whatshisname got caught creeping on someone” or something like that in some kinda demon dialect. The takeaway from the entire incident was that if that fella hadn't been drinking, I might not have seen him at all. He'd obviously pulled similar stunts many times before and was overconfident and careless. It's stunts like this and others that compelled me to write this book. People need to know what they're up against.

I slept in parks and under bridges, in alleys and on the beach, and experienced some of the misery inherent in the homeless journey. Nights here are always cold and wet, and waking up locked in a full-blown back-spasm became a matter of course. Once a sleeping bag gets wet, it becomes an intolerable burden to carry, and I learned again about the wonder of cardboard. Cardboard will support your back, absorb ground moisture with no ill effect, and help retain body heat. It's the first thing rough-sleepers learn, or should be.

Folks think the homeless are lazy, but it's a full-time job to manage a typical day on the street. Where can you charge a phone? Different Starbucks offer different attitudes toward the unhoused, usually based on their experiences with them. As always, in every walk of life, there is a small percentage of bad actors that can ruin things for the majority. In the homeless world, it's almost invariably those who have somehow evaded detention, whether through pro-crime judges and DAs or due to the incredible and inexplicable lack of psych beds. Folks hate these particular homeless folks because they've seen them do anti-social or worse things, and because this particular group is the loudest and most visible group, they think they're typical of all the rest. They are not, and these criminals victimize other unhoused at a much higher rate than they do the

housed. And, of course, these violent and unpredictable ones have an acute spiritual malady—a demon—and no shrink can ever help them...which is not to say they can't be helped.

If Starbucks won't let you charge your phone, or you don't have eight bucks for a coffee, libraries can provide a solution. As for showering, there are options but you must plan and travel to them. For men, the Rescue Mission provides showers to those who stay the night, and we'll discuss homeless shelter theory in another chapter. I regarded the Rescue Mission as an incredible and invaluable asset, and slept and ate there on numerous occasions.

There are places that offer certain meals on different days, some in Oxnard and some in Ventura, an hour and a half bus ride each way. Like most of the homeless who receive monthly income, I would stay in motel rooms at the beginning of the month, which quickly drains resources. But even when broke, I rarely regretted spending those funds because even a day or two of shelter, shower, and safe sleep can help a suffering person remember that they're still human.

I started writing about the homeless experience, and had some interest in my articles from local publishers.

A Trip To Starbucks

Shortly after arriving in Oxnard, I attended an outdoor Holiday meal in support of the homeless over by the Rescue Mission in Oxnard. I was homeless and had been sleeping at the Mission on occasion. This event was staged in the back alley next to the Mission, and it was a big deal.

There were long banquet tables laid out, and volunteers delivered plates of Holiday food as folks sat themselves. Turkey, fixins, meat, broiled fish, an astounding level of quality from the various chefs. There were a lot of attendees, the staff was stretched to their limit, there was a microphone for performers, and a little blind girl delivered a performance on voice and ukulele for the ages. It was mystical and sublime, and I wasn't the only one crying.

As the event was concluding, and dessert was being served to those who wanted it, an attractive young lady, maybe thirty years old, walked into the area and sat down next to me. She looked, to put it mildly, out of place. By that time, the photo-op folks had left, and the only ones still there were homeless, nearly homeless, or part of the event staff. She was none of those things.

She said hi, my name is Angel. I'd learned that when someone says their name is Angel, it's often meant ironically. But I said okay, I'm Peter, and this is an amazing meal that you shouldn't miss out on. We got her a plate, she ate, and we made small talk.

She told me she was catching a bus out of there at 11 PM and we decided to hang out until then.

We walked up from the Rescue Mission toward sweet little downtown Oxnard. She had a small travel bag, and I had a guitar, a backpack, and a rolling suitcase. It started raining, and night had fallen. We were able to walk all the way into Plaza Park before it began to rain down hard, and then we retreated to the Starbucks across from the Park.

They had closed, and I remember winding up the umbrella over the Starbucks table by hand. It was pouring down hard, and a security guy came by and said you know you're not supposed to be here, and I said man c'mon it's pouring we'll just be here for a little while. He went away.

We talked for a while, and a young guy suddenly appeared next to us. He was not an imposing fellow and wasn't a threat. He said man it's raining hard can I duck under here? We said sure why not. So now there were three of us, complete strangers, leaning in under the umbrella of the Starbucks table in the pouring rain.

After a while, he said man I was famous when I was a kid. He said I was in Time magazine. I said wow, what for? He said "I was featured in an article about child abuse around the country. They chose my case as the worst example of child abuse they'd ever seen".

I thought I didn't want to ask him for specifics— if it was the worst thing Time Magazine had ever seen, that was terrible enough for me. So I didn't ask for details, I just leaned in and tried to feel what he must have gone through, based on my own idea of a worst-case scenario.

I told him I was sorry for what he'd been through, and told him that God and Jesus Christ loved him and that this must be part of his Test. I attempted to console him, but it remains unclear if I was helping him or not. Inside, I was trying to figure out how this could happen to him, and what might have caused it.

After a few minutes, he leaned over to me and said man I've killed hundreds of women. I said you're talking about before, in a previous time. He said yeah. He said he was never caught. I said man you gotta make up for what you've done, you gotta talk to God and apologize, or...something. He said yeah I know, I know.

And then I just sat there. Just as I have in the years since, I was trying to figure out the test, The Game, as it pertained to me. Was I supposed to hate him, or maybe kill him to prevent future crimes? I wasn't even mad at him. He was so diminished, so obviously suffering. I didn't ask him how long his sentence was, and he wouldn't have known anyway. They never do. And what was Angel's role? Observer? Facilitator?

After a few minutes, the rain subsided and he got up to leave. I told him I loved him, God loved him, and that he could maybe change his future if he started praying harder. He said he was trying and that he'd do the best he could, and he walked away. After a while, I walked Angel back to the bus station. Gave her a hug, said see you later, and that was that.

In A Homeless Shelter

Our thoughts and feelings and treatment of the homeless is one of the key ways that God tests our qualifications for ascension to the Next Level:

[Mathew 25:40-45

40 The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

41 'Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

44 'They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

45 'He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.']

There is no gray area in there--those who hate the homeless are cursed to suffer. The negative and sometimes frightening experiences the public has with some homeless folks are generally caused by people who should not be on the street at all, but rather incarcerated or otherwise confined. Put another way, it's bent judges and DAs who enable repeat and violent offenders to continue to terrorize the general populace, and that issue is magnified and more visible when they live on the street. The majority of the homeless--folks just trying to get back on their feet--are far and away the main victims of violent homeless felons when they're released upon the general public.

I stayed for over two years in a homeless shelter, and came to know and understand the unhoused in a way that wouldn't have been otherwise possible. If I'd never stayed in a shelter, I'd have only my own homeless experience to write about. It takes a long time for any person who lives on the street to trust another human being, but living together under one roof enabled me to meet and appreciate those who are forced to live without a roof. I was blessed to wind up in an extremely well-managed facility, and I will not be commenting directly on any personalities who worked there or stayed for any length of time in there because I've retained relationships and contact with many of them. I love them. A homeless shelter is a private place for recovery, and I'll respect the anonymity of everyone involved. That said, there were some spiritual and otherwise unusual experiences along the way.

I was thankful and excited when Oxnard decided to convert their winter-warming shelter to a full-time, full-service, 24-hour shelter, but I knew that not everyone at the city-level was happy about it. After all, this is a city that had harassed people for providing food to the homeless, had stolen new backpacks a church had provided to them, and had closed and locked all their public restrooms, an act of such diabolical intent that it would have been cartoonish, if not for all the suffering it's caused to this day.

There was a week of 'transition' so that the new shelter management could move their stuff in there and get situated. We were handed a map of where we could be and where we could not be during those seven days. Yes, exactly like the Nazis gave the Poles. The area we couldn't be in was a mile and a half circumference around the shelter location. We would be exited early in the morning and could return at night, but we were supposed to clear out by a mile and a half, which meant there was a stream of a hundred or so bedraggled homeless people marching away from our remote location on the edge of town and into the city center.

We could have easily queued up in one of the vast empty fields around the facility, but this was their way of stepping on our necks and showing us who was boss.

When I looked around at all the elderly, and crippled, and disabled, who were being force-marched out of the area, I became incensed. I dashed off a letter to the editor of a popular local publication, who I'd been corresponding with, and she was equally baffled and ticked-off. I delivered a copy of the map to her office and she ran with it. I wanted her to call it The No Go Zone, but she ended up calling it The Red Zone in her article.

Naturally, there was quite a bit of pushback from local miscreants, along with a tiny bit of disappointment from regular folks about the stunt, and they ended up extending the Zone for an extra day just to rub it in. I had a little bit of fun by publicly threatening to organize a rally in one of the parks, then one of the fields, 'leaking' that info, then watching the helicopters circling around trying to find the 'homeless rally'.

This began a short period where this weekly periodical was publishing my increasingly histrionic articles on systemic homeless abuse in the area. With each article, there was a more violent and unhinged reaction from local ne'er-do-wells, culminating with a night after the print edition had gone out when howling, drooling rednecks in their double-cabs were circling our building, screaming epithets and setting off explosives outside our back door. Good times.

Later on, when I started writing about the unusually high homeless death rate in Ventura County, the largest local rag purged their website of hundreds of articles about dead homeless people. They went from eagerly posting detailed descriptions of every homeless death scene to NEVER mentioning a homeless death unless it was horrific or spectacular enough to be picked up by other news sources.

Shortly after the shelter opened, a young, pretty girl showed up. The young and pretty don't often end up in shelters. After she was checked in, she came right over to me and asked if we could talk. I said sure and we made our way outside and ended up sitting down on the sidewalk a short distance from the entrance. She took out her phone, set it down between us, and we started talking. After sharing some of her intense and unique hardships, I said well it sounds like you've run up against some demons.

I said I know all about demons, and she said tell me everything you know. I looked at the phone and I thought, yeah, whoever is on the other end should know what's coming—it's only fair. Which is kinda the point of this book, come to think of it.

We sat out there for at least two hours, and I told her everything I'd seen and all that had come before, and how the Kingdom of God and Jesus will inevitably squash the Enemy and scatter him to the winds, eventually producing Paradise by default. She stayed in the shelter for a couple of days after that, and when she walked by one time one of the fellas said, completely unprompted, “she's on a 400-year walk” and looked down and away. I thought oh, no.

She disappeared until a couple of days later, when she approached me while I was out in front of the shelter. She looked disheveled and desperate. I said what happened and she said she'd been picked up by the cops, held overnight, couldn't remember much else, but had awakened with strange fluids on her body and clothing. I was aghast and asked if she was still staying with us at the shelter. She said no, I can't. I said God bless you, we exchanged numbers and I never heard from her again.

I was hanging out by myself in a field adjacent to the shelter, reading the Bible and talking to The Man. When I was ready to go back for dinner, a huge, burly fella stood in my way, between a fence line and a sizable power transformer. I recognized him as one of the shelter guests but had never spoken to him. I could have easily walked around the transformer, but the much more direct route was to go through where he was standing. And because he was in a blocking stance, and there were a bunch of fellow shelter-dwellers standing around watching, I chose to walk toward him and through his position, so that he had to step out of the way, which he did. The folks said woooooo and he said something nasty and I said well what are you doing standing there like that? What's your deal?

Later that night, after lights out, I was in a top bunk with my ear buds in and felt a strange sensation. The new shelter hadn't yet received delivery of the side rails which

eventually were installed on all the top bunks, so it was a very narrow bunk and potentially deadly, a long straight drop down onto concrete. I'd slid all the way over to the edge of the bunk, my butt was partially hanging over the side, and I realized that anyone could just grab me and pull me all the way off and all the way down to the ground, killing or maiming me. I kind of shuddered and was adjusting back to the middle when I sensed a commotion around the area. I pulled out the ear buds and realized there were a bunch of paramedics attending to someone on the lower bunk of the bed to the foot of mine.

I heard several of the paramedics say the word "stroke" as they attended to the person. When they got him loaded on a gurney to roll him out, I saw it was the big fella who'd tried to block my way just a couple of hours earlier. I realized that from where he was lying on his lower bunk he would have been staring directly at me on my top bunk, hanging over the edge precariously, like a moron. And then I realized that he might have thought, after our earlier interaction, even if just for a second, about simply reaching up and pulling me down. And then he was being wheeled out by a team of paramedics.

I stayed on my bunk, silently freaking out, crying, asking God to forgive him, and couldn't fall asleep for the rest of the night. In the morning, as we were all lined up for breakfast, here he comes walking in the front door, hale and hearty, a big smile on his face, walking past us to take his place in line. I was elated, filled with joy, and I've since used the term 'stroke zone' a few times to produce comically dramatic reactions. ex: Years later, a fella came and sat down right beside me on a bench by the beach and said "I aughta rip that cross right off your neck" and I said brother you're in a stroke zone and he was instantly standing 15 feet away. I said if I were you I wouldn't even get a bad thought in my head, and if something happens to you it sure isn't my fault, and he turned and quickly walked away.

I read in the paper about a woman who'd been struck and killed by a vehicle while walking on a main road by the tracks, only a short distance from our shelter. The article had managed to bury the lede, and down several paragraphs it came to light that she'd

been struck by four, maybe five vehicles who had **all** left the scene. This smelled like the same kind of stuff that I'd experienced from the double-cab boys, like this was a planned-out group effort that was no doubt videoed and available on the dark web. I started talking openly and writing a little bit about this...odd...incident, and reached out to her family for their take on it. I talked to a male relative and he agreed that it sure was strange. I said maybe I should write publicly about it, and we made plans to talk again.

A day later, I decided to take a walk down by where the incident had happened on Ventura Rd. As I walked in an alley alongside the road, a fella was coming toward me and stopped and started digging around in his shoulder bag, trying to get something out of it. I watched him struggle, and when I got in front of him, I stopped and waited to see what he was going to produce. His desperation increased when it became apparent he wasn't going to be able to produce anything, so I shrugged my shoulders and left him there, digging around in his bag. Not the first or last time for that specific sort of tomfoolery. I kept walking and a woman came running out toward me. I'd never seen her before, but she really wanted to tell me that she'd been there that night. I said you mean the night that woman was killed and she said yes, she'd seen the whole thing and the driver had stopped right away so there was nothing to be concerned about.

I said don't you think it's strange that nobody else seems to know about any of that, and as we walked together, I noticed a double-cab pickup truck posted up across the street, clearly watching us. I said is he a friend of yours and she said I don't know that guy. I said let's see what he has to say for himself and started crossing the street to get to him. He immediately screeched his tires and drove recklessly away. I asked her to kindly inform that fella that we're coming for him and all his little buddies, and we parted ways. I tried afterwards to contact the family member I'd spoken to before but he never picked up or returned my calls or emails, so I dropped it. I never saw an update on the case, but I know what happened, and now you do, too.

I came upon an interesting situation while practicing guitar. Nearly every day, I'd sit out back in the yard behind the shelter and practice and record everything I played. I was

using some very cool backing tracks and when I would put a new beat on, and start playing over it, I would just naturally play a melody over it. I'd figure out what key it was in, start playing, and would produce a flawless new melody right in the moment, every time. I didn't know the chord changes or the progression, never wrote anything down, and immediately became aware that this was a spiritual situation, some kind of gift from above. I'd written a hundred songs in my youth, with some very nice chord progressions and lyrics, but the one thing I'd rarely produced was a compelling melody.

Now they were just being given to me, as though they'd been somehow installed. I didn't have to think about what I was playing, I just knew what to play. And when I'd go to solo and improvise and played something that I thought was pretty cool, as soon as I had that thought like “oooohhh, listen to what I just did” I would miss the very next note. Every single time, without fail. At the very moment I internally took credit for something, it was taken away from me. I promise you, after this identical situation happens all day, every single day, for months and years, it'll eventually sink in that you're not just ‘getting a lot of help’--every single remarkable thing that you do is being given to you. All of it. And it also sank in that soloing was not my role at all...I was just there to help facilitate the song.

There was another interesting feature of playing guitar out in the yard--helicopters. The shelter was situated right next to a small airport, just across a highway from the runway. Small planes would come in kind of low and fly right over the shelter in order to prepare for landing. Shortly after the shelter first opened, there was a cookout in the yard and we watched small aircraft fly straight up to a very high altitude, then appear to lose power as they plunged down directly toward the shelter. They'd pull up at almost the last second and turn away, and some of the guests were scared and freaked out, while most of us were pissed off and throwing up the bird at these miscreants. And even though this went on all day, we eventually stopped paying attention. We already knew we were hated in the community, and I think some of us were at least mildly impressed that they'd put all this effort into showing us just how much they despised us.

Once in a while, a helicopter would hover very low over the shelter for a few minutes, but unlike the dive-bombers, who would appear only sporadically after that day, the helicopters came back day after day for weeks and months and never stopped showing up, especially while I was out in the yard practicing. I would stop playing until they left because they are very LOUD, but I wouldn't stop the recording because the mic was a few feet away and I'm lazy. After I'd recorded the sessions, I'd go back into the shelter and put the disk into my laptop. I used an editing program called audacity, would load the session, and try to edit out the false starts and other glaring errors before adjusting the levels and listening to what I'd produced that day. Audacity shows the sound waves, so it's easy to pull out sequences that were too short without having to listen. You know what else is easy to spot in a soundwave? Really easy? A helicopter.

There would be a five to seven minute portion of the recording that was so dense it was almost completely black, and I would put the cursor at one end of the mess and slide it over to the other end of the mess, and erase the helicopter from the final product. I did this every single day, for months and months, and when I later asked someone who was there how many times she thought the helicopter had visited us, she said it had to be at least 500 times. Just doing the math. So if you think *you* hate the homeless, just think how much you'd have to hate the homeless to hover your helicopter low over a homeless shelter, every day, for hundreds of days, just to torment them. Compared to them fellers, you're a piker.

An odd little fella arrived at the shelter and said his name was Gotti. I thought okay, here we go. He hung around in an irritating manner when I was playing guitar in the yard, would start rapping to some of the trap beats I used, always some kind of negative, evil drivel. Like most trap rapping, come to think of it, except he couldn't rhyme very well. He'd try to engage me in light spiritual discussions and I would dutifully slap down and make fun of his demonic perspective.

He did have one interesting talent—every couple of days, he'd drop a drawing on my bunk. These were incredibly intricate and detailed drawings of weapon systems,

blueprint-style mechanical drawings, in pencil, on cocktail napkins. There was a surface to air missile system, a huge caliber tank gun, a ground-mounted gatling-gun thing, and so on. In ridiculous, absurd detail, with measurements and angles and everything else, on cocktail napkins from the kitchen. I can't even write a legible phone number on a paper napkin so I was duly impressed. I thought maybe this guy does have some real spiritual juice, so I tried to engage him in some cease-fire discussions and the road to demon surrender, but he didn't have the stomach or the game for it.

He said you think I'm a demon and I said sure and he flicked his wrist and a spider landed on my leg. I pushed it off and saw it had a bright red marking like an hourglass, so I guess it was a black widow. I said that's all you've got, spiders and drawings? The cops came the next day and marched him out of there in handcuffs and we exchanged nods as he passed by and I realized that this was the only way he could go out of there and maintain a shred of dignity--he couldn't just slink out the back door and disappear.

There was a woman who slept in a covered bus stop very close to the shelter. Every time I'd see her, I'd encourage her to try to get into the shelter. She never said a single word to me, and I was acutely aware that she was frightened of men and that men had victimized her all of her life. Of course, that's the most common thread for all homeless women--they've been raped and beaten and abused by men all of their lives, starting with their dads and uncles and cousins, and continuing with boyfriends and husbands and acquaintances. But I never gave up, kept encouraging her, and one day I walked into the shelter and there she was! I was elated, and also happy to learn that she could communicate well enough to be admitted.

That night, after lights out, she started crying, then screaming in terror. It sounded like something out of a horror flick, and the thing was--she was fully asleep. She had to be shaken awake by staff, who then had to tell her to leave. Her past trauma--her history of torture and torment--was so acute, so present, so inescapable, that she couldn't sleep through ONE night in the one place that actually provided safety. There were more than 100 other suffering humans in there, double-bunked in an area half the size of a

basketball court. The ongoing and similar trauma of many of the others, especially the gals, was being triggered.

She couldn't stay, and when she couldn't seem to understand that after all she'd sacrificed to get in there, she couldn't even make it through one night, the cops had to come and DRAG her out. She screamed the only words I ever heard from her:

“Who serves and protects ME?”

They dumped her on the sidewalk half a block down the street, and she eventually made her way back to the bus stop.

Speaking of down the street, there were several RVs that would park on our mostly deserted block. It's almost as tough living in a car as it is living on the street, and it has to be a bit easier living in an RV...except for the cops. These people were also (mostly) homeless, meaning they didn't have much money, if any, and it seems to be something of a sport in some areas for cops to pile tickets on vehicles in order to seize them, thereby producing rough sleepers with the wave of a pen.

While I stayed in the shelter, I was vigorously, almost rabidly, protective of the brothers and sisters who shared a roof with me. We were situated near a grocery store parking lot, and I was hyper-vigilant and on the lookout for predators of all types. Because of the way our area was set up, with the lack of any businesses or any other reason for folks to be driving through there, it became extremely easy to identify who was traveling on that road. There were a tiny percentage of folks who lived in the immediate area, in adjacent housing developments, who would sometimes cut through our street to get to the back parking lot of the grocery store, and there were people who stayed or worked in the shelter who would drive in and out of the area, and almost everyone else could be safely placed into the category of predator.

There were the looky-loos, pain-eaters who would drive slowly by, staring at the homeless people like they were on safari, and there were the others who were there to sell drugs or maybe grab up one of the women. These people were always dismayed when I was posted up out there because I would spoil their fun, no matter what their fun happened to be, just by staring at them. I think it's the hat.

Ours was a low-barrier shelter, an essential element of the overall homeless treatment landscape. There are also dry shelters, often Christian-based, and those are also essential. In a low-barrier shelter, sobriety isn't required. We'd rather help someone inside if they've had too much to drink then leave them outside to die. You can't be noticeably hammered in there, and this rule was mostly respected. As long as you leave others alone, you should be fine. As for drugs, same kind of thing. Don't be obviously high, don't bother other people, and don't drink or drug inside the facility. So, while I wished everyone would take care of themselves and stay sober—and the majority of the guests did—I never harassed anyone for using anything.

I cannot say the same for those individuals who hung out near the shelter with bad intentions. I harassed those people relentlessly, in order to encourage them to leave. When I had reliable information that someone in an RV was dealing drugs, I would pound on the side of their tin-cans, which must have been terrifying for anyone inside. With special cases, when I knew to a certainty they were abusing my friends, I would pound on the sides and threaten to come back and read the Roman Ritual at them. This wouldn't mean anything to any normal drug-dealer, but it would mean everything to any demon or anyone carrying a demon inside them. The Roman Ritual is the Catholic exorcism rites, which would have been like pouring acid into their tiny earholes, and there were several RVs that simply started up and cleared out.

One RV in particular was very stubborn, and I kept after them because they were known to everyone as an existential threat to all the homeless in the area. I didn't hang out all day harassing people, it was more of a hobby than a vocation, but I passed by them at least twice a day, going out and coming back to the shelter, and each time they would get

the full treatment. Finally, the fella--who'd never shown his face before--opened the door, stepped out onto his top step and said you think I'm a demon and I said of course and he blinked his eyes, slowly and deliberately, from the outside in, like a lizard or something. I just stood there like I hadn't seen anything, and he went back inside. From that day forward, whenever I'd pound on the side of his vehicle, which was every day, I'd call him 'Blinky'. I'd given him the rest of that night to think he'd gotten over, which was very considerate of me. To his credit, I don't think he ever left.

As I'd done in Canyon Ridge, I handed out questionnaires to see what people would share about themselves. 'What job would you do if money were no object?' 'What business would you start if success was guaranteed?' and other questions along those lines. While I had almost complete buy-in in the mental facility, none of the dudes at the shelter would play ball. They were just too cool for it, I guess. But at least 18 of the ladies participated, and their answers were almost identical to the answers provided by the patients at Canyon Ridge.

It turns out that people who are under extreme duress dream of helping others who are in similar situations. Everyone wanted to start a mental health clinic or wanted to start an animal shelter or homeless shelter. All of them wanted to do something that would be helpful to others. I also learned that these broken-down and traumatized women had nearly all had extended periods of success in their lives, had excelled in their work and in leadership roles.

One night, after lights-out, I stepped out to smoke a cigarette. As I stood at the fence line, I heard a series of loud bangs coming from the highway, which was just across a wide field in back of the place. I started yelling at them because I'd come to despise that kind of stuff, had learned that 'disturbing the peace' was almost always intentional and designed to...well, disturb people, a demonic impulse if ever there was one. To my surprise and delight, they turned down our road, which meant they would pass only a few feet away, though we'd be separated by a heavy chain link fence.

As they rolled up, I started yelling at them to shut up and stop bothering people. As they passed by, I heard seven distinct gunshots and saw three different muzzle flashes come from inside the vehicle. Now I was yelling vile insults and profanity at them as they passed by, running along the fence line to keep up with them. Oddly, and hilariously—because there was no traffic at all at that time of night—they stopped at the four-way stop sign at the corner of the shelter property and so were forced to endure another several seconds of intense verbal abuse. *Well, of course one should always obey all traffic laws while performing a drive-by shooting--it's the first thing they teach!* I was just laughing because I knew it was a top-ten moment. Maybe top-five.

I looked back into the yard and I saw Texas Joe out there smoking a cigarette. I couldn't believe there was a witness so I walked over to him and asked him what he thought had just happened. He said drive-by shooting, right? I said yeah, looks like. Was anything hit? He said he didn't hear anything get hit and I hadn't either. I walked away and started thinking about things--should I call the cops? I walked into the shelter and talked to the night manager. I said we just had a drive-by shooting and he said yeah I heard a bunch of pops. I said do you have a camera that looks over the road on that side, and he said no and I kind of didn't believe him. And then I started realizing that I'd have to bring Texas Joe into it and he really didn't need any cops talking to him. So I did nothing. The next day, I quietly mentioned the incident to Joe, and his recollection was getting all fuzzy: “well, I sort of thought they were shooting, but...” Okay, brother...relax.

I called the cops and told them what happened and they said you want us to come and look for shell casings and I said no I just want you to know they were laughed at and insulted throughout the entire miserable stunt. And in the days and weeks to follow, no less than four different individuals made it a point to bring it up unprompted: “Hey, did you hear about those kids with the airsofts?” or “Hey, there were some high-schoolers driving around taking potshots...” Just random strangers talking about it to another stranger standing next to me, this non-event that I was already forgetting about...funny stuff. One thing you'd never do in Oxnard is drive around shooting fake guns because we have a LOT of folks driving around with real ones.

I shared a cab with a pal at the shelter who worked quite openly for the opposing team. In the morning, he'd start harassing people walking by his bunk and I'd lay into him and insult him until he stopped. That was the nature of our relationship. He had plenty of spiritual juice and higher knowledge along with a good sense of humor and we sort of hung out, exchanging insults on spiritual matters. We were picked up in an Uber by a very attractive girl, maybe in her early thirties. For perspective, we were both in our sixties, sort of ragged and beaten-down and obviously homeless.

As we drove, she started to talk about going to a downtown bar and not feeling welcomed and I said something like don't feel bad, those guys were d—ks. And she said “I like d—ks” and I just looked at my buddy. She said “yeah, I like d—ks” and she had kind of a dazed look on her face and he was grinning while I told him to cut it out. It was so simple and easy for him to manipulate her that it should give us all great pause when we see someone coming apart at the seams in public. Look around at who's watching and you can often find the perp in the crowd, feeding on the pain. And first, always, check the cameraman.

The last thing I ever wanted to do in the shelter was make someone leave. Unfortunately, sometimes it was necessary. The sword that Jesus brought was The Word, and any mention of Jesus immediately shuts down and demoralizes the demon in folks. So I used the same methodology I use to shut down anyone who pipes up in a threatening manner, whether they're standing in the street screaming at passing vehicles or posted up on the bunk next to mine with an eager look on their face.

Sometimes I'll start by saying hey man I love you, and God loves you. Or don't forget how much God loves you. But if I'm impatient or just want to get on with it, I'll say hey man Jesus loves you. And that's it and that's all, the end. A full-blown, long walking, professional Demon shakes that off, but I don't say that stuff to them. I'm talking about regular folks who have a demon in them and are acting out of school like a sock-puppet.

They have NO answer to even the mention of Jesus, so they can be manipulated and shut down with a minimum of effort.

The fastest it ever happened was when I was walking through the maze of bunks to get to mine and there was a new fella sitting on the top bunk right next to mine and he looked like he thought it would be great fun to be in the bunk next to mine. I walked directly toward him and as I jumped up on my bunk next to him I said hey man don't forget that Jesus loves you. He looked sick to his stomach, jumped down to the floor, and walked out of the area and all the way out the front door, never to be seen again. He'd left all the stuff he'd taken to his bunk right on top of it, and it sat there for a couple of days until someone figured out he was gone.

When my housing was confirmed, I quickly exited the shelter. Suddenly, there was a problem, a delay for the landlord to bring the windows up to code. I was very blessed that my shelter had another shelter they could send me to, and I headed over there to wait. I recognized a few of these fellas from the other place and a couple of them left immediately, which made me feel terrible. I'd recently ordered a six-inch fist sized crucifix while I was in the other place, just in case it would come in handy someday. I carried it everywhere, and still do. One night, a fella in the back of the dorm-room style bunk area started talking very loudly in his sleep, a kind of desperate and vaguely threatening monologue. One of the fellas said are you going to do anything about this and I said this isn't some kind of stunt and several guys said no, he does this all the time and we've had it up to here. I said okay, no problem and I grabbed the crucifix and made my way all the way to the back corner of the room where he was bunked.

I sat next to him on the bed and he opened his eyes and I took his hand, wrapped it around my hand with the crucifix in it, and held him there. His eyes got wide and I told him to say "Jesus is Lord" and he started panicking and he ripped his hand out of mine with great difficulty. I stood up, said God bless you brother, and went back to lie down on my bunk, where I was tingling all over and felt like I was hovering in the air and

maybe even glowing. In the weeks that I stayed there after that, he never once piped up again in the middle of the night.

The homeless aren't just a spiritual test for us, they're suffering human beings who deserve our love and our care. I consider them my immediate family and I love them in just that way—unconditionally. We're going to bring solutions aggressively forward because this is an issue our wealthy country should not be facing. Even in California, the homeless are only three out of every thousand people, so we don't have an excuse for not solving this crisis.

A handful of billionaires could elegantly solve the issue over lunch at the club, just from the lint in their pockets, and it'll cost far less than folks think once we remove demons and fraudsters from the equation.

Chapter Five: LIMPING TO PARADISE

Angel On The Promenade (from 6/2022)

Sometimes, I think about how mankind, puny as we are, has come up with the concept of a multiverse, which I think means that every interaction with another human being sends us on a different path through our life, based on the way we handled it. Yeah, ya think?

But knowing that the 'multiverse' is as far as we, as humans, can think things through, you'd kind of have to wonder just how thinly sliced is the world built by God, who made

this place and all of us with his bare hands. And can you imagine what awaits us at the Next Level of the Game?

Anyways, I met an angel down on the Promenade the other night and thought I should share the experience with you. I hope you'll interpret it according to whatever belief, or non-belief, you find most comforting.

I'd attended an event in Oxnard to honor the recent loss of lives in New York and Texas (Uvalde) . It was a small gathering, but a LOT of spiritual power, of all kinds, in the group. Several attendees spoke, and I spoke briefly about God and love and the points I always try to make about healing. I try to stress the greater importance of prevention at the source, inside the person. Trauma reduction. Love over all. I heard some support when I finished, but I'd also absorbed a little direct hostility from some gals in the audience, so I have to admit I was kind of rattled.

I rode the bus back to Ventura with this weird angst. I got off at California and walked down to the Promenade. It was cold, and I was cold, which is very rare. I also had this queasy feeling in my gut from those girls not liking my message that much. They were 'organizing' in a political way, I wasn't really helping, but still. I hadn't done it right. I'd failed.

So I walk from the hotels down toward Surfer's Point on the Promenade. It's a clear, crisp night, a decent number of folks out. Happy people with their very happy dogs. I start walking up toward this tall black fella. He's stopped, leaning back against the wall with his back to the surf. I prepare to give him a warm salutation when he says

Hey, what's that your shirt says? Something about love?

I stop, I look down, I have a flannel shirt buttoned up to my neck over a dark t-shirt that says Love God, Love People in small, thin letters. How can he see it through the thick flannel? Not only that, but it's dark. It's full dark. Not late, maybe 10, but full dark. How

does he know what it says? We're not even standing close together. And why would he be asking this question, anyway? Nobody engages like that in broad daylight, let alone at night by the beach.

I unbutton my flannel shirt and show him my t-shirt, and I read it. "Love God, Love People"

He kind of looks off wistfully and says man but it's tough when they don't love you back and of course now I'm **all** fired up and I say Brother! I love you, God loves you, there are strangers out here who love you!

I realize as I'm saying it that he isn't suffering, and he doesn't need my help. He's just smiling.

He says hey thank you man. I say thank you to him. We share a nice, warm, solid handshake, and that's it. Couldn't have taken a full minute.

As I walked away from him, I wasn't cold and I had no more butterflies in my gut. I noticed that first. And I'm kind of floating. I knew what had happened in the moment, and I've seen so many...unusual events...but so rarely is it one of the GOOD guys reaching a hand out, kind of breaking protocol. It just blew me clear away, I gotta say. I'm sharing this because it blew me away.

If you can interpret x-ray vision man another way, please feel free to do so. Look up if you know what happened, or dismiss it altogether. We've talked about thoughts and prayers. I didn't pray for that, though I certainly would have if I knew how I'd feel coming out of it. That's just our Father, our Dad, looking after one of his kids. He does it all...day...long.

YOU are loved.

A Healing on Main Street (from 10/2022)

Earlier this summer, I had an experience I'd like to share with you.

I was walking down Ventura Avenue toward Main Street, middle of the day, on the Von's side of the street. I reached the light in front of Von's and heard some aggressive yelling coming from down toward Mission Park. I saw a couple over there who were affected by this noise, so I crossed the street. I saw a fella yelling, but I couldn't hear what he was saying. He was scary sounding and obviously unwound, so I yelled at him to shut his mouth. I probably scared that couple as much as he had.

I walked toward him and realized that he was screaming "leave me alone", over and over. Unlike other similar situations, he wasn't yelling at other people. He was just screaming "leave me alone".

I walked up to him and saw that he'd been suffering for a long time. He looked as rough as a person can look, was bent partly over, and had deep, hideous scratch marks all around his neck area. He wasn't bleeding—these were profound and hideous scars from before. I told him that I love him, that God loves him, that Jesus Christ loves him. He was posted up just before the Park, on the sidewalk in front of those businesses across the street from the Mission complex.

He stopped yelling and stood there. I repeated that I loved him and that he was loved by God and Jesus Christ. I told him that I knew what he was going through, and asked if he wanted me to help him. He didn't say anything, but he didn't move away. I stepped toward him and asked if I could give him a hug. He still didn't move away, so I wrapped my arms around him and gathered him in. His back may have been locked in a spasm because he felt like he was made of marble, of stone.

He was shorter than I am, so I put my left hand on the back of his head, and held him to my chest. We stood like that for a minute, then I put my right hand in the air, and I thought:

Father God, please look down on your child. Help your child. Please help your child. Help this child. In the name of Jesus Christ, please help this child. I thought it a couple of times, over and over.

That was it. I held him for a few moments longer, then let him go and stepped back. He straightened up to his full height. He stepped back a pace or two and looked at me. He said "thank you", quietly, sincerely, maybe five or six times. He turned and walked back on the sidewalk toward the intersection, seemingly normal in every way.

I crossed over Main, headed for the stairs to one of my favorite places, which might be called Eastwood Park. It's in the Mission complex, with a steep winding stone staircase. I wanted to take a moment to absorb what had happened. As I was leaving the sidewalk and entering the area leading to the stairs, a man approached me from behind.

He said hey, I saw what you did. I said I didn't really do anything. He said no, I watched that guy screaming, I watched you help him, then I watched him all the way until he crossed over the intersection. He looked perfectly normal, like nothing had ever been wrong with him.

I said but you realize that I didn't do anything, just said a prayer for him. I added that it was very strange and cool that he'd seen it. He said he was from out of town, he was just passing by, and that his wife worked as a psych nurse in an in-patient facility. I said well you know your wife sees folks like him every single day. People suffering from demon encroachment.

I told him that she could perform that same service, but that it wouldn't help her career very much. He laughed and agreed. I said that if we started pulling demons out left and

right, in public, we could win the Game pretty quickly. We commiserated on the evils of Big Pharma for a minute or two, shook hands, and he left as I continued into the complex toward the stairs.

When I reached the overlook, I sat down and thanked God for all of it—for the timing of my walk that day, for the opportunity to help that guy, for the gift of the right words, for the witness(!), all of it. I was kind of vibrating, buzzing, as it always is after these experiences. It feels like I think the Rapture will feel.

What did I actually do? Nothing much at all. I was ready to assist the situation, but I assumed it was just going to be another moment where I demoralize and discourage the demon in someone so they'll pipe down, stop bothering people, and go away. Instead, in this case, I connected with a person who wanted help, the key component—and asked God to help him. It was the first time I didn't say certain things out loud, and it taught me that out loud isn't necessary.

The point of sharing this story is this: We can ALL perform this service because we don't actually have to do anything. We don't have to know anything, other than Who is in charge. We just act as a conduit, as a representative for the suffering individual, nothing more. We make the case by bringing it to His attention, and we don't worry about the result. Whether the person is helped or not has NOTHING to do with us.

PWR

I recently noticed that there are a LOT of palm readers around here. Storefronts, for palm reading! That's right, I said palm reading. It tells us that we have a robust community of seekers of help and new information, of the lost looking to be found.

What if we opened up an exorcist shop? Now, I'm not talking about advertising with huge billboards like down on the Avenue. I think a big sign advertising exorcism ('Got

Demons?') would be distracting for many drivers. But it's a way toward winning the Game, which is our job. The catch? You can't charge money for it.

As part of a business plan, that's a notable flaw. Anyone charging money to pull demons out is a liar and a charlatan, which is not the same as saying they can't do it.

As for winning the Game, we have a lot of ammunition in reserve. What if we taught folks, particularly women, about certain kinds of 'narcissists'? Provided the gifts of discernment and tradecraft? That is ALWAYS an option, and those who oppose God should always keep this in mind. The time of demons is ending, and they can't stop what's coming.

Down by The Tracks, and Elsewhere

It's true that hanging around after midnight down by the railroad tracks isn't the only time and place to run into angels and demons, but it's certainly proven to be the most reliable for me.

Spiritual folks in the know recognized the COVID experience as a Devil stunt from the start. Too many maskless public appearances from the politicians insisting on mask mandates, too many skits from the spiritually compromised, too many scientists openly selling their souls to Satan. Churches closed under threat, schoolchildren prevented from learning, human beings barred from sending or receiving smiles, masked criminals now able to blend with regular people, just an absolute demon smorgasbord of all his favorite things.

The very moment it was discovered and announced that the elderly in nursing homes were most at risk from the virus, devilicious Hollywood-types got together and released a music video of themselves singing 'Imagine' by John Lennon. You know..."imagine there's no Heaven, it's easy if you try...". This disgusting antic was very specifically designed and timed-up to reach these people as they were suffering in their last moments, a blatant attempt to assist them in pulling defeat from the jaws of victory, to trip them up just as they began to ascend to God.

I remember sitting with a couple of Old Boys down by the tracks in the dead of night and laughing about this stunt. No, it isn't 'funny', but the more obvious and overt the actions of Demons are, the more amusing the willful ignorance of the general public can be. Another time, with different fellas, we laughed about a black candidate in Georgia--a pro-abortion preacher (NOT a legitimate thing)--who'd convinced the WNBA to support his political campaign. He'd gotten the shining heroes of the most at-risk demographic for abortion (young black girls) to come out in support of his devious ideology. Hat tip.

Then there was a gnome-like scientist, who said "I AM science(!)", cursed and tagged with the what-me-worry face, who began to quickly turn his lies about the origins and treatment of the sickness into cold hard cash. Because he was so clearly working for the Devil, and against the well-being of the children of God and our nation in general, his drivel was breathlessly promoted by other fans of the little guy--the mainstream media. Like Gore, one of the most successful con-men in world history, he wasn't discredited and pilloried even after all his lies were exposed. The Devil protects his own, up to a point.

How can one tell if they've encountered a long-walker and not just a homeless fella or a resident out for a walk? First, the setting. If you're hanging out in the darkest part of night in a place that any sane person would recognize as potentially dangerous, and someone walks by, that's a clue. Nobody walks around in the dark by the tracks unless they either have to, or they know they have protection. Second, what do they say? If immediately after exchanging pleasantries, the next thing out of their mouth is some

kind of spiritual declaration, that's another clue. The one thing that many of these little fellas want to talk about is how “Jesus brought a sword”, meaning there will be a bloodbath in the endgame because Jesus decreed it.

I always explain, sometimes more patiently than at other times, that The Word is the Sword He refers to, and that the Devil and his flunkies will be defeated by the Word of God. If they persist, and they often do, I remind them that if it ever came to a ‘bloodbath’, God Almighty will release the Archangels of Heaven upon them and there will be demon entrails festooned from every tree branch and telephone wire as far as the eye can see and beyond, all the way to the end of the earth.

I met an ancient woman who was pushing a cart that was piled impossibly high with stuff. As I watched her approach, I couldn't figure out how the thing didn't topple over. For some reason, and I'm usually more careful about these things, I said how you doing, I'm Peter, what's your name? Very careless on my part, because when you ask their name they have to tell you, and when you get their name from them, they're helpless, and I don't like being in that position unless they're an active threat.

She answered, and it took a while for the whole thing to come out. It sounded like a combination of several languages, none of which I recognized. I said gee whiz, you're on a long walk, aren't you? She nodded. I said do you know how long your sentence is, and she shook her head no, and I thought about the girl who had 400 years to walk. I said do you know what you did to deserve this, and she nodded her head yes. I said can you tell me what you did and she said “Bad things ... bad things” in a way that made me mourn her victims. There are a LOT of different ways to ‘burn in Hell’, and just as many ways to get there.

There was a night when I was walking around on the Promenade near the Ventura Pier. A little fella came flying by on a bicycle and skidded to a stop in front of me. He had a guitar and a backpack slung over his shoulder, and this was during a time when I'd been playing my guitar out there at night, by the beach. He said I want to show you something

and I said cool. We sat down cross-legged in front of the parking garage. He pulled out a little keyboard with a sequencer or something from his backpack and started to play with it. He immediately produced some amazing and otherworldly music from the thing and looked at me. I said wow, that's really something, and I meant it. It was spectacular, and I watched his fingers playing it live.

I said that is SOME gift you've got there, do you ever look up and thank God for it? He said yes, I thank Him all the time. As he said those words, there was a huge fireworks bloom out past the end of the Pier, from down the coast a ways. The timing was perfection, and my question was rhetorical, anyway. I said that's pretty funny, huh? He was weirded-out and not happy. We sat for a few, he played some more, and I asked him again. Do you thank God for your gift? He said I sure do, and again there was a huge bloom of a firework right in front of us. I was kind of smiling at him and he was getting rattled. This happened in the same exact way three more times, spaced out so it could not possibly be coincidental, and he became disinterested in continuing our conversation.

Another nighttime, near the same location by the beach, I was playing my guitar when a wizard-looking guy walked up out of the blue. He took off his wizard-looking hat, stepped forward, and pressed his forehead against mine. I wonder what's going on and kind of steel my mind against any kind of incursion. At that time, I was feeling kind of proud about having been given the gift of finishing a phrase correctly just a few days earlier. It's wonderful to be able to stretch out and improvise and play something interesting, but if we can't finish the phrase on one of the right notes, the whole thing collapses and is ruined. That years-long torment of rarely closing a phrase correctly had recently been lifted, and I'd felt it in the moment, as I was playing. I could suddenly instinctively do something I hadn't been able to do at all just a minute earlier. All of this was fresh in my mind.

He picked up the guitar, started shredding like I've never heard before, blending different genres with classical chops, then suddenly stopped and handed the guitar back

with a sad look on his face. He said it was nice to meet you, and I said likewise. As he walked away, I knew that I'd declined a precious gift. If I'd have been more open and welcoming, he would have installed some kind of higher understanding and guitar ability directly into my noggin. He'd tried, and I hadn't let him. This is one of the problems when 95% of your spiritual interactions are with the other team—you can get jaded, make assumptions, and ignore opportunities to upgrade. If I'd been open to it, my entire journey would have changed that night. On the other hand, walking around with a gift like that might have taken my eye off the ball in any number of ways, so I've always felt that there might have been a little...intervention...to prevent all that success and temptation from happening. Who knows?

One night, I was just hanging out at a bus stop, long after the last bus had concluded its run. A big fella, a huge fella, suddenly appeared in front of me. He was maybe 6'5" and 260 pounds or so. He was mumbling something strange and repetitive and I realized he had Tourettes. I know about Tourettes the same way I know about multiple-personality disorder or narcissism or any other excuse shrinks come up with to explain someone who has an unwanted traveler on board. He started kind of flirting with me and I realized how striking his appearance was. Apart from his massive frame, he had a classic Persian face and build that reminded me of the 'bad guy' in the 'This is Sparta!' movie, and though he was short about a hundred rings and face-piercings and baubles, he did have one huge sturdy gold earring in each earlobe, which really worked for him.

I said hey man, I'm straight but thanks. Where did you come from? He said he just liked to walk around at night and I said I do too. He said do you want to walk down to the Denny's and I said sure why not. As we walked, he had this phrase he would blurt out, over and over again. I'd love to tell you what he was saying but I just couldn't make it out. Could never make it out. It sounded very angry and seemed directed at himself. I felt terrible for this man, and I told him that God loved him and could heal him. He said he didn't think so and punched himself in the face, really, really hard. I said wait a minute, don't do that and he said his father didn't like him talking about stuff like that. I said what do you mean, God is your father and he loves you to the end of the Earth.

He punched himself in the face with his huge meaty fist and said that's not my father, my father is the other guy. I said you mean the Devil? Satan? He said yeah, that's my dad. I thought what in the world? I said screw that guy, your real Father loves you and made you with His bare hands, that's why you're so magnificent. He punched himself in the face, the sound echoing all over the place in the quiet night. It sounded like a baseball bat hitting a side of beef. I was panicking, trying to think of how to help him. This was before I carried a crucifix, and I have no idea how he would have reacted if I'd pulled one out. He might have just punched himself in the face again, which seemed to be traumatizing me far more than it did him.

So I started praying right at him, asking God to help him come back home, and he kept piping up with his weird phrase and occasionally punching himself in the face. I asked about his father and said I'd like to meet the guy who does this to you and he said he didn't think that would be a good idea. I started complimenting him on all the amazing things about him, how I could tell he was a good guy with a warm heart, how bright and good-looking he was, how people would love him as soon as they knew him. I told him I loved him even though I'd just met him, and how God and Jesus loved him more than he could imagine. He just kept producing his noise and punching himself in the face. I finally stopped because I could not endure any more of the punching. I knew that if he punched anyone else in the face that hard, they'd go down and stay down, and I just wanted it to stop. So we sat there, at a bus stop in front of a Dennys, until it started to get light out. We stood up, hugged each other for a long time, and I wished him well. I gave him my card and told him to call me if he ever needed anything. He took my card but never called, and I never saw him again.

Another incident happened right directly on the tracks, and this was in the middle of a bright and sunny day. I was walking on the slats between the tracks over a bridge suspended maybe forty feet over a body of water. When the slats are on land, they're spaced so that you have to be careful to step directly on them or you might twist an ankle should you catch only a part of it. They're spaced by about four inches, so that an

adult foot won't go through if you're facing forward, and even if you did, you'd be standing on the ground anyway. When the tracks are over water, you can see the water down there between the slats, which can be kind of nerve-tingling. I was walking very confidently on the slats, over the water, when I became aware of a fella approaching on my right.

He was on the metal walkway next to the tracks, which is very loud and jangly and dubious to walk on, which was why I chose the slats instead. For some reason, I couldn't see him very clearly, but when he asked for a dollar, I said sure, reached in my pocket, pulled out a dollar, and stepped toward him. But by turning my body toward him, I'd also turned my foot-angle sideways and was now using the width of my foot instead of the length of my foot, and I missed the slats altogether. He'd stopped at a point where there was an extra wide gap between the slats and waited until I got in front of him before speaking. As my entire right leg went down into the abyss, I plunged down in an instant from 6'2" to my face landing directly on the cold steel track. One leg up, the other **way** down.

I watched the dollar bill I was going to hand him fall like a leaf all the way down to the water, and he said "tough one". I said "yeah, tough one" and I knew he'd got me. He never offered help or said another word because he'd completed his task. It took a while for me to get my leg out and stand back up, complicated by my herculean effort to pretend that I wasn't hurt. I didn't want to show him anything, but, man...I was hurt. I was really hurt, and stayed hurt for a couple of weeks. But something else had happened: I'd landed directly on the steel track with my face so carefully and precisely that I had only a thin razor-like cut on my cheek. Astonishingly, inconceivably, I hadn't caved in my entire skull, or been knocked unconscious to be run over by the next train, or been killed instantly, all of which were far more likely scenarios.

I'd dropped six feet in an instant, with 210 lbs dragging me down, landing on my cheek on a railroad track...and somehow hit it at just the proper angle and speed to leave only a tiny cut, with a little bit of blood coming down. I finally managed to stand up and finished crossing to the other side and sat down on a rock and collected my thoughts. I

realized I'd been too confident, had felt too safe in a place of danger, had exhibited hubris and arrogance and a lack of respect for God and the Enemy by acting like I was all alone in the world. I hadn't taken one single moment to assess an oncoming stranger, and hadn't even shown the common courtesy of looking at him and acknowledging him before trying to hand him money. A Demon got me, an Angel saved me, the good guys won, and I really hope I've retained that "tough" lesson. Don't get too cocky, because something else is just ahead, up around the bend.

One night, a couple of years later, I was standing around in the same general area, and a fella walked past me and said hey do you remember me? I said no, I meet a lot of you fellas out here. He said are you sure and I said yeah, I'm sure and he kept walking. It was still too soon to laugh about it, and I really didn't want to give him anything more than I already had. Pretty weak, now that I think about it.

Another night, same area, a tall and feral-looking girl approached me and started yammering at me so fast I thought she was on crack or something. It took me a while to catch up to her cadence, and when I did I realized she was trying to sell me something—a different kind of life. She was pitching a world of wealth and affluence, if only I'd agree to it and walk away with her. She was pacing back and forth in front of me as I leaned against a retaining wall, and at the exact moment I thought of deploying the crucifix in my shoulder bag, she stopped and laughed right at me.

Eventually I was able to convince her that I was going to try to help win the Game the old-fashioned way, instead of taking a shortcut and jeopardizing my future. I asked her if I could say a prayer for her, and she said sure why not. I hugged her, she hugged me back, and as we stood like that I silently asked God to help her come back to Him. As we broke our embrace, she stood on her tiptoes and briefly but firmly bumped her private part into mine, and then laughed like she was in a laughing contest. I said well it was worth a try and walked away tingling, feeling like a jackass. She'd got me.

Over the past six years or so, there have been scores of odd interactions down by the tracks and the beach at night. It's my favorite time and place to hang out and pray and think, and I'd say of the hundreds of nights I've walked around down there, nearly half have produced at least one...unusual...exchange.

I guess that's why I continue to go down there—the presence of the spiritual and the supernatural will always be more compelling to me than the absence.

Very recently, down by the tracks at night, the very day I'd finally committed to finishing this book, a fella walked up to me out of the blue and showed me his phone. There was a meme-thing with a clickbait headline: 'Five things you should never talk about'. He said do you want me to send this to you and I said no that's okay. I pointed up and said if He wants me to stop talking about something, He'll let me know.

I walked away and immediately encountered a fella who looked entirely unwound, carrying a large stick. He dropped the stick and said his name was Michael and that he'd been the first angel to fall, even before Lucifer. He said even though he'd bounced really hard, he'd been uninjured, unlike some of the other angels that fell with him. He started quoting scripture, and I started paying more attention to him. He referred to Lucifer in the present tense, and I reminded him that the little guy is barred from using that name. The other fella came back right around that time and kind of broke up the discussion. I was left to wonder whether the guy was a full-blown long-walking Demon, or if he just had a demon inside him, manipulating him like a sock-puppet. Without the gift of discernment, we risk frightening and alienating folks that we might otherwise be able to help. If I'd had another few minutes with him, I'd have known his status and whether to try to help him, advise him, or demoralize him.

Sometimes, you don't have to go all the way down to the tracks to encounter the supernatural, it will come to you.

One night, very late, in my apartment, I awoke to the sound of some dude yelling. I could hear a fella in the distance yelling as loud as he could, coming down the street, getting closer to where I was, and he was screaming “F— YOU, I’LL KILL YOU!” just as loud as a person can scream. He was pounding on the garbage cans on our street with a stick or something. As he kept getting closer and closer, I thought, well I should investigate. This is exactly the kind of thing I normally run toward, but I was tired and didn't immediately get up.

He arrives in front of my place. My window faces the street and he is standing on the sidewalk maybe 15 feet from my window. He's yelling ‘f— you I’ll kill you’ right in at me, and he wasn't going down the street anymore because he'd apparently reached his destination. So I got up and put on my sandals and walked out into the tiny front yard and opened the gate. We have a small fence and he stepped in and got right in my face, continuing to scream at me with his nose less than an inch from mine. I was looking down on him because I'm 6 2 and he was about 5 10. I'm about 210 pounds and he's about the same but he's all buffed up and raging, while I only had mild curiosity working for me. I should probably mention that I was wearing one of my ‘I love you’ t-shirts as a pajama top and that HAS to be unnerving to someone in the state he was in.

I said “hey, man, you should see all the Angels in the air around your head” He took a step back, paused and thought for a moment. Then he chuckled me on the shoulder and said you're okay, man. I chuckled him back and said you are too. He exited through the gate and I said “I love you, brother” and he immediately started screaming "F YOU, I'll kill you!“ And I said “no you won't, you're not going to do anything, you're gonna lose”. As he walked away, continuing down the street the way he'd been headed, he yelled F You I'm gonna kill you as I yelled after him “you have no chance, you'll never win, you always lose, it's already decided.”

He continued down the street yelling his thing while I yelled mine, both of us LOUD. He exited the area and I went back inside. I thanked God for the opportunity and the entertainment, as I always do. Although you can hear a pin drop a block away at night in

my neighborhood, no one came out, no one turned their lights on, no dogs barked, and my neighbors said they never heard a thing when I asked them the next day. It's like the whole thing happened in a vacuum.

Another night a couple of years later, I'm sleeping on my couch next to the window and I'm awakened by a woman screaming, as though in genuine desperate peril. It was late, after two in the morning. I run outside in my socks to see what the deal is. I hear the pounding of feet on pavement and I catch a quick glimpse of a girl who runs like a sprinter coming up the sidewalk. She turns into my next-door neighbor's driveway and disappears into his back yard, which is fenced in like mine. I think huh, and walk out to the sidewalk. I see a small ragged compact vehicle slowly trolling up the street, coming from the direction she had. I start walking toward it, and it quickly accelerates and goes by.

I start talking to the girl, aiming my voice down the driveway she'd just entered, asking what she needed, how could I help her, telling her I'd call the cops and she could wait in my place for them. She suddenly appeared in front of me, on the sidewalk. She looked feral but focused and very solid. She was striking-looking, with a very athletic posture and bearing. I said was that car following you, is there something you need, how can I help, and so on but she didn't say a word.

Now here comes the same car again, slow-rolling after circling the block, coming up the same way it had before. I turned toward the vehicle and she moved up right behind me, as though trying to hide in my shadow from the guy. I looked at him, and looked at her, and I thought that if it came right down to it, she could jerk that little weasel out through his windshield with her bare hands. I started walking toward him, he took off and drove away, and when I turned back to her, she just took off running back down the sidewalk in the direction she'd come from. Running like a machine, her bladed hands pumping, her bare feet pounding on the sidewalk in the otherwise silent night.

I thought something's going on and I want to know more! I went back inside to put on some shoes and walked briskly down toward where she'd run. I stood in the middle of the intersection but couldn't see anything happening. Suddenly, there was a ringtone from a phone. It was kind of distinctive and playful, like ring a ling, ring a ling ling ling. It sounded like it was coming from just across the street, in front of the convenience store. I thought maybe I could help someone find their phone, so I walked over and studied the ground but couldn't find anything. Suddenly, from far behind me, up the road a ways, ring a ling, ring a ling ling ling. I started walking in that direction, and now the ringing was coming from the opposite direction, halfway up the street, back the other way. Ring a ling, ring a ling ling ling. Again, from the opposite direction it had been. This went on for a while, just walking toward the sound and the sound resetting its location by fifty yards or more back in the opposite direction. Honestly, I could have continued playing that delightful game, just smack in the middle of some kind of cosmic skit, but it was very late so I headed back home, thanking God yet again for my oddball journey.

One day, I dropped off a friend at a doctor's appointment and was suddenly driving, for the first time in years. It felt weird and a little bit exciting to be behind the wheel again, but I was just going to go down by the beach and hang out until she was ready to be picked up. Immediately, in under a minute, while I was sitting at a stop light, a double-cab pickup crossed through the intersection and I could hear the driver screaming obscenities out his window at passers-by. I guess I could have ignored him and continued with my plan, but why would I do that? I pulled out and followed him and watched as he screamed “F—You!” out of both windows.

People on the sidewalks were jumping back and reacting to this bizarre onslaught of hatred, so I got up right behind him and started yelling “Shut your mouth” every time he'd yell. I saw him looking around for the source and he stopped yelling for a few moments, so I stopped. Then he started up again “F—You!”, just like dozens of folks I've seen yelling at traffic or people in the street. Unlike all those times with those folks, when I've quieted them down by reminding them that Jesus loves them, I was

screaming back at this guy, bringing terror to a terrorist. Yelling “SHUT YOUR MOUTH” as loud or louder than he was.

And he did, indeed, shut his mouth, all the way until he turned off the main street, and onto a side road, and through a housing development, and all the way until he finally parked in his driveway, as I pulled over just up the street, where he could see me. He didn't look directly at me as he went inside his place, and I stayed parked there for some reason. He came out and pretended to look in his truck, sneaking a glance at me, still parked two houses up. And then it suddenly occurred to me--I was now the bad guy! It would have been fine for me to follow him all the way to his house, and even turn around in his driveway to spike the ball, but it was wrong to stay there after his demon had been fully terrorized and cowed. So I left.

As Christians, we have an obligation to help those who are suffering. As Warrior Christians, we have an additional obligation to demoralize the Enemy when the opportunity presents, and to remind him that God and Jesus will always be in charge, and that demons always lose at the end.

THE END

AFTERWORDS

Protection and Perspective

As human beings, as God's creations, as His children...most of us go through our lives without real gratitude.

It isn't because we don't love Him, if we know about Him, it's because we don't see all He does on our behalf.

We don't appreciate the sheer volume of protection we're allotted during our lifetimes, because we've been trained to dismiss miracles.

We don't appreciate our Angels, and we don't appreciate our Dad.

I don't know anyone who hasn't had their bacon pulled from the fire. Do you? Do they ever talk about it? Do you?

How many times would we have died or been maimed if we'd have just turned our head one way and not the other way? If we'd have jumped in that car, or trusted that guy, or went on that retreat? Our angels work overtime just to keep us functional. And we survive, even if damaged, because of them.

When we pray directly to God for help in a situation, and get it, we rarely look up and thank Him. We forget about it instantly, and not just because we're selfish.

It's because we've just witnessed the supernatural and aren't ready to accept it. We've seen a sign and wonder, and shrunk from it.

It's a perfectly natural and understandable human response to new and startling information. Paradigm shift can sting.

Sometimes, though, protection is impossible to ignore.

I'd been on the street in Vegas for a few weeks, and was riding the bus late at night, which is about 11 PM for people who live there. Only the casinos go late, everyone else goes to bed early.

I was about halfway back in the very long city bus, but I was the forward-most passenger, the first guy you see when you get on the bus. Three young tough guys step up and onto the bus. They seemed like they might belong to the same club or something, and probably not Kiwanis. I had my rolling suitcase with me, a guitar over my shoulder, and one or more backpacks.

I could see their faces light up with glee and anticipation when they saw me, then immediately commenced the worst group coughing fit one can imagine. SO much worse than any coughing fit I'd ever seen, in movies or anywhere else. The bus driver pulled over right away, and demanded they exit immediately. They were clawing at the door trying to get out, and it was accomplished very quickly.

I knew, in that moment, that I'd been protected from certain calamity. I knew I was being cared for, and I thanked Him, in that moment, on the bus. I didn't think much more about it. I'd been in Vegas for a while, so I'd already seen plenty.

Forward a few more weeks, and the same identical sequence happened again. Different demographics, but ganged-up hostiles getting on a bus, looking at me, in approximately the same state, with all my stuff, visibly salivating, and then being ejected by the driver for their bizarre, horrific coughing fit. Again, I noticed and thanked Father God and His angels for loving me and looking out for me. And then I kind of forgot about it.

Forward many more months, and now I'd been in Ventura County for a while and was staying in a shelter. I'd written an email to the Chino police department and copied the mayor and council on it, complaining about the fact that I'd been unable to report any of the crimes I'd witnessed at the Canyon Ridge facility in Chino, to Chino cops.

I explained that I'd tried several different options with the cops of Chino, including calling the switchboard, meeting them on the street more than once, and going directly into the station, and none of them had worked. No one had even taken out a pen.

I never expected a response, so I was shocked and mildly optimistic when a Lieutenant from the Chino police force emailed me back and said sure we'll take your statement, c'mon in when you can.

I made plans to leave immediately, and left immediately. I took a combination of buses and trains to Chino, where I was, yet again, unable to convince any Chino cop to take a report on ongoing abuses at Canyon Ridge, an in-patient mental-health facility in Chino.

The Lieutenant wasn't available, and no one had ever heard of me. One little cop fella came up to me in the lobby and motioned me to step out the back door, onto a kind of

terrace. He listened without producing a pen, and when I finished explaining the sleep deprivation, he said oh that's just their policy. He seemed familiar with that story, as though he'd heard and dismissed it many times before. I said policy? What are you talking about? He said that's all I know, and I realized we were done talking.

I returned to the bus station, a kind of massive hub in the Chino/Montclair area, and boarded a bus toward LA and the train station to return to Oxnard. I wasn't dejected, though I'd certainly been had. It had cost me time that I could spare, and money that I couldn't, but it wasn't exactly a shock.

I was sitting about halfway back in the bus, and three young tough guys got on. They took a look at me, and then began coughing like they were going to expire on the spot. We didn't even clear the terminal lot before they were running out the door.

And I thought man, it happened again! And then I thought—and this was a mistake—maybe I can just control people who mean me harm. I mean, ME. Control enemies and whatnot. ME. With my dang MIND power, or something.

And then, I couldn't breathe. Not in, and not out. I was suspended, unable to take in or expel air.

I immediately felt chastised, embarrassed. But just as quickly I realized hey, this is serious, no one else is laughing.

And in the minutes to follow, I had ample time to figure out why THIS was it. Why was THIS the moment I might expire? Why now, and not all those other times?

I had plenty of time to consider all those times I'd let people down. All those times when I could've helped someone, and didn't. All those things I hadn't apologized for yet.

Just when I'd come to the conclusion that I'd forfeited my chance, and richly deserved whatever was coming, I could suddenly breathe again.

He just wanted to remind me that it had nothing to do with me. Any of it.

And after that happened, as the bus hit the highway, all I could do was raise my hands and thank Him for loving me. And I kept thanking Him, over and over, for a long time and until this day, which was what I should have done the other times.

If you ask me how long it really lasted—when I could neither draw breath nor expel it—I'd say it lasted for exactly the right amount of time.

Disclaimers

‘A Christian mystic is a believer who seeks a direct, intimate, and experiential awareness of God's presence rather than just an intellectual understanding of religious doctrine.’
(Google)

I know darn well I'm nobody special but I also know I've been given some very special knowledge and have an obligation to share it. God had to grab me by the nape of the neck and force me to learn certain truths, and because He did that, I work for Him now. I'm compelled and obligated to share what's happened and answer any questions about it, but I'm not required to worry too much about how it's received.

I'm sure that any Christian who's seen what I've seen has reacted in similar ways, has asked the same questions of Him, and is currently on the job trying to bring His children Home. What else can you do? You can't pretend to not know what you know, and you can't un-know it.

In each of the first two inciting incidents, I did what anyone would do. I dragged a demon out of a motel room by its feet because I was protecting a friend, and if it had shown its demon-face before I grabbed it, I might have run away. I hope not, but it would've occurred to me. And then yelling the Lord's Prayer into a room full of demons—I think almost EVERYONE would have done that, because when you're staring into the abyss at the end of the Earth, you'll grasp at anything. See : atheists, foxholes, etc.

I remember a back and forth on social media years ago, when a fella explained that he'd witnessed a real sign and wonder, proof of God and the Bible, had felt elated that he'd figured the whole thing out, and then had tried to convince others of what he'd learned. He talked about running up to people and desperately trying to help them, and how they didn't really appreciate his efforts, to put it mildly. He'd eventually convinced himself

that he'd imagined the sign and wonder event, and was back to being atheist-ish. He was trying to prevent my own heartbreak in this area.

I told him that he'd had the most natural reaction in the world to what he'd seen and that I'd spent years tamping down the desire to run up to people and try to help them in a more...direct way. I told him that he was very special to have been shown something like that and that he should try to accept what happened and absorb the knowledge he'd been given into himself, first, then worry about the others. I said that if grabbing someone by the lapels and yelling about God really worked, even one time, it'd be worth alienating even friends and family...if we knew they'd advance to the Next Level.

I haven't been frightened of anything I've encountered—everything was placed before me in a very specific order, this thing building on the last thing, and so on and on. I dragged out a demon before I knew it was one, yelled the Lord's Prayer as a last option, and suddenly had all the knowledge in the Universe that matters. And since then I've just tried to go with the flow, tried to allow the angels to guide my words, tried to lead with love in all instances, while being open to all spiritual experiences.

There will soon come a time, I hope, to publicly debate atheists, or spiritualists, or other religious factions and general nay-sayers, on the true nature of this world, and that will be the time to start the real work.

Convincing folks to think again, to try harder, to care more about their future. To look around and embrace the amazing environment He gave to us, to love and uplift ALL of His suffering children, and to finally figure out and embrace the Truth and thank God Almighty and Jesus Christ for all of it.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

THE BOOK: The Bible. The Word of God. The way Home, the rules of salvation. The basis for The Paradise Game.

DAD: God Almighty, The Man Upstairs, The Big Guy. Father, Sir, Pop, etc. The One who made the world, and all that is in it, with His bare hands. Creator of The Paradise Game, so that we may earn eternal bliss and happiness. Merciful in every way, but a stickler for details. Do NOT lie to Him, because He will know.

MOM: Mother Mary, Queen of Heaven, Mother of God on Earth. Second only to Her Son in Spiritual power on Earth. Squashed the skull of the Serpent.

JESUS: The Key to Everything, the bridge to God's adopted Family, the door through which we must pass in order to ascend to the Next Level. Unlimited power over the Enemy and his demons.

Satan: The fallen Angel formerly known as Lucifer. The Opponent in the Paradise Game. The little guy, The Evil One, The Enemy, Ol' Scratch, Father of Lies, Prince of Darkness (some kind of middle-management position--the King and Queen of Darkness are also the King and Queen of Daylight), the Dragon, the Serpent, etc. The loser in the End, always.

Demon: A high-ranking flunkie of Satan. Able to manipulate people through cunning influence and shape the environment through vast experience.

Old Boy: A Demon with many, many years of experience under his belt. Yes, there are some Old Gals, but far fewer and not as dedicated to destroying us as the fellas. The work of true Evil is overwhelmingly the work of men.

Long Walker: A Demon serving a sentence for prior bad acts. Forced to suffer through this life and others, barred from sharing their many talents and limitless knowledge. There is no escape for them—even suicide just resets the clock on their penalty.

demon: A malevolent creature that can enter and control human beings when they have too much trauma, or when they are victims of spiritualists or other charlatans, or when they're careless with guarding themselves or engage in other negative practices. Some folks actively seek out a demon, thinking it'll make their lives better, and we can find these poor souls begging for solutions all over the internet.

Shmemon: A virus, a malady, a condition. When ordinary people break under the pressure of too much retained trauma, they can open a doorway through which a demon enters. The condition of having a demon inside.

Sock Puppet: The most acute state of Shmemon, having ceded total control to the demon inside. Folks in this state will do ANYTHING to please their unwanted traveler, and often do. Jails and prisons are full of folks who gave up all control and followed their demons into Hell. It can happen in less than a minute, the entire life-in-prison incident.

The Sword: The Word of God. The Book.

The Word: The Sword we wield in Spiritual Warfare. The Book.

The Lord's Prayer: The most powerful prayer for everyday guidance and protection. Be sure to always say "...and deliver us from the Evil One" because there is no such thing as generic evil. ALL evil flows from the little guy, so don't forget to name him.

Spiritual Juice: Additional protections afforded to Angels, Demons, and those who've obtained higher knowledge.

The Paradise Game: A view of the spiritual world based on the teachings of The Book. A strategy for Victory over the Opponent.

READING LIST/FOR FURTHER STUDY

Documentary film: The Devil and Father Amorth

dir: William Friedkin

Alignment, Chuck Parry.

Hearts of Fire: Eight Women in the Underground Church, Voice of the Martyrs.

The Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism, Bernard McGinn.

The Exorcist Field Guide, Pastor Swope.

An Exorcist Tells His Story, Father Gabriele Amorth.

Saints Who Battled Satan, Paul Thigpen.

The Battle Against Satan and his Demons, Father Vincent Lambert.

Prayers That Route Demons, John Eckert.

Little Talks With God, Catherine of Sienna.

Confessions, St. Augustine.

The Exorcist Handbook, Josephine McCarthy.

The Roman Ritual, part 2

The Devil in the City of Angels, Jesse Romero

PART TWO: Available On Request

(warning: tradecraft)

THOUGHTS AND CONCLUSIONS

On Demons

Shrinks and Charlatans

How Do You Pray?

The Paradise Project

The Paradise Game

PARADISE GAME SAMPLER

Forgive In Advance

Paradise and African-Americans

How Not to Wear the Cross

Will You Need an Attorney in the Afterlife?