

## Clint Burnham / SIX STORIES

### WHITENECKS

Little Tommy Douglas's friend knew Alan Blakeney's son. He was at the window of his house when a lady from the complex came up and asked him if your mother's using the laundry. He said he didn't know and she asked if she was home and he said he didn't know. The woman went away.

Tommy went up to the main street to see his friends who had to go to the school. They were recessing and he went and sat on the curb by a coffee emporium. Some of the boys came by.

Tommy told them of his dream, of whitencks attacking at noon. Some of the boys elbowed each other noisily. What's whitencks hey? Hey doncha know. Pushing each other with weak knowledge. The quiet ones who knew from watching the tv sat quietly.

None of them quite caught what was going on. The whitencks did indeed arrive at noon, in new pick-ups and old jeeps. They were mostly the town bully losers, contract killers who never quite made it, like those Africans you read about who'd join up with the missionaries and sell out their brothers and sisters.

## NOT FAIR

(from *Smoke Show*)

Hey how're you doin'? Okay eh?

Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah okay, hunh. Kernal. Yeah so okay. Hey, you want to open the window? Open the window okay?

The white girl sitting up in front of him turned around, folding her legs under her. She pushed a couple of times on the window. Jeff got up and she opened the window. He sat back down again and continued abusing the guy next to him. That guy wore flip-up sunglasses, and carried two plastic bags. He wore garden gloves. A cream windbreaker and looked like Jad Fair from the band Half Japanese.

So you want to get off now. Jeff talked to him. Get off, and, you know, go for it.

Uhhh, no.

Yeah okay so maybe we'll. This is your stop eh? This your stop? So what're you doing? Going to the fireworks? So you know. Hey no one mind the rush from the window?

The guy shifted a bit on the seat, pushed his glasses up, the flip-up shades stuck to the light sheen on his forehead.

Yeah so what if I had a gun eh? You got a knife, no, you wouldn't carry a knife, don't have the guts. You wouldn't carry a knife, would you? Hey Howard.

The guy called Howard looked straight ahead, said no.

Yeah, knew that. So where you going? Going downtown? Going to *Waterworld*? Gonna see it eh? Some movie eh? You seen it? Going to *Waterworld*, fireworks? Yeah so you going to the fireworks? Not much going on there. Something. Not much. So how's it going? Mind if I, think I should fuck ya? Hunh, you mind? Want me to shoot you? Hunh? Want that to happen? The bullet's bigger when it comes out eh? You know? Whole back of your head goes. So what're you going to, *Waterworld*? You want to sit here.

A little while later, a native woman moved back in front of Jeff. He got up, and she sat down. Yeah good so like I still wanta talk to my buddy eh. So how's it going eh buddy? Yeah, want to keep an eye on him. Don't want him getting away.

The woman looked at Jeff, she frowned and quickly smiled.

So where you going, where you going? Going home.

The girl who'd opened the window looked up at him. Nope.

Going to a movie? Yeah? What movie? *Waterworld*.

Umm, I don't know. Whatever. Some movie.

Yeah so, what movie. Don't you know. Don't you want to?

I don't really feel like having a conversation right now.

A guy across the aisle dropped some peanut shells into his pocket and stood up.

Hey so what's up.

Not much.

Going to a movie?

Yeah. He smelled of gasoline, or lighter fluid.

Guys going together?

Yeah, you know.

Yeah so what're you up to?

Oh you know, movie.

Yeah so what're you seein'?

I don't know, *Glass Key*. *Glass* something.

Yeah so what is it?

I don't know, some gangster movie.

White.

Yeah.

White gangster. Not a black one.

Yeah.

Yeah so like, right on. You know, not *New Jack City*, hunh? *Boyz N the Hood*.

No, this is an old one. Black and white.



Yeah, same drug, different —

Same shit, different pile.

The woman at the back got up and Jeff sat down again. Hey let's talk some more, eh buddy. Get some talking, hey Jew-boy. Hey you better not report me to *The Buzzer*. So where you going? West End? Going to the West End? Hunh? You like to go there.

No. The guy's jacket was zippered to his sternum.

Jeff kept putting his hand in his jacket pocket, poking with his finger. It was zipped up half-way: Body-Glove.

Hey you interested in our conversation? Pretty interesting eh? Well why don't you mind your own fucking business.

## SOMETIMES IN THE SUMMER BUT NOT USUALLY

Sometimes Wolf'd imagine how he'd sound if he was being taped and under surveillance. He read part of a book of tapes of the mobster John Gotti to get the tone right.

He would do quick conversations aloud.

· So I says to him, I go, how coulda ya forget the coke?

Although he was exaggerating. Most of the tapes were of people talking about how they were being taped. They worried about it, and talked about the informants. He used to use the pay phones. Assuming his own house was tapped. Then, they started tapping the pay phones in the early 90s.

By the late 90s, someone in BCTel decided that certain areas didn't deserve to have pay phones at all. They ran a cost-benefit analysis and while they were making money from all the pay phones altogether, they weren't from ones that were vandalized. Soon it wouldn't be from ones in rich neighbourhoods near high schools, since the kids had cell phones, but for now they differentiated between where they should have pay phones, where they shouldn't, and where there was a grey area. For the grey area they put in pay phones you could only call 911 from after 9 p.m. This crimestoppersish initiative only succeeded in making people use cell phones and further inconveniencing non-cell owners, or NCO's. Then AT&T got into the market and spread more pay phones again.

## SELF HELP = SELF DENIAL

Felicity filed her report cards at the government office, walked out to where immigrant-looking families — Vietnamese, Taiwanese, Ethiopian, Cambodian, Polish, American, Somalian, Filipino — sat in idling minivans and compacts waiting for their breadwinners to emerge from the government building. She unlocked her bike from one of the three almost-full racks.

Rules for dating:

1. Drink before you get to the party/bar/event/whatever.
2. Wait for guys to start talking to you, then talk back. Or start yourself.
3. Only have sex with them if you end up back at your place, or back at his place. If you end up somewhere else — say, it's muggy, and you're half drunk or totally drunk and it's a park and the grass feels cool, well, okay, but only if there isn't some creepy guy watching from the other side of the statue with a horse on it, unless the guy watching from behind a bush or from the other side of a statue with a horse on it doesn't bother you. Too much.

She wrote this down in a notebook, with a blotchy pen, in her terrible handwriting. That even she couldn't read. So she kept thinking sentences were over. Even if they weren't.

Two months later, looking through it, she couldn't tell what it was and could not remember the circumstances. In ten years of going on unemployment insurance they had changed the name, and now she got a job before her benefits ran out, for the first time.

## MY COCK IS A WOMAN

The woman begins speaking: It started when I put this sweater on backwards. I could see the Armani tag when I looked down to see if I'd spilled any cigar ash. And it looked like deflated tits down there.

He asks, What do you mean?

What's so hard to . . . ?

So hard to what? What, this isn't funny. I can't believe this, I'm talking to my cock? What, I'm one of those guys —

She, his cock, looked at him scornfully, if you can look at him with one eye scornfully.

He said, This is like a Jewish dog.

Yeah, she said, it's like a Jewish dog. She stopped and frowned. What do you mean a Jewish dog?

Why would I think my cock would be male? It's like a noun, right? It can be like male or female. Like is it a Jewish dog if it's born to a Jewish family or if it's owned by Jews.

What, so you're my cockette?

She cuts him off — Oh Mama Mama. My mother named our dogs all the time. One was named Brutus. The big guy on Popeye? This was before the Robert Altman movie. We had a cat named Snoopy.



Yeah, well top this. We had a dog named Quincey. After, you know, that show.

As I watched, my cock seemed to reach, with arms that weren't there, for her bedside table that wasn't there. She picked up her vibrator and began rubbing it on her cunt. My piss-hole. I, she, was writhing around, my cock was writhing around like a crackhead dancing to Gino Vanelli. I was getting fucking excited myself, I'll tell you, and my cock got bigger, she got bigger and harder and kept moving around even though she was stiff.

I was stiff and limber at the same time, or alternating, who can tell when you've got a dildo banging you? You know, I sadly said to the dildo, my father once told us not to call each other dildo. Me and my brother. We used to. So we switched to dingo. And fruit instead of fuck off. He told us dildos were things lesbians, women who loved other women, used. I thought they were nuns.

Sweet, the dildo said. Yeah, those lesbians. They were total fantasy objects for straight guys.

We're talking the arctic. We lived in the fucking arctic.

Fucking ice people.

Fucking ice people's fucking right.

But the thing about the dildo is it's a gun. It's a .22 rifle. I'm kinda disappointed, I'd rather a glock or elephant gun. But my gun and me, you know, we have a relationship. I keep it clean, don't share it too much. It doesn't mind getting dirty as long as I clean it. It's satisfying rubbing it, cleaning it, the brass weight and the flannel through the barrel.

And then the dildo, or the gun, he's got this fucking cappuccino machine. He lived in some trashed-out house, rotting into the ground and surrounded by surly illegal workers, a belching tar pit

and surveillance cameras. It was like how by the Cambie street bridge the raves and drug dealers lived across the street from the cop shop. What's a guy like that doing with a cappuccino machine anyway? Except that loser white trash like that have ones that they get from the dump or thrift store for a buck. And so dude dildo-slash-gun's there foaming up the milk, a cup with a couple ounces of nice dark fluid sitting on that shelf it has, the sheet metal shit with little holes or black plastic grid.

## CLINT NEVER MISSES

I shake the squeeze toy at the kid as its father fetched a pack of bootleg smokes.

