

## Out take 1

Me I was always making circles. Out from the 66 a few plays, some drive time, back to the 66. Some circles were broader than others. Phoenix just for fun. Frisco, Seattle, Vancouver, Quebec. The latter creating bi-lingual issues that highlight the limits of the play, it don't cross borders too easy – though I have had my times down south – the international business play. I don't know if I could run that these days. Days of indecision and hazy horizons. I haven't won though I kid myself I'm ahead. Natural self delusion, it's what makes society possible. There's no short cuts, just ways less travelled.

I am pulling in the driveway hating this no answers shit when I see the problem staring me straight in the face. The Arizona State Police cruiser brushed up close behind the back of the diner. That was what counts for discretion round these parts. It's the lieutenant's, of course. I have to cool my jets, in the diner, the usual crowd.

I eat the regular breakfast. The eggs are too greasy this morning, the bacon too fat. I pick and chew and glance, eyes flicking into the white light, the silver fuzzed out heat already kicking up around the gas pumps. You can see the gas vaporizing around the filler as desert dulled drivers load up for another five hundred mile petrochemical dreamtime.

I guess at where they're heading, some families in bummed out station wagons and early SUVs. A gallon of gas costing around the same the as an eggs only breakfast. A full tank would get you board as well.

A night with Tanya would buy you some of these rusted out wreckers – this is Arizona no California cash for clunkers. Smog? Bring it on, least it'd block the sun.

I'm doing the value equations again. It comes with the territory, room charges, room rates, state sales tax, bar tabs, valet fees. I am calculating the value of every tiny enterprise. I could do more, I know this. She knows this. The second coffee is kicking in sour and black. Matching my feelings about this dining room. I travelled 557 miles to be here. Now I see every mile since I sold that first StarBlend queen, cushion-sprunged with latex outer. The black snake of freeway spitting me out into this booth waiting for that Arizona cobalt blue cruiser to pull out from that sneaky patch of shade behind the accommodation block.

## Out take 2

I'm sitting dazed in the back of the Benz after I unloaded my peeling old blue star. I'm really deep into thinking what have I done here. A guy's dead. That's pretty final no talking your way around that. Kinda of worse is the feeling I lost control of it all. I was cool with my little game, the little victories over the man.

Like I'm some kinda late twentieth century outlaw, turning the system back in on itself, nice and forgivable. Always thought I'd do minimum security time if I ever got taken down. Meet up with some of those Wall Street types and learn how to make a real pile, rip of the system legally. Team up and write a book. I imagined the worst would be a retirement home for old cons. Now I guess it's manslaughter kind of. I reckon they'd go murder two and bargain me down from there depending on how much the rest of my games means to them.

I'm wading through this drivel when it clicks where we're going what were doing. She's got us heading up through West Hollywood to the Chateau Marmont for the love of god. It's not exactly well known as a low profile hideaway for those seeking to fly under the radar.

I've said it to her once and I know I'll say it again – they make movies and TV shows about this place. America's best selling record of all time has a god damned picture of the place on the album cover.

Then I see her looking at me like I'm some kind of child, needs to have something really simple spelled out to them so they remember it for always.

She just reminded me how I'd worked my life coast to coast doing this stuff – or so I had claimed. And how the best way to escape from robbing a bank is to walk past the cops as they go screaming around looking for the getaway car.

Hide in plain sight is what she's telling me. And I see him nodding and grinning in the rear view. Yeah she's right ain't no time to go skunking around. Might as well go for broke, could even be fun.

Here I am in the room 413. That's why she had it at the 66. The girls get to choose their room numbers. It's their account number. Some double accounting separate set of books they'd run in case anyone came looking. Her account was 413 – the 'all you can eats' would be tallied against that number.

This ain't a room, it's a luxury apartment. Small but perfectly formed. There's even a kitchen – for the staff to cater from. The terrace is the knockout, she's out there hair streaming back in the breeze kicking in of the Pacific. I still feel the burning car out there in the desert generating all the heat that makes that cool breeze run into the early evening. Cold current down from Alaska working closer to shore this time of year.