

Father Doesn't Always Know Best

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By the time I was 16 years old I had been sufficiently lectured on the need for a proper education. Believe me. I grew up in an academically rich environment. All that mattered was getting to the Ivy League and hitting it big. Join a Fraternity; be a legacy; follow Father's lead; and – of course – marry nice blood. Grades aside, there was always a post-graduation position in Father's business. Cars, champagne, "jolly good shows" all those inducers of orgasm for the opulent aristocracy awaited me if I could only "tow the mark" and "go the distance."

Well, I didn't do those things. Instead, I chose to follow the tune of a different drum. I fucked up. That's what Father thinks. He calls me a black sheep, but he'd rather call me a bastard. He can't though.

As soon as I could walk I was ushered into nursery schools and began instruction on how to get along with my blessed brethren. This was necessary in order to suffer through future years of private tutoring and preparatory schooling, for I was aimed at the top. Things were laid out for me. Father knew best.

I began life early as a cynic of institutions. I couldn't help it, though, because I was surrounded by institutions within my family. Stout, unrelenting institutions that had weathered more than one generation of stormy social seasons. Father was an up-and-coming associate member of a fine East Coast corporate law firm; Mother peddled Mary Kaye cosmetics from a plush living room conversation pit in our model suburban bungalow.

I was the only child: Mama's little precious.

Father and Mother's friends used to remark that I was "such a smart looking young man" and that "someday I'd have the world at my feet." I'd smile politely and wish rather to have the world by the balls than at my feet. As I said, I became a cynic quite early.

But then it happened. Some smart-ass son of one of Father's partners opened my eyes one day and shook up my life forever. He told me I was adopted.

I hadn't given it prior consideration, but suddenly I *felt* adopted.

So I took off.

It wasn't easy getting my money out of the bank. I had to throw a tantrum, but it worked. That was back in Boston where tantrums go a long way. I'm writing this from a place where tantrums don't mean shit.

I'm in jail – finally – but I'd like to tell you what I learned in those six years since I grabbed the \$15,000 and went on the lamb, pursuing what I thought would be the proper education.

There I was, delivering this car from Beverly Hills to San Francisco. Tooling up Interstate 1 like Hell unleashed in a sinister Chrysler LeBaron convertible. The Santa Lucia Mountain erupted on my right, a steel breeze off the crystal turquoise Pacific blowing through my mind.

My mind...then it was fine...then it would absorb...now...?

Shit! I was something else, piloting this machine up to some freaking fraternity brother of Father's who lived in a singles condo downtown. Delivering fruit to my future. C.O.D. (and the 'C' doesn't stand for 'Cash', buddy)

I was alive with the moment: sex on the mind; Grateful Dead's "Good Lovin'" singing in my ears; and 151 Rum running through my blood like the liquid fire it was.

That's where I was when I saw this strawberry blonde standing beside the road holding a sign that read: I GO DOWN FOR A RIDE!

The brakes locked impulsively and I skidded beside her bronzen form. My groin shivered as she melted into my life.

She smiled; the sun reflected off her big white teeth; I moaned my desire in a soft promise to my West Coast alter-ego: Yyyesssss...You mmmusssst...!

By the time we broke Warp Factor 1 she had me in her jaws, working my Pierre Cardin jeans over my Gucci boots. Imagine me there: the East Coast prodigy gone West to become a sexual dynamo!

Father, this is it...

The next thing I remember is watching her step out of the car as I gripped the steering wheel, standing on the brake with the car in a dust cloud on the scarred shoulder of California 1.

It was then – as she climbed into a Mercedes, filling my rearview mirror like champagne spilling over plastic - that I was aware of my wallet lying empty on the floor.

Bitch! I'd been shamed! That bloody sucking rag had emptied my wallet as she emptied my corpus cavernosa!

That was the only time I can ever remember finding delight in the knowledge that I had herpes.

But that was a lesson. It left some indelible imagery in my mind. I think back to what ran through my head as I saw her step into that Mercedes, hoping she'd get more from that chump than the \$25 she got from me.

Champagne spilling over plastic. That was Southern California to me, where every beautiful body has its face in your lap and its hands on your wallet. Father never told me.