

pd mallamo

Okazaki Strip

And the seas's edge, the fringe of waves washed up with refuse, invited us to approach. Sirens disguised as empty hair-oil bottles, headless sardines, jerrycans and half-peeled leeks, chanted their hoarse-voiced summons; we were to go down the steps, still puddled with salt water, and without undressing, entrust our bodies to the waves.

Le Clezio THE INTERROGATION

So then in lustful, that is, in darkened affections, is the true distance from thy face.

St. Augustine CONFESSIONS

▽

Achilles Muckelroy, whiteman, drive slo-careful up a rutted dirt stockfence road

BOOOOOOOOOO

trailer in front explode #!HolySantaMaria!# Angelo spin crazy counterclockwise

cartwheels forty feet high sideways due west, his long dark tresses and arms centrifugal, a giddy orbiting toreador tearing across the sky with his head on fire

Juan fly the other way as if shot from a cannon, a blazing low arc east skips him facefirst across the iron-cold ground

shockwave/collapsewindshield/wrapAchilles'face

truck roll fast aimless

shrapnel whistle through cab

chunks of trailerhouse crash on roof & flaming black mushroom roil high into frigid prairie overcast

salt-on-tongue – Shit!

now steering wheel and shirt red with new blood -

Nose. Damn nose. Sleeve wipes mouth&chin.

Finds a wide spot to turn around and head back-road the way he come, cold hard slipstream on him all the way

2

Achilles throw the Ching & it come up dharma sticks which is more-or-less naked tao and that's a good thing so he come back next day driving wary through the Christian landscape, Kansas City northwestward into the Great Plains again. Desperate Midwestern billboards proclaim Jesus is Real! He's Real! He's Real! Really Really Real! Really! Promise! If-I'm-Lyin-I'm Dyin Really Real! Jesu for the money lender! Jesu for the Hindu! Jesu for the pygmy!

Is it possible, he wond-a?

3

Last five miles he stops each minute or so to glass for cops. When he's reasonably sure the authorities won't ever show he drives right up. A shallow blackened crater mark the spot. One small end of the single-wide smolders upside-down across a small ravine. The coyotes have already worked on Juan but Antonio still intact, splayed with his right cheek pressing Earth / arms embracing Pachamama as if she the *last* mother, which, in his case, she certainly wuz.

He pulls a pick and shovel from his truck and spends the next hour cracking frozen soil and bentonite. He digs a seven-foot pit the shape of a coffin and drags first Antonio then Juan, removing their wallets and rings before tipping them in. He got three bags quicklime in the bed/pours these down and burns the empties. Fills the hole and mounds over the extra/looks just like a grave but so what?no one to see or care out here/Shit! Best glass shak on the plains bar none.

Adios amigos, he says, standing sweatsoaked/exhausted respectfully to one side, leaning on his shovel. You wuz good producers. R-I-P.

4

Achilles Muckelroy sees the world but the world does not see him. He lives by himself in a tight little fifth-floor walkup he rent cheap in a bad section of Kansas City. He got four locks on the door and a little video cam wired to net/tapped into his iPhone in case anybody stupid enough to break in the door. He's also got two-hundred and ninety-one thousand yankee dollars & counting plasticwrapped & hidden beneath the shower. He's mixing this undetectably with the filthy feudal wealth of the dynastic rich, bleeding it a little at a time into the multisplendored american investment establishment, building up his own little fraction of the land of the free.

5

Finding a replacement pair of smart ambitious Mexicans is not hard. In two weeks he got another factory six miles out of Narka way the hell up in Republic County near the Nebraska line. He spends three days explaining The Method, makes sure Ramon y Alejandro have food and supplies enough for a month, instructs them on the fine art of avoiding instantaneous death while manufacturing methamphetamine (including a cautionary tale involving two erstwhile&unanticipated beaner astronauts), warns them on the use & abuse of meth itself, and leaves them more or less for good. The Nigerian will take it from here.

6

The Nigerian is actually a Congolese x-MaiMai commander named Xenophon Lumumba who through a convoluted and devious triangulation of blackmail/bribe/family is admitted to the United States as a refugee. For purposes of running drugs in America as opposed to the Congo & environs he is known as Heavy D. This is interesting because Heavy is no more than 5 foot 9 inch/160 lbs. In a dark room his eyes glow like wet pearls, at once malevolent and mesmerizing. He is supernaturally intelligent and perceptive but there are things about America he will never understand. He understands this and is thus content to occupy a position subordinate to Achilles – a man, he also understands, in his own singular category of indigenous brilliance.

I haff not yet heard from the people who will bless my liffe, he says when Achilles rings him. Now I haff heard from yooou. For tooday that will haff tooo dooo.

D the first&most important connection in a long careful chain of connections Achilles arranges between the factories/users/himself. Like a safety loop that gives way at the slightest stress, Xeno renders the rest of the chain for all practical intents and purposes unknowable. Breakage is certain given the nature of the business. Putting it back together again is what Achilles do best.

7

Heavy D has another business: For a given sum, usually astronomical, he will procure noclothes photos of the unavailable woman you crave, up to but not necessarily including the Queen of England. This may be your boss, your neighbor's wife, the woman who works six cubicles down - or, as an astonished Heavy relates to Achilles one day, your sister or your daughter. It may even be your *own* wife.

My Got! Does this wortl of corruption haff no end? Such things they *never* did in Congo Free State, which was *VERY* free I tell you! You would not belief the numba of people who dee-zy-a theees even in Kansas City! Some fruit is the forbidden: You will *Pay!* You will *Pay!* *Got* will make you *Pay!*

Xenophon's struggle with the inner animal is a somewhat inconsistent & selective struggle.

You got the damn pictures anyway, didn't you?

But this is *business* my good friend. Of course! Of course! There is no *choice!*

Sometimes all it takes is persistence with the unfiltered search engine. Sometimes it takes \$500, the maid or plumber and a very small camera. Sometimes it takes very black Heavy D sneaking all black around black back yards at 9 PM with a Nikon and happyheart going pittypat and a long heavy lens/breathing heavy/x-haling a little laughing nervous gas ocxxxxxxsionally from his x-hole.

I tell you something else, he says to Achilles: Thea ah *ALL* Republican. Every one! He points to his head: Xenophon know! I can smell dem – actually *smell* dem!

This is no surprise to Achilles. The only political sticker he's ever seen on an Escalade or a Yukon pulling over for that little plastic bag o bliss say *John McCain & Sarah Palin*.

Democrat, they got this out of they system long ago. Now it organic garden. Now it Birkenstock.

Shit.

8

We got us a little pipeline problem upcoming, Achille tells him.

You are saying we haff another rocket?

That's right.

Thea ah space-mans?

Both of them ...

My Got! He claps his hands and shouts in such a way that Achilles can never tell if he is expressing glee or despair.

... so you better get yor tribe togeth-a.

Red ant/black ant, shouts Xenophon. *War a-gain!*

Ready yor mymy jist in case -

THIS time we take it all, shouts Xenophon: Thea cat-tle! Thea wo-man. He makes a slashing motion with his hand: And then we take thea lifes. *All thea lifes!*

9

Last time Heavy fought Inca Bois there wuz five fatalities no cop ever learned, one his, four theirs. Only ones knew wuz tribe & inca bois and all kept shut like some extra-tight opus dei order of the calabrian mafia, which, in a certain sense, is not far from the truth. Buried&quicklmed altogether Tribe&Inca on the prairie.

This ain't fuckin Exxon, sez Achilles one day. You cain't just do any damn thang you pleez.

Tribe paid incas twentyfivethousand dollars each KIA & handled the burials themselves but the truce was a nervous truce and Achilles knew it wouldn't take much to tip inca back in the game. Something like a little pipeline problem for instance. Incas had a man in Kentucky supplied truckloads of cheap poisonous crank gave the whole business a bad name – housewives who tried this shit would never come back/might even switch to crack which is harder to use but won't make you sick for a week. Housewives where the action is: TV, sugar, hydro, lies. In the daily peristalsis of life in America these go down like bread&wine.

Achilles got three other factories on the pampas with six other potential Mexican astronauts, plus a factory smack-dab in the middle of tiny Stoopid, Missouri operated by the chief-of-police & his brother Leon, but still cain't meet demand. Lose one house and system trips, Chinese train wreck if ev-a they wuz one – and that jist females in the burbs cain't get they fix. Jonesing blond from Overland Park ever-bit as ugly as the empty susta from favela-KC only diff being the blond drive Benz and get her teeth fixed whereas the susta a twenty-year ford and don't have none.

BOTH run yo ass down on the Home Depot lot. Where's my medicine? scream the blond. Where my shit asshole? scream the susta. They all screams and they all screams just the same.

Achilles go with Xenophon one day, a *special* special delivery breaks all his rules to a very nice house in Overland Park. They pull in across the street and wait. Achilles sees an upstairs curtain open and a woman make a gesture with her fingers at her crotch that offends even him. O her, sez Xenophon: Preacher wife. That big family church in Lenexa off 95th. Smiling he lifts the little bag of crystal to the level of their eyes. I sweeeet-tan up thaaat Diet Coke. & sometimes something else.

Just what the *Hell* the old man think she do at home all day, Achilles wond-a, between Fat Klub, cheeseburger and Christian Worship Hour? This thing just *Itchin* get away from you, dumbass. And here we go.

10

Xenophon had gratuitously and cynically equipped his ragtag Congo ruffians with an implement of his own devious devising, a kind of shillelagh equipped with a sharpened spatula he calls boji - which is Swahili or Norwegian for "can opener." Having thus opened many invading Rwandans he has found this horror to be of some utility in the New World too and during outbreaks of gang hostility employs it with sadism and pleasure. Sometimes the mere sight of Africans with these gut rippers in their hands is enough to pre-empt violence. The ominous shadow of the boji hangs helpfully over several winning negotiations.

But how he misses the soft rattling of distant machine guns. Kill loot rape burn freedom, they chant. Be finally and at last precisely what thou art O Xenophon, O Beautiful Lion!

Now this voice has been replaced by the Sunday bells of the Catholic Diocese of Kansas City on Parallel Road, and the doppler roar of stock cars running the oval on the Kansas Speedway just off State Street. It is not the same, of course. There is less freedom, of course – less looting, less killing, certainly less raping. And yet, smiles Xenophon when he hears these bells and these mighty V-8's, sometimes the Lion still roars. Even in America.

11

Achilles got a woman out in Oskaloosa dresses up like Dorothy of a summer morn. Gave her Juan & Antonio's rings and wallets for which she was appropriately, actively & immediately grateful. She's not goodlooking and she's not badlooking and she don't mind his smoking cause she smokes 2pacs too and she love him unreservedly and he treats her and her three children under five years begotten of three different distant men without the advantages of matrimony better than any man has ever treated her and her three misbegotten children but that ain't saying much cause Achilles no prize hisself. She feeds him the reddest of red meats. She don't ask what he do. One day because she's abject white trash she brings up the subject of children as in more of them. Don't you dare, warns Achilles stretching forth his arm and sticking his finger in her face. Cause I got bastard blood. You got enough problems already without more a me runnin around.

12

Xenophon believes that redemption is best approached with stealth and great caution lest the quest for the Gift of Gifts become yet one more curse and calamity. For truth be told Xenophon is a Republican too, the genuine Reaganite trickle-down piece-of-shit, to wit: If Xenophon be happy, eventually everybody around him be happy too mos likely. If Xenophon well fed, well maybe some crumbs fall somehow into another mouth. Xenophon reads Seneca and Tacitus compulsively, knows them inside out. Thus he understands that virtue is its own reward, there is no other, even in heaven.

Now Heavy's job is complicated by the appearance of a sudden&lethal north-alabama whitemafia called The Hick & known to have their inbred fingers in every methpie except meth in KC. Why they might want to muscle their way into a relatively small and well-saturated market he can only surmise but if he had to surmise he'd say they wuz training for something bigg-a & bett-a and that's not good -

But Heavy knows every bad African in Kansas City, and some of those be very bad in-deed. Three of them, men he laughingly identifies only as BadNiggaOne, BNigga2 & BN3 are wanted by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity committed during their not-so-holy service in the Lord's Resistance Army, Okot Odiambo's Ugandan terror franchise. They haff done, Heavy tells him, things the inca bois have not even dreeeeeeemed off. They haff done things the Inca bois cannnooot comprehend!

These Africans haul dire zeitgeist everywhere, a cold cloud follows them even on hot clear summer afternoons.

The Nigerian tell him, One day I wake up and ask myself, 'Where doooo it end?' Dooo you know where it end, my Friend?

I buy my hotrod. I buy my little tomato patch I guess.

Even though he does not believe in Heaven, Heavy knows there's a soul in each machine. He knows the Big Bang was only the slightest movement of the little finger on God's left hand. He knoweth that Man the Angel rarely prevaieth over Man the Beast.

Haff we not *all* been in that place? he asks. Haff we not *all* needed to be healed?

Among Heavy's reflexive Republican addicts is an endocrinologist named Jacob DuBois, who attended the prestigious Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. Now here this crazy mon, say Xenophon, who has *di-rect and unfet-ted access* to *lit-rally* the best drugs on *earth*, yet he choses *our very own methamphetamine*. It is for people like theees that we must make shua our glaaaas is the *purest possible*. It is for men like theees that we must make shua we ah the *best!*

Doctor Dubois is writing an article for the Journal of the American Medical Association entitled *Adrenal-based Drug Free Relaxation Response in Level Six Anxiety Patients: A Holistic Approach*. He is thinking of starting his very own drug-free relaxation clinic.

If Dr. Dubois ever wrote a poem about his meth, this would be it:

When the joy hits
 I go up & up & up & up
 New soul a balloon of pain and light
 Everything
 Everything
 Everything
 Everything
 Now!

Achilles' sweetheart is actually named Marilyn Monroe, her daddy having derived from a long & distinguished line of Monroes stretching far back into the invisible past, which past actually becomes invisible immediately after daddy but no matter; and a mother named Marilyn after the starlet with the drug problem because her mother had a drug problem too and Marilyn was a inspiration even though she dosed herself to death. But no matter. She was still a inspiration, the way she dressed & so forth -

Marilyn is a John Wayne Gacy fanatic and has read every word ever published about him, sometimes twice. When Achilles wants to surprise her he'll log on to johnwaynegacy.com and buy her something fancy: a JWG t-shirt, or a pair of JWG embossed crotchless panties or a JWG custom bra with embroidered nipple holes or a JWG coffee cup. On her birthday he bought her an old water bill addressed to the Demon himself, at the very house where he had interred the mortal remains of thirty innocent young souls. It cost Achilles almost two-thousand dollars and she said it was the best thing she ever got in her life and maybe it wuz poor thang.

At one end of her doublewide Marilyn has a John Wayne Gacy shrine, a stacked-up pyramid built around a white bedsheet with John's last known photograph at the top. Descending Christmas-tree like are the victim's names and, where available, photos and a description of the manner of death. There is also Marilyn's poetic tribute to Mr. Gacy:

There once was a little baby
 And his name was John Wayne Gacy
 So cute and itty bitty
 Suckin on his mamas titti
 No one then culd understand!
 He woud be the greatist man!
 Now hes up with mighty GOD!
 With all the other holy ANGLES!
 YOU WILL BE MISSED JOHN WAYNE GACY!!!!!!!

He wuz a great man, she sez. I can't defend what he done, but that doesn't mean he wuzn't a great man. The strong survive. John Wayne Gacy was a survivor!

At least she ain't no lesbian, Achilles tells Xenophon.

Xenophon has an opinion of the woman somewhat below his opinion of cockroaches: People this stupid should not be allowed to live, much less reproduce. As for what Achilles sees in her, well, it could only be the sex, but *Dea Got!* how good could it *be* to put up with *theees*?

Marilyn's got plans. Right now she's managing a KwikStop in Nortonville. One of these day she's going to open a daycare. She already knows the name: The JWG Helping Hands For Tiny Tots Academy. She will *personally* sew each tiny tot a little red white & blue clown suit.

Good News, Achilles tells Xenophon thru his cellphone: Buffett just bought the rest of Burlington Northern Santa Fe. It's BUY on railroads.

18

This is how Xenophon imagines the Lord Eternal high above as he observes his & Achilles' dissolute machinations: With patience, compassion, love, understanding. They must do what they must do, he imagines the Lord saying to himself. What *choice* do they *haff*?

19

Xenophon sits zazen in his dark ride. He listens to Fela Kuti's *Music Is The Weapon Of The Future*. He watches a little scene unfold a block away. He flips open his phone and sez to Achilles, We haff gott incas at Deadpoint mahk-ing territory like dogs – actually *peeing* on de *street*! We haff got Hick pimp&ride across de Plaza with .50 cal. *sticking-right-out-de-window*!

20

If Achilles ever wrote a poem about his life this would be it:

All the shit I ever wonted when I wuz young?
I got it all now and then sum
I just had to think own it and work own it
I'm not as stupid as you think I am

21

The preacher's wife is the former Nancy-Ann Hooper and her life changed 180 after her gay-bashing mega-church preacher-husband was discovered snorting&porking in St. Louis with a male prostitute named Theodore Dubinski who essentially gave him up to an *Enquirer* reporter for \$50,000 and a glowing intro to a high-end escort service in L.A. Nancy-Ann is one of those entitled women from an entitled mercantile white family thinks it owns the world and you can't reason them out of it unless like Nicolae Andruta Ceausescu & wife this is attempted at the point of a gun and even then they *may* talk back and you *may* end up shooting the stupid asshole(s) anyway.

Nicolae Andruta & wife were shot. That's how it goes.

However, after Pastor America is driven from his lucrative pulpit by other right-wing homo-hatin' GOPChristians undeniably guilty of same or worse, an awful reality sets in for Nancy-Ann. Said reality, Nancy-Ann discovers, is at least in the short-term effectively addressed with wanton meth-fueled sex involving a former young male parishioner Pastor "A" once counseled with unexpected if partial success for krystal and same-gender attraction. It's a wonderful thing, the young man tells her after a particularly reckless episode (viewed by a neighbor both knew watched from a window nextdoor): First, Pastor helps me. Then you do, too. Lord's going to cure me for sure!

22

Xenophon got a Aunt in Swaziland married a Gujarat diamond merchant she met on a smuggling trip to Calcutta. Does a good hot-rock business but of course we always want more don't we?so when Xenophon phone one day with a proposal involving twenny-G for one week's worth of medium-risk travel she say Yes! Said proposal involved the suspension between her generous breasts of a small leather pouch containing three snake eggs. It also involved clearing customs in the USA but no problem/worse come to worse I just say mothafocka goodluckcharm or breakfast or whatever/jedi-mindtrick. And she's right, woman could sneak a giraffe. Woman sauntered right on through with head held high.

Xenophon rec'd eggs in good working order and nurtured them under a heat lamp for ten days. They all hatch bitch & he feeds crickets and Tupac Shakur nonstop one disc after another continuous from two large speakers booming at the end of the room.

Very quickly they move up to mice, rats, small rabbits. In one year they are all over six feet and growing. Scats stink of curry, sure sign of the real thing. The reptiles are gray-silver-gray with a wide grinning indigo mouth and two long fangs. Said fangs have enough venom kill a horse. Then another horse. Then another horse. Then another horse. Then another horse.

23

Quite by accident Dr. Jacob DuBois finally learns where his money is going, an unaccountable evaporation that begins with his wife's generous allotment but also seems to involve, despite her repeated and vehement denials, other resources as well: household and maintenance money, bill money, grocery money, entertainment money, vacation money, & finally, savings. Driving his wife's car one day his cellphone slides off the passenger seat at a sharp left and when he stops and gets out and walks around to the passenger side and fishes around under the adjustment mechanism he finds his cell phone. He also finds a month's tithing receipt for \$18,561.22 from a right-wing gay-bashing mega-church, The YAWEAH Anti-Satanic CHURCH of the Free & Willing LOVE of Christ JESUS Almighty -

- his patient Nancy-Ann's husband's mega-church, to be exact. He knows this because she invites him to services every time she sees him.

24

Three clerics counseled Pastor America post-defrock for his same-gender issues. Within the synod they are known as Team Heal! Of each it could be frankly said that not one was himself *personally inexperienced* or even *nonchalantly experienced* in the more or less infinite realm of sexual misconduct.

Counseling Pastor #1, LeWilk Jameson, Metosh, Indiana

White Man, age 61

SEXUAL HISTORY:

TEENAGER - sister; four different kinds of farm animal; cousin

ADULT - wife; three generations of the same neighbor family, namely, grandmother, mother, daughter. (Secretly his proudest conquest if you don't count that one very goodlooking first cousin [on his mother's side]); thinks of this and smiles whenever he hears the words, "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.") Prostitutes in Thailand and Korea while serving in the US Navy.

STD: gonorrhea.

Counseling Pastor #2, Lee Arthur Crock, Seymour, Arkansas

White Man, age 52

SEXUAL HISTORY:

TEENAGER - sister; dog

ADULT - wife; one very drunk aunt, his mother's sister to be exact, on the bathroom floor twice, commencing 1:30 A.M., New Years Day, Year of Our Lord 1989. Assorted prostitutes.

STD: Herpes Simplex Type 2, most likely transmitted to him by aforementioned aunt.

Counseling Pastor #3, Henry LaCock, Simsipissee, Louisiana

White Man, age 49

SEXUAL HISTORY:

TEENAGER - sister, brother

ADULT - wife; certain New Orleans women not his wife with whom he not only consorts but has begotten 3 children. Assorted prostitutes.

STD: Herpes Simplex Type 2, likely transmitted to him by a prostitute.

Xenophon call BN3 and say meet me Home Depot parking noontime.

He then take his snakestick and extracts from his snakepen Snake2 which is by 8 inches largest of the 3 and drop him cautiously into a heavy canvas sak with a tie-rope near the mouth. He put this in a gym bag with Tupac disc and take it down to his ride.

BN3 pull up and it a nastycoldblowing KC day, all the window roll up and heata on. Get in, say Xenophon when he park up close. I will tell you what tooo dooo.

So Dr. Dubois call Xenophon and tell him he's having a problem with this preacher, a particularly noisome hypocrite & erstwhile cleric at this godawful megachurch-church his wife goes to and his wife is giving away all sorts of money down there and even though the preacher has been removed he thinks he's probably getting it somehow anyway and maybe something else too, you know how those friggin preachers are and he hears that for a certain fee Xenophon will take certain pics and he'd like him to take those kind of photos regarding said preacher's wife name of Nancy-Ann then threaten to post these on the web as an act of revenge and justice if Pastor Ass-Wipe won't give his money back. Nancy-Ann's a patient of mine, says Dr. Dubois. She sees me for age management. I suppose I could do it myself. She's an attractive woman. But I don't want to get my hands dirty. I'm a doctor, you know.

Xenophon drive all the way out to nowhere at 3AM and he sees Marilyn's car. He takes his snakestick & tries quietly the front door, finding it not only unlocked but slightly open. The room is dark & Tupac still pimpin, which make him smile a knowing smile, that BN3 de-*pendable* as *hell*. He reaches carefully inside and hits the light switch then pushes the door which won't go any further. He braces a leg in the doorjamb and pushes hard enough to get his head in. Marilyn's body lies X-wise in the entry. He scans around for snake. No snake. He pushes hard again and enters, then walks carefully about, looks behind the couch, in the cupboards above the refer, all-ov-a. No snake. He lights up as he walks, checking room-by-room. Two dead children on a bed. Noise under John Wayne Gacy shrine/he figures snake. With snakestick lifts carefully the sheet upon which photos of the dead are pinned: a tiny wide-eyed girlchild hugs her knees/trembles violently. Holding the sheet up Xenophon sits slowly down crossed-leg indianstyle and regards the girl for several minutes, neither of them uttering a sound/wind outside only the whine of wind outside in the electrical and telephone wires. He whispers to her: *De strong sur-vife*. He reaches slowly in and draws her close. She flings her little arms around his neck and holds on for dear life. He leaves stepping carefully, peering around his clinging prize turkey for something snake. No snake. Props open doors front&back/sets fire to the couch/buckles her in the carseat beside him & drive away lights off.

Xenophon's favorite magazine is *Playboy*. He knows from his freelance photographic work that most female bodies are disfigured or blemished or ungainly or repellent in some shocking and totally unexpected way and that the disrobing he frequently witnesses thru nighttime windows is as likely to reveal horrors as delights. He appreciates with a connoisseur's eye what the artful melding of scalpel, makeup, and lens may accomplish. More than once he has wanted to advise his visually-violated females on steps they could take to improve things. More than once he has thought of sending anonymously a photograph with numbered arrows drawn and suggestions written on an accompanying chart.

Achilles knows the trailer burns before it all the way to the ground and knows there is death. He drives out and perches some distance with his binoculars and watches the emergency Vs and leaves.

Achilles throw the Ching & it come up dharma sticks which is more-or-less naked tao and that's a good thing so he drive back after bodies been hauled off and fire people think they discov-a cause (they did not). Takes his witch-hazel dowsing rod in both hands, clears his mind, and, beginning at one end, goes carefully over the rubble, step-by-step. When the stick dip three-quarters of an hour later/three-quarters of the way through the trialer he knows they somethin. On both knees he scrapes layer by layer through two feet of blackened ruin and at the very bottom finds a section of backbone. Attached to said backbone are ribs so circular they form a tube. A tube like a snake.

24 hrs. later Achilles call Xenophon: I know you got the baby.

2 min later Xenophon get another call, this one from Nancy-Ann: If I *EVER* go see another movie where Bob De Niro's the sensitive guy, please come over here and *shoot me in the head!*

29

Then Nancy-Ann flips shut the cellphone and takes another long sip of her meth-fortified Diet Coke. Judge Jeanine Pirro is making a guest appearance on *The View* (which except for *Cougar Town* is her all-time favorite and that's just for the arguing) and Nancy-Ann loves Jeanine's tan if it's really a tan and she's not just a mexican or puerto rican or something, and Jeanine's nose job if it's really a nose job but it sure looks like one. Judge Jeanine is always so *certain!* She just *knows!* National security for instance: Jeanine knows what to do with those god damn Arabs –she'd send them back, every one, and so would Nancy-Ann because Jesus made America for white people, that's what the fucking bible is all about isn't it? Elizabeth Hasselbeck too, she's a white woman and she's blond and skinny and she nodoubt binge&purge just like Nancy-Ann and she is so *knowledgeable* about the national security of *Our Country!*

Nancy-Ann takes another deep swig and turns the volume up a click or two. Here's a commercial for medicine helps a woman not pee all the damn time. Next, a commercial helps a woman deal with the shame and discomfort of fibromyalgia wherever that comes from, Pastor A says it's all in your head, but Dr. Dubois gives such *good* medicine, although those gin-soaked raisins seem to work well, too. Next, a commercial for the woman whose bones break right and left and she don't know why but soon she's in a wheelchair with gray hair & a shawl on her lap. Next, a commercial for women so *HELL-A* depressed she ignores the commercial and chugs the rest of her DietCoke all the way to the bottom and beams when Big Kris hits like a sledgehammer and grabs the cellphone and dials Xenophon and shouts in a too-many-secret-cigarettes-this-morning rasp, *You may never speak of god to me again!*

Then channel-change to Judge Alex who is so *handsome!* A drag queen sues a very ugly blond because she holds his dresses in lieu of past-due rent. Judge A observes their combat impassively – but you can be sure he'll fix this mess in a jiffy! It's a *snap* for Judge A!

30

Hills & simple farmers, thinks Achilles – yes, simple tillers who begot The Word - & here's me with neither fence nor horse -

31

Now Xenophon got a problem a Big Problem and he know it but also a opportunity, too. Manufacturing Krystal in Kansas is not exactly a long-term arrangement so now *Is The Time* to make that shift. He got heavy invest, plenty cash and now goods to sell, namely 25lb. highquality kandy, one extra snake after he handle the mafia & something else teenytiny&pretty and veryverywhite that will likely go fast&high somewhere on the Arabian Peninsula.

He pac a gymbag full of amp&cash/two gymbag each with mamba&tupac/gymbag with tennytinypretty and last one gymbag w/clothes-toothbrush&shit.

He call BN123: We got work. Bring boji.

32

Achilles drives straightaway to Nancy-Ann's and ring&ring&ring until she finally come down from the tv and open the door. He force his way in and shove her back. Nancy-Ann pull off her tubetop/hold out her hand/singsuddenly&strange *Calgon, take me away!*

That all he want?

He thinks I'm dirty. Won't touch me. Just wants to look.

He stole my little girl. You call me if you see her.

He hands her the little plastic bag. Do what I say and I'll smoke yor husband.

Long as you do it niice and slooow she laugh then take his hand and pull him down a hallway into a big glass room with a white couch in the middle. She peel blackstretchpants from her bonywhiteass/kiss Achilles hard on his ear & brace herself forward on the sofa like a storm comin'. I'm the goat, she say stand there all skiny-neked. I *know* you know what that means.

33

Xenophon meet BN123 as usual at HomeDepot and hand ov-a one snake&tupac. Here she be, he say, those Hick muthafocka all together in thea lit-tle nest somewhea because they all jabb-a de same way, that how they com-fort-aaable. Put in de snake and what she don't dooo you dooo.

He make boji/chopchop with his hand and say, You will giff dem some-ting dea will nev-a fo-get! Numb-a tree, you go wit me.

34

BN12 park a block distant, fade señor Tupac a bit & discuss best placement of the animal, car or house. They go w/ house. BN1 reach behind for another bag and bring out a full bottle Jack Daniels plus two clear clean tall glasses. He fill them up with smoky/amber and they clink rims as usual prior to big job *AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHSHIT THAT GOOD!* JD help with the normal jitter-ay and today more jitter-ay than usual cause they got monsta-in-a-bag just a few inches back. BN1 say he overhear Xeno talk about W. Buffett & how he now own ALL Burlington Northern Santa Fe.

Shit, say BN2: I can't find RR stock *no-whea!* *Everyone* holdin thes mothafocka *close* to they ches –

You right, say BN1: You buy entire goddam track or you don't buy nothin. You got to *know* someone – that crack-a muthafocka fo instance. I *know* he hold RR. *How de hell?*

BN2 then hold forth on his structured product and allows as how he got half the derivative in Put and the other half in Call and figure to cover his ass bothway.

BN1 fill them up again & say Shit Bro., them days be ova! Obama put the scurry on *that*. Even the *OJ* be lock-up now! If I can't get FDIC I get RR. If I can't get RR I just bury my skrill in de backyard.

They find a small crawlhole to the space between floor and ground and while one keep close lookout the other pry it open and both crawl inside with toolbag/monsta-bag/boji/flashlight. They push they-selves slowly across the middle length until they see a

dim ray streaming in through a mousehole above. From the sound of things the mafia in another part of the house so they quietly enlarge the hole with a medium rattail file and then BN2 put on his glove and take the sak out of the gymbag and feel around for the head and grab it and BN1 open sac carefulcarefulcareful and take the animal right behind the jawline and pull her all the way out, then shake her and hiss at her and push her, mad as hell, through the mousehole into the house with the Hick. They laugh so hard they have to stuff their mouth with snakesak and crawl back outside, still laughing, to stand beside the backdoor w/bojis held high.

35

When the iPhone buzz Achilles know *be-fo* he even know -

The vid catch X&BN3 crack open his door and catch X drop his pants and flash Achilles his blackass with two-handed fing-a from the south then they both of them tear the apt. to pieces – which, after they rip the shower out and don't find nothin \$ they do with increasing rage and abandon.

But Achilles move his shit. Now Bank of America got his shit. Citibank got his shit. JP Morgan-Chase got his shit. Providence & Worcester Railroad got his shit. Global Railway Industries, Ltd. got his shit. New York Regional Rail Corporation got his shit.

I guess that well-built aunt in Swaziland stay in Swaziland, Achilles think w/ crack-a smile on his face.

36

Then Xenophon make quickstop at the offices of Dr. Dubois, Board Certified Endocrinologist. He takes a gymbag and his pass card and walks up four flights of stairs and enters the doctor's suite from the rear. He makes his way stealthily to his office, shuts the door and waits. Dubois walks in ten minutes later. X hand him halfpound-sac most excellent shabu & show him wat in bag.

I need yooou check her out for loong ride. 16 hour sleep. He makes a slashing motion with his hand: Then she arrive in de Promise Lan!

I thought *this* was the Promised Land.

He play-punch the doctor's shoulder: Auntie /oooooooooove de little girl. De little white girl.

Then leave her, says Dr. Jacob Dubois. I'll call you when she's ready.

37

Terrified&furious, the snake slithers with lightening speed through the house striking anything that moves – and there is a *whole lot* of movement. Of 11 Hicks it manages to kill 5. One holes up in the bathroom and calls HQ in Guntersville to the effect this thing got a head like a coffin and eyes like the worst nightmare a man can have, *send reinforcements now!* Two run out the front door and down the street yelling on cellphones. Three tumble out the backdoor into the backyard where two soundlessly laughing Africans wait with the soundless boji.

38

Achilles throw the Ching & it come up dharma sticks which is more-or-less naked tao and that's a good thing -

Dubois brings in his nurse and shows her the child and tells her wat and she stands there with her arms croxxed and says finally, His African aunt my asscheeks -

High as hell Nancy-Ann ripppps west across the Great Plains w/ a little girl from some woman she never met killed by a 7-foot African snake from under a John Wayne Gacy shrine in a doublewidemobilehome on the Kansas flats.

No longer will Nancy-Ann or the dead woman tote the burden of their species. In fact, the last thing N-A did in KC was have her nails done at Waterloo Beauty Spa of London off Chouteau Trafficway.

Teenytinypretty sleeps unrestrained on the back seat, little arm thrown over her little head&silkyblond falling across her cheek and nose so beautiful so goddamn beautiful it makes Nancy-Ann cry & stop the car & run out into the empty bitter fields and

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SCREEAM

till her sinus hemorrhages and she sits exhausted on the ground w/ her head hanging between her drawn-up knees dripping blood the color of Egypt. O Jesus thou son of God, she whispers, have mercy on me.

Then she wipes her nose with her fingers and flings away clots&snot and wipes her fingers on her whitepants and weary-walks back to her white Lexus & points it to California and confirms again her ice and cash and credit cards and naked pics from Xeno before she got so thin&haggard and the snake now writhing slowly in the gymbag in the trunk and looks around for cops and in a few miles sees I-70 for Denver and then hours later another serpent road low&fast&dark all the way to L.A.

L.A. L.A.

L.A.