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THE NIGHT OF THE GUN DAVID CARR

A REPORTER INVESTIGATES
THE DARKEST STORY OF HIS LIFE.
HIS OWN.

2008

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To the magic fairies
Jill, Meagan, Erin, and Madeline



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AUTHOR'S NOTE

The following book is based on sixty interviews conducted over three years, most of which were recorded on video and/or audio and then transcribed by a third party. The events represented are primarily the product of mutual recollection and discussion. Hundreds of medical files, legal documents, journals, and published reports were used as source material in reconstructing personal history. Every effort was made to corroborate memory with fact and in significant instances where that was not possible, it is noted in the text. (Go to nightofthegun.com for more information concerning methodology.) All of which is not to say that every word of this book is true—all human stories are subject to errors of omission, fact, or interpretation regardless of intent—only that it is as true as I could make it.

GUN PLAY

Sure as a gun.

—DON QUIXOTE

The voice came from a long distance off, like a far-flung radio signal, all crackle and mystery with just an occasional word coming through. And then it was as if a hill had been crested and the signal locked. The voice was suddenly clear.

"You can get up from this chair, go to treatment, and keep your job. There's a bed waiting for you. Just go," said the editor, a friendly guy, sitting behind the desk. "Or you can refuse and be fired." Friendly but firm.

The static returned, but now he had my attention. I knew about treatment—I had mumbled the slogans, eaten the Jell-O, and worn the paper slippers, twice. I was at the end of my monthlong probation at a business magazine in Minneapolis; it had begun with grave promises to reform, to show up at work like a normal person, and I had almost made it. But the day before, March 17, 1987, was Saint Patrick's Day. Obeisance was required for my shanty Irish heritage. I twisted off the middle of the workday to celebrate my genetic loading with green beer and Jameson Irish whiskey. And cocaine. Lots and lots of coke. There was a van, friends from the office, and a call to some pals, including Tom, a comedian I knew. We decided to attend a small but brave Saint

Patrick's Day parade in Hopkins, Minnesota, the suburban town where I grew up.

My mother made the parade happen through sheer force of will. She blew a whistle, and people came. There were no floats, just a bunch of drunk Irish-for-a-days and their kids, yelling and waving banners to unsuspecting locals who set up folding chairs as if there were going to be a real parade. After we walked down Main Street accompanied only by those sad little metal noisemakers, we all filed into the Knights of Columbus hall. The adults did standup drinking while the kids assembled for some entertainment. I told my mom that Tom the comedian had some good material for the kids. He immediately began spraying purple jokes in all directions and was wrestled off the stage by a few nearby adults. I remember telling my mom we were sorry as we left, but I don't remember precisely what happened after that.

I know we did lots of "more." That's what we called coke. We called it more because it was the operative metaphor for the drug. Even if it was the first call of the night, we would say, "You got any more?" because there would always be more—more need, more coke, more calls.

After the Knights of Columbus debacle—it was rendered as a triumph after we got in the van—we went downtown to McCready's, an Irish bar in name only that was kind of a clubhouse for our crowd. We had some more, along with shots of Irish whiskey. We kept calling it "just a wee taste" in honor of the occasion. The shot glasses piled up between trips to the back room for line after line of coke, and at closing time we moved to a house party. Then the dreaded walk home accompanied by the chirping of birds.

That's how it always went, wheeling through bars, selling, cadging, or giving away coke, drinking like a sailor and swearing like a pirate. And then somehow slinking into work as a reporter. Maybe it took a line or two off the bottom of the desk drawer to achieve battle readiness in the morning, but hey, I was there, wasn't I?

On the day I got fired—it would be some time before I worked again—I was on the last vapors of a young career that demonstrated real aptitude. Even as I was getting busy with the coke at night, I was happy to hold the cops and government officials to account in my day job. Getting loaded, acting the fool, seemed like a part of the job description, at least the way I did it. Editors dealt with my idiosyncrasies—covering the city council in a bowling shirt and red visor sunglasses—because I was well sourced in what was essentially a small town and wrote a great deal of copy. I saw my bifurcated existence as the best of both worlds, no worries. But now that mad run seemed to be over. I sat with my hands on the arms of the chair that suddenly seemed wired with very strong current.

There was no time to panic, but the panic came anyway. *Holy shit. They are on to me.*

The editor prodded me gently for an answer. Treatment or professional unallotment? For an addict the choice between sanity and chaos is sometimes a riddle, but my mind was suddenly epically clear.

"I'm not done yet."

Things moved quickly after that. After a stop at my desk, I went down the elevator and out into a brutally clear morning. Magically, my friend Paul was walking down the street in front of my office building, looking ravaged in a leather coat and sunglasses. He hadn't even beaten the birds home. I told him I had just been fired, which was clinically true but not the whole story. A folk singer of significant talent and many virulent songs about the wages of working for The Man, Paul understood immediately. He had some pills of iffy provenance—neither he nor I knew much about pills—maybe they were muscle relaxers. I ate them.

Freshly, emphatically fired, I was suffused with a rush of sudden liberation. A celebration was in order. I called Donald, my trusty wingman. A pal from college, he was tall, dark, and compliant, a boon companion once he got a couple of pops in him. We had first met at a crappy state college in Wisconsin, where we tucked dozens of capers under our belts. We had been washed down a mountain in the Smokies

inside a tent, created a campfire out of four stacked picnic tables at Wolf River, and casually taken out picket fences and toppled mailboxes during road trips all over Wisconsin. Our shared taste for skipping classes in lieu of hikes, Frisbee, and dropping acid during college had been replaced by new frolics once we both moved on to Minneapolis.



We worked restaurant jobs, pouring and downing liquor, spending the ready cash as fast as it came in. "Make some calls!" became the warm-up line for many a night of grand foolishness. We shared friends, money, and, once, a woman named Signe, a worldly cocktail waitress who found herself wanly amused by the two guys tripping on acid one night at closing time at a bar called Moby Dick's. "Let me know when you boys are finished," she said in a bored voice as Donald and I grinned madly at each other from either end of her. We didn't care. He was a painter and photographer when he wasn't getting shit faced. And at a certain point, I became a journalist when I wasn't ingesting all the substances I could get my hands on. We were a fine pair. Now that I had been fired for cause, there was no doubt that Donald would know what to say.

"Fuck 'em," he said when he met me at McCready's to toast my first day between opportunities. The pills had made me a little hinky, but I shook it off with a snort of coke. Nicely prepped, we went to the Cabooze, a Minneapolis blues bar. Details are unclear, but there was some sort of beef inside, and we were asked to leave. Donald com-

plained on the way out that I was always getting us 86'd, and my response included throwing him across the expansive hood of his battered '75 LTD. Seeing the trend, he drove away, leaving me standing with thirty-four cents in my pocket. That detail I remember.

I was pissed: Not about losing my job—they'd be sorry. Not about getting 86'd—that was routine. But my best friend had abandoned me. I was livid, and somebody was going to get it. I walked the few miles back to McCready's to refuel and called Donald at home.

"I'm coming over." Hearing the quiet menace in my voice, he advised me against it; that he had a gun.

"Oh really? Now I'm coming over for sure."

He and his sister Ann Marie had a nice rental on Nicollet Avenue in a rugged neighborhood on the south side of Minneapolis, not far from where I lived. I don't remember how I got there, but I stormed up to the front door—a thick one of wood and glass—and after no one answered, I tried kicking my way in. My right knee started to give way before my sneaker did any damage. Ann Marie, finally giving in to the commotion, came to the door and asked me what I was going to do if I came in.

"I just want to talk to him."

Donald came to the door and, true to his word, had a handgun at his side. With genuine regret on his face, he said he was going to call the cops. I had been in that house dozens of times and knew the phone was in his bedroom. I limped around the corner and put my fist through the window, grabbed the phone, and held it aloft in my bloody arm. "All right, call 'em, motherfucker! Call 'em! Call the goddamn cops!" I felt like Jack Fucking Nicholson. Momentarily impressed, Donald recovered long enough to grab the phone out of my bloody hand and do just that.

When we met again through the glass of the front door, he still had the gun, but his voice was now friendly. "You should leave. They're coming right now." I looked down Nicollet toward Lake Street and saw a fast-moving squad car with the cherries lit, no siren.

I wasn't limping anymore. I had eight blocks to go to my apart-

ment, full tilt all the way. Off the steps, 'round the house, and into the alleys. Several squads were crisscrossing. *What the hell did Donald tell them?* I thought as I sprinted. I dove behind a Dumpster to avoid one squad coming around the corner, opening up a flap of jeans and skin on my other knee. I had to hit the bushes and be very still as the cops strafed the area with their searchlights, but I made it, scurrying up the back steps to my apartment in a fourplex on Garfield Avenue. I was bleeding, covered in sweat, and suddenly very hungry. I decided to heat up some leftover ribs, turned the oven on high, and left the door of it open so I could smell the ribs when they heated up. And then I passed out on my couch.

Every hangover begins with an inventory. The next morning mine began with my mouth. I had been baking all night, and it was as dry as a two-year-old chicken bone. My head was a small prison, all yelps of pain and alarm, each movement seeming to shift bits of broken glass in my skull. My right arm came into view for inspection, caked in blood, and then I saw it had a few actual pieces of glass still embedded in it. So much for metaphor. My legs both hurt, but in remarkably different ways.

Three quadrants in significant disrepair—that must have been some night, I thought absently. Then I remembered I had jumped my best friend outside a bar. And now that I thought about it, that was before I tried to kick down his door and broke a window in his house. And then I recalled, just for a second, the look of horror and fear on his sister's face, a woman I adored. In fact, I had been such a jerk that my best friend had to point a gun at me to make me go away. Then I remembered I'd lost my job.

It was a daylight waterfall of regret known to all addicts. It can't get worse, but it does. When the bottom arrives, the cold fact of it all, it is always a surprise. Over fifteen years, I had made a seemingly organic journey from pothead to party boy, from knockaround guy to friendless thug. At thirty-one, I was washed out of my profession, morally

and physically corrupt, but I still had almost a year left in the Life. I wasn't done yet.

In the pantheon of "worst days of my life," getting fired was right up there, but I don't remember precisely how bad it was. You would think that I would recall getting canned with a great deal of acuity. But it was twenty years ago.

Even if I had amazing recall, and I don't, recollection is often just self-fashioning. Some of it is reflexive, designed to bury truths that cannot be swallowed, but other "memories" are just redemption myths writ small. Personal narrative is not simply opening up a vein and letting the blood flow toward anyone willing to stare. The historical self is created to keep dissonance at bay and render the subject palatable in the present.

But my past does not connect to my present. There was That Guy, a dynamo of hilarity and then misery, and then there is This Guy, the one with a family, a house, and a good job as a reporter and columnist for *The New York Times*. Connecting the two will take a lot more than typing. The first-date version of my story would suggest that I took a short detour into narcotics, went through an aberrant period of buying, selling, snorting, smoking, and finally shooting cocaine, and once I knocked that off, well, all was well.

The meme of abasement followed by salvation is a durable device in literature, but does it abide the complexity of how things really happened? Everyone is told just as much as he needs to know, including the self. In *Notes from Underground*, Fyodor Dostoevsky explains that recollection—memory, even—is fungible, and often leaves out unspeakable truths, saying, "Man is bound to lie about himself."

I am not an enthusiastic or adept liar. Even so, can I tell you a true story about the worst day of my life? No. To begin with, it was far from the worst day of my life. And those who were there swear it did not happen the way I recall, on that day and on many others. And if I can't tell a true story about one of the worst days of my life, what about the rest of those days, that life, this story?

Nearly twenty years later, in the summer of 2006, I sat in a two-room shack in Newport, a town outside of the Twin Cities, near the stockyards where Donald now lived and worked at a tree farm. He was still handsome, still a boon companion. We hadn't seen each other in years, but what knit us together—an abiding bond hatched in reckless glory—was in the room with us.

I told him the story about the Night of the Gun. He listened carefully and patiently, taking an occasional swig out of a whiskey bottle and laughing at the funny parts. He said it was all true, except the part about the gun. "I never owned a gun," he said. "I think *you* might have had it."

This is a story about who had the gun.

2

POSSESSION

Who by now could know where was what? Liars controlled the locks.

—NORMAN MAILER, *THE ARMIES OF THE NIGHT*

I am not a gun guy. That is bedrock. And that includes buying one, carrying one, and, most especially, pointing one. I've been on the wrong end a few times, squirming and asking people to calm the fuck down. But walking over to my best friend's house with a gun jammed in my pants? No chance. That did not fit my story, the one about the white boy who took a self-guided tour of some of life's less savory hobbies before becoming an upright citizen. Being the guy who waved a gun around made me a crook, or worse, a full-on nut ball.

Still, there it was: "I think *you* might have had it."

We were not having an argument, we were trying to remember. I had gone to his house with a video camera and a tape recorder in pursuit of the past. By now the statutes were up, no charges in abeyance, no friendship at stake.

Donald is not prone to lies. He has his faults: He has wasted a gorgeous mug and his abundant talent on whiskey and worse, but he is a stand-up guy, and I have seen him bullshit only when the law is involved. Still, I know what I know—Descartes called it "the holy music of the self"—and I believe that I was not a person who owned or used a gun. The Night of the Gun had stuck in my head because it suggested

that I was such a menace that my best friend not only had to call the cops on me but wave a piece in my face.

I didn't hold it against him—Donald was far from violent, and maybe I had it coming. I doubt that he would have shot me no matter what I did. But now that memory lay between us. Sort of like that gun.

Memories are like that. They live between synapses and between the people who hold them. Memories, even epic ones, are perishable from their very formation even in people who don't soak their brains in mood-altering chemicals. There is only so much space on any one person's hard drive, and old memories are prone to replacement by newer ones. There's even a formula for the phenomena:

$$R = e^{-\frac{t}{s}}$$

In the Ebbinghaus curve, or forgetting curve, R stands for memory retention, s is the relative strength of memory, and t is time. The power of a memory can be built through repetition, but it is the memory we are recalling when we speak, not the event. And stories are annealed in the telling, edited by turns each time they are recalled until they become little more than chimeras. People remember what they can live with more often than how they lived. I loathe guns and, with some exceptions, the people who carry them, so therefore I was not a person who held a gun. Perhaps in the course of transforming from That Guy to This Guy, there is a shedding of old selves that requires a kind of self-induced Alzheimer's.

In this instance, the truth didn't seem knowable. At best, there was a note on a long-lost precinct nightly sheet about some lunatic at Thirty-first and Nicollet. In the matter of the gun, Donald and I are both unreliable witnesses, given the passage of years and our chemical résumés. But Ann Marie was there. I called her in the midst of my attempt to report something in dispute. She said that she remembers me showing up in a state of complete agitation, but nothing about a gun. Then again, she said, "I didn't exactly stick around." Perhaps her

brother or I had the decency not to wave one around in her presence. The change in custody of the weapon made no sense. It's true that I was fully involved in the drug lifestyle at the time, buying and selling coke, but weapons were not part of my corner of that scene.

Bat-shit crazy or not, the weight of a large-caliber handgun in your hand is not something you're likely to forget. I've held a few as a cop reporter, and I was always stunned by how dense and formidable a gun felt. As I thought about it, I realized I would have had to walk over to his house with one jammed in my pants. I'm not obsessed with my own privates, but I'm not one to point a pistol at them, either.

Donald was the first person I went to see when I decided to put my own memories up against those of others. By turns, it became a kind of journalistic ghost dancing, trying to conjure spirits past, including mine. Donald was my first stop because he was and is incredibly dear to me. And if I were being honest, I thought that addiction, which had come close to killing me, would take him out, and I would miss my shot. He was plenty lucid and hilarious while we talked, but the bottle was winning over the longer haul, exacerbated by a methadone habit that served as a rubber band, always pulling him back to that same terrible place. (Sometimes addiction seems more like possession, a death grip from Satan that requires supernatural intervention. Absolution from end-stage chemical obsession tends to force otherwise faithless men to their knees.)

Other mysteries would pile up as I made my way, but the Night of the Gun stuck with me. Maybe Donald didn't know what he was talking about. Perhaps his memory was even more compromised than my own. Those were very busy days—I was on the run a lot—but I remember some of it with a great deal of acuity.

In that same year, near the end of 1987, I got in a fight with my girlfriend. The last time we had fought, I ended up going to jail because I assaulted her, so this time I was smart enough to call my friend Chris to pick me up. Chris was one of the saner people I knew, and I used to call him whenever I got in a jam. That night, I called him for a ride,

threw my stuff in some garbage bags, and fled out the back of my apartment. It's the kind of thing you see on *Cops*—I was even shirtless, to add to the verisimilitude. Chris was and is a kind man, and he never seemed to run out of patience with me. As I panted in the cab of that truck, he told me everything would be OK even though we both knew better.

In the summer of 2007, a year after I talked with Donald about the gun, I went to New Orleans to see Chris. He is now a professor of creative writing at Loyola University and the godfather to one of my children. Sitting in his backyard, we caught up on family stuff, and then I asked him about that night.

"I remember showing up," he said. "I had this GMC pickup truck. You put the garbage bags in the back, and that was it."

Then he said something else: "I went back into your place once you'd taken off. You sent me back to get a gun that you'd left there . . ."

Oops.

"You were worried about the cops going through the place, and so you'd asked me to go back and get some things that you had stashed. You had, I think, a .38 special," he said evenly. "I don't know where you got it. It was toward the very end, and you were starting to act real . . ."

He didn't finish the sentence, but he didn't have to.

"Yeah, you did have one—for I don't know how long," he said. "Somewhere in the closet, up above the shelf or something. And up above the refrigerator you had some drug paraphernalia or something, and you wanted me to just go there and clear out anything that would be incriminating."

Given that Chris was able to describe where the gun was stashed in the closet of my apartment near Donald's house, it probably happened the way Donald remembers it. It started to ring some distant, alarming bell. Oh yeah, my gun. Maybe so.

But if I was wrong about the gun, what else was I wrong about?

WHO YOU GONNA BELIEVE, ME OR YOUR LYING EYES?

The moral question of whether you are lying or not is not settled by establishing the truth or falsity of what you say. In order to settle this question, we must know whether you intend your statement to mislead.

—SISSELA BOK, *MORAL CHOICES IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LIFE*

On the face of it, I am no more qualified to take my own historical inventory than the addict with the fetid dreads who spare-changes people on the subway while singing "Stand by Me." Ask him how he ended up sweating people for quarters with off-key singing, and he may have an answer, but it won't be the whole story. He doesn't know it and probably couldn't bear it if he did.

To be an addict is to be something of a cognitive acrobat. You spread versions of yourself around, giving each person the truth he or she needs—you need, actually—to keep them at one remove. How, then, to reassemble that montage of deceit into a truthful past?

Addiction, which Oliver Sacks defines as "a form of self-induced catatonia, a repetitive action bordering on hysteria," is a little preoccupying. And if the apparatus is impaired, what of the will to be truthful? Let's stipulate that I do not have a good memory, having recklessly sautéed my brain in fistfuls of pharmaceutical spices. I generally test well for intelligence, but if you caught me after a punishing night-and-day

run back then with a simple "What happened to you?" I was usually stumped.

I learned early on as that it was probably OK to lie to my parents, but once I had skipped out into the world, not so much. It is dumb to lie to cops, a lesson that was tattooed into me at a tender age. Later on, when a cop asked me a direct question about something that would implicate me, I would always say the same thing: "I can't help you with that, officer."

Even so, give or take a died-in-the-diagnosis sociopath, there may be no more unreliable narrator than an addict. Recovered or not, you are in the hands of someone who used his mouth and his words to constantly create one more opportunity to get high. But my version of events is worth knowing, if for no other reason than I was there.

HERE IS WHAT I DESERVED: Hepatitis C, federal prison time, HIV, a cold park bench, an early, addled death.

HERE IS WHAT I GOT: A nice house, a good job, three lovely children.

HERE IS WHAT I REMEMBER ABOUT HOW THAT GUY BECAME THIS GUY: Not much. Junkies don't generally put stuff in boxes, they wear the boxes on their heads, so that everything around them—the sky, the future, the house down the street—is lost to them.

To the extent that I remember, this is what I know: I was born a middle kid in a family of seven into a John Cheever novel set on the border of Hopkins and Minnetonka on the western edge of Minneapolis. It was a suburban idyll where any mayhem was hidden in the rear rooms of large split-level homes. I sought trouble even though I had to walk a long way to find it. My home was a good one, my parents were wonderful, no one slipped me a Mickey, and if they did, I would have grabbed it with both hands and asked for more. I drank and drugged for the same reason that a four-year-old spins around past the

point of dizziness: I liked feeling different. Three of my siblings have the allergy to alcohol. My dad is in recovery, and while my mother may not have been an alcoholic, she knew her way around a party. That girl could go.

Let's skip high school. I mostly did, smoking doobies like they were Pall Malls every single day of those four years. I went to an all-boys school I loathed and hid behind red eyes and long hair that hung in my face. The day after I finished high school, my friend Greg and I hitchhiked to the yippie camp-in at Spokane, Washington, near the site of the 1974 World's Fair. I became a hippie at precisely the instant that it had lost cultural salience. The camp-in was pathetic—Nixon was on the way out, the draft and the war were over, it was mostly just loadies trading food stamps for pot and eating the gruel that the Krishnas were handing out with beatific smiles. I ended up hopping a bus of the so-called Rainbow Tribe, and on the ensuing ride, they gifted me with peyote, a profound sense of life's psychedelic possibilities, and a tenacious case of crabs.

I came back and was working in a jelly bean factory, Powell's Candy, where we wore helmets, beard guards, and earmuffs while we cranked out trays of rolled sugar. My foreman called me Curlicue because of my long ringlets and rarely spoke to me without using his index finger on my sternum as a punctuation device. I worked in a hydraulic tube assembly plant where my boss was a dwarf named George who took Dolly Parton's breasts as his central religious icons. Here and there I dug ditches, worked at a golf course, and washed dishes.

Obviously on a roll, I decided that the time was not right for college, but my father thought otherwise. He drove me to a branch of the University of Wisconsin at River Falls, a small farming town near the Minnesota border. He dropped me off in the middle of campus with my beanbag chair and chest of bongs and gave me a check for \$20. It bounced.

My crowning achievement came early: As a brand-new freshman, I won the beer-chugging contest, drinking five twelve-ounce beers in under twenty seconds. My new pals clapped me on the back as I vomited

minutes later. I stayed for two years and moved in with a lovely girl, Lizbeth, whom I soon wore out. I ended up working at a local nursing home, where I found myself the lone male on night shifts full of townie girls. It was a good life until one night when I was doing laundry at one of their trailers and the ex-husband came by drunk as a goat and pointed a gun at me. I left town soon afterward. (Never, ever get mixed up with townies.)

After some months of traveling in the West, I came back to Minneapolis and enrolled at the University of Minnesota, a massive campus in the middle of the city. I worked nights in a restaurant called the Little Prince—one of two straight guys on a very large gay and female staff, so, again, I was blessed with friendly odds—and during the day, I hung out in parking garages at school with pals, mostly lesbians and pot smokers. Throughout college I had many friends, very little money, and what Pavlov called “the blind force of the subcortex.” Ring the getting-high bell, and I was right there.

I subsisted on Pop-Tarts and Mountain Dew, along with less nutritious substances: LSD, peyote, pot, mushrooms, mescaline, amphetamines, quaaludes, valium, opium, hash, liquor of all kinds, and—this is embarrassing—morning glory seeds. (Rumored to have psychedelic properties, they didn’t work.) Total garbage head.

On my twenty-first birthday, I went out with Kim, who worked at the Little Prince and would become my wife. I also did coke for the first time. The relationship with the coke was far more enduring and would define the next decade.

A dealer who dropped his money on Dom Pérignon at the restaurant palmed me a Balkan Sobranie cigarette tin when he found out it was my birthday. He told me to open it in the bathroom. I saw the powder and knew what to do.

It was a Helen Keller hand-under-the-water moment. Lordy, I can finally see! Cold fusion, right here in the bathroom stall; it was the greatest thing ever. My endorphins leaped at this new opportunity,

hugging it and feeling all its splendid corners. *My, that’s better.* You can laugh all you want, but Proust had a similar epiphany eating a madeleine: “. . . a shudder ran through me, and I stopped, intent upon the extraordinary thing that had happened to me. An exquisite pleasure invaded my senses, something isolated, detached, with no suggestion of its origin.”

Every addict is formed in the crucible of the memory of that first hit. Even as the available endorphins attenuate, the memory is *right there*. The chase is on, sometimes for hours, sometimes for days—in my case, for years on end. I could get high just having coke in my pocket, knowing that I had a little edge that few others had. I had spent my life terrified that I would miss out on something, and now I didn’t have to. If I had delved deeper, I might have also noticed that coke accessed something in me that was unruly and ungovernable, but there would be time for that later.

In school and out—I attended classes when I could while working at the Little Prince—I told people I was a journalist, with only that uttered noun as evidence. Then I caught a real actual story for the *Twin Cities Reader*, a local alternative weekly, and the fever to go with it. I developed an intense interest in the craft immediately.

But working on stories and the attention that came with them was never enough. Tucked in safe suburban redoubts, kids who had it soft like me manufactured peril. When there is no edge, we make our own, reaching for something that would approximate the cliché of being fully alive because we could die at any minute. That search for sensation leads to the self divorcing from the body, à la Descartes, and a life of faux peril. Everything that brought me joy involved risk. *Yes, let’s do mescaline, and, sure, let’s wander out onto that trestle bridge hundreds of feet over the St. Croix River. I’m pretty sure we’ll hear a train if it comes, right?* My friends would do LSD and stare at the marvel of their own hands. I’d drop acid and organize a road trip.

Early in 1986 I tried this newfangled thing called freebasing and, later, crack cocaine. Another eureka moment—*This is, like, the best. Only better, faster.* The smoke became a pharmacological rocket in about four and a half seconds. I quickly became an autodidact, learning to make crack, dropping some coke and baking soda into a spoon over the stove, and, voilà, we were rocking.

During the day, I was doing stories for the *Twin Cities Reader*. I took the recalcitrance and slipperiness of public officials personally—my moral dungeon at the time is freighted with irony in retrospect—and aligned myself with sources who I thought were doing the people's work.

Crime stories riveted me from the beginning—it is often a short walk from cops to robbers. But when I got in a jam of my own, I never worked any connections within the department, I just tried to lay low and duck any uniforms I knew while wheeling through booking. Some of the wiseguy stuff I picked up at night helped me in my day job, but I prospered mostly in spite of my addiction.

In the fall of 1983, I did a story about a food bank that was mismanaging funds and its mission, and, later that year, a story about a neighborhood's effort to shut down a huge food line for the homeless. In 1984 there was a piece about a massive federal civil trial that suggested the makers of the Dalkon Shield had knowingly distributed a product its own research had shown was dangerous. That year I covered politics extensively, including local favorite Walter Mondale's campaign for president. I also exposed a prolific con man who had charmed his way through others' millions.

My worlds began to collide a bit in 1985 and 1986 when I did very detailed reporting at a large detox center—I would later be back as a customer—and, along with another reporter, came up with a lavish and loving portrait of Block E, a downtown square block of urban pathology and lore. I did investigations of the supercomputer firm Control Data Corporation's extensive role in supplying infrastructure for the government of South Africa and broke news about the rise of big-city street gangs in what had been a fairly quiet Midwestern burg.

There were signs early on that the center would not hold. During

this time, I was working on a running story about a tough cop who ran the decoy unit of the Minneapolis police. A suspect had been shot accidentally while being taken into custody, and another reporter and I investigated and found out that the cop who ran the unit had entered, but not completed, chemical dependency treatment. State laws required that he give up his gun for a period, and when I called he was civil and serious. But a few days later, my phone rang and he said—I am recalling this decades later—"You know, I've been asking around and your life is not without blemish. You better watch your step." For weeks afterward, I would drive somewhere and see the van that the decoy unit used in my rearview. It both scared me and cramped my style. I eventually had a very uncomfortable conversation with the police chief complaining that some of his officers were following me around. He made them stop.

But for much of the 1980s, I was about my business, all of it, simultaneously. In my little provincial world of Minneapolis, I felt like a king. I had a job, coke, and lots of friends. On my thirtieth birthday, September 8, 1986, a friend gave me some mushrooms and took me into the back room of McCready's for a quick snort. The door opened, revealing a band, streamers, and more than a hundred people—rockers, comedians, drug dealers, lawyers, journalists, and wiseguys—all wearing T-shirts that said, "I Am a Close Personal Friend of David Carr."

You don't say.

In this time, many of my friends went to prison, but I was more of a misdemeanor, spending hours—and every once in a while, days—in various county jails. When things got way out of round, my family—usually my dad—would swoop in and intervene. After long, tortured family discussions about all the promise I was frittering away and all the misery I was spreading around, I would go to treatment (four times in all) and promise to mend my ways. But treatment or not, I continued to live by Emerson's credo: moderation in all things, especially moderation.

But as time wore on, I combined a life of early promise as a writer with dark nights full of half-baked gangsters and full-blown addiction. I became a steady dealer for the creative community in Minneapolis, selling coke to musicians, comedians, and club kids. I moved grams, eight balls, ounces, quarter pounds—no one trusted me with a kilo for more than a few minutes.

I did not date women, I took hostages. I married Kim for all the wrong reasons and pillaged our bank account with an ATM card. (I half-believed at the time that ATMs were invented by a drug cartel to keep the hard cash flowing at night.) There were nights when I would come in and go to bed like a normal person next to her, and once she fell asleep, I would slip out of bed and go between the houses across the street to a woman I knew. Once Kim and I divorced, I fell into a relationship with a woman named Doolie and slowly drove her insane. She was gorgeous, witty as hell, and drew stares in the bar, which led to many ensuing beefs. My duplicity around women was towering and chronic. I coned and manipulated myself into their beds and then treated them as human jewelry, something to be worn for effect. It certainly did not have much to do with how I looked. Far from clinically handsome, I have a face that looks like it could have been carved out of mashed potatoes, and my idea of exercise was running the length of my body.

One night in 1986, I was at a party for Phil, a long-time coke connection who was going away to federal prison. I met Anna, who had better coke than Phil and soon developed a fondness for me. We were an appalling mix, metastasized by her unlimited supply of coke. I taught Anna how to smoke it. Later, in 1987, she came home one day with a needle in her pocket, and I joined in the fun. I lost my job, she lost her business.

It would have ended there, but on April 15, 1988, Anna had twin girls. My daughters. Our remaining friends had begged us, quite reasonably, to abort them. We were smoking crack the day Anna's water broke, and they were born two and a half months premature, fewer than three pounds each. Friends began to boycott our house because it

had become such a grim, near-scientific tableau of addiction's progression.

Eventually we both went to treatment, and our kids went into foster care. I sobered up, Anna didn't, and I got the twins, Erin and Meagan. I then lived most of the last two decades at the end of a firehouse of those promises that recovery delivers, with luck, industry, and fate guiding me to a life beyond all expectation.

But was it really all thus? Shakespeare describes memory as the warder of the brain, but it is also its courtesan. We all remember the parts of the past that allow us to meet the future. The prototypes of the lie—white, grievous, practical—make themselves known when memory is called to answer. Memory usually answers back with bullshit. Everyone likes a good story, especially the one who is telling it, and the historical facts are generally sullied in the process. All men mean well, and clearly most people who set out to tell the truth do not lie on purpose. How is it, then, that every warm bar stool contains a hero, a star of his own epic, who is the sum of his amazing stories?

Most of my stories are not nice ones, their heroic aspects dimmed by the fact that the hand which struck me was my own. Truly ennobling personal narratives describe a person overcoming the bad hand that fate has dealt him, not someone like me, who takes good cards and sets them on fire. I can easily admit that I did bad things for no good reason but stop at copping to being overtly evil. I was a screwup who took aim on himself and may have created collateral damage along the way. What I found twenty years later was darker, more meretricious, but in the memory, those stories tended to be bathed in pathos, coating the pieces of the past in rich goo that make them go down smooth. Even absent the urge to tart up the past, there are practical impediments to communicating the baseline reality of addiction, because when every day is built around obtaining and consuming a substance, those days run together and fail to gain traction in the memory.

There is also an almost irresistible consistency bias. Memory is an expression of hindsight as much as recollection, so my rear view must incorporate the fact that I was eventually redeemed from a life of drugs, alcohol, and mania. In this construct, the moments when I stumbled across a life-changing epiphany are vividly preserved, while the more corrosive aspects are lost to a kind of self-preserving amnesia. To be fully cognizant of the wreckage of one's past can be paralyzing, so we, or at least I, minimize as we go. Nowhere is that imperative more manifest than in memoir. Popular literature requires framing a sympathetic character, someone we can root for or who is, as they say on the studio lot, relatable.

If I said I was a fat thug who beat up women and sold bad coke, would you like my story? What if instead I wrote I was a recovered addict who obtained custody of my twin girls, got us off welfare, and raised them by myself, even though I had a little touch of cancer? Now we're talking. Both are equally true, but as a member of a self-interpreting species, one that fights to keep disharmony at a remove, I'm inclined to mention my tenderhearted attentions to my children as a single parent before I get around to the fact that I hit their mother when we were together.

So what if I had the gun? A drunken rampage after getting fired has its charms, but waving a gun in the face of a best friend? That behavior creates a large rift in the bigger narrative of me as a knucklehead who was pulled along by a ring in my nose into matters that were beyond my ken. If the gun story is as Donald and Chris remember it, it would put me on the far end of the continuum from victim to perpetrator.

We tell ourselves that we lie to protect others, but the self usually comes out looking damn good in the process. "Stories are for books," Phil, my dealer once upon a time, said to me. I was plaintively explaining how despite my best intentions, things had gone wrong, people had disappeared, and I did not have his money. He put me into collections, sending his boys over to talk to me. Stories are for books.

And so they are. Even if you are a civilian who leaves a few gulps in

the bottom of the second glass of wine, you know them by heart. The arc of the addict has become as warm and familiar as a Hallmark movie: the textured childhood, the abasement, the epiphany, the relapse, the ultimate surrender. Dead addicts don't leave behind an uplifting tract, so the narratives are generally told by people who can go on *Oprah* and stand like a barker in front of their abasement.

In the convention of the recovery narrative, readers will want to scan past the tick-tock, looking for the yucky part so that they can feel better about themselves. (Here's a taste: When I got to detox for what I thought was the last time, they took one look at my arms and brought me a tub filled with lukewarm water and Dreft detergent to soak my scabrous, pus-filled track marks. Even the wet-brain drunks wouldn't come near me. See how that works?)

I read some of the classics of the genre, debunked and not. After reading four pages of continuous ten-year-old dialogue magically recalled by someone who was in the throes of alcohol withdrawal at the time, I wondered how he did it. No I didn't. I knew he made it up. It was easy and defensible, really, sublimating and eliding the past in service of a larger Emotional Truth. Truth is singular and lies are plural, but history—the facts of what happened—is both immutable and mostly unknowable. Can I somehow remember enough to type my way to an unvarnished recitation of what happened to me? No chance.

As I sit today, I am a genuine, often pleasant person. I am able to imitate a human being for long spurts of time, do solid work for a reputable organization, and have, over the breadth of time, proven to be an attentive father and husband. So how to reconcile my past with my current circumstance? Drugs, it seems to me, do not conjure demons, they access them. Was I faking it then, or am I faking it now? Which, you might ask, of my two selves did I make up?

But there is a way, not to Truth, but fewer lies. When I set out to write a memoir, I decided to fact-check my life using the prosaic tools of journalism. For the past thirty years, give or take time served as a drunk and a lunatic, I have used those tools with alacrity. I decided to go back and ask the people who were there: the dealers I worked for,

the friends I had, the women I dated, the bosses I screwed over. There would be police reports, mug shots from my short career as a crook, and some medical records from my serial treatments.

Left to their own devices, addicts—or people who are attempting to impersonate them for reasons I have never fully understood—end up in the business of wish fulfillment, becoming a composite of their own making to feed specific public appetites. I have always thought that reporting, while onerous, was easier than making it up: There are many great reporters and very few truly remarkable novelists. As a writer, I prefer to get bossed around by my notebook and the facts contained therein. They may not lead to a perfect, seamless arc, but they yield a story that coheres in another way, because it is mostly true. As many of the cold facts as I can uncover and lean on, woven with the networked memories of the people I interviewed, will produce enough seeming fantasy and unreality as it is. But to report out a story I was this close to I would need reinforcements.

In the spring of 2006, I went to Best Buy outside Minneapolis. I told the kid who was helping me that I wanted a set of gadgets that would help me document every inch of a book I was reporting. This time, I thought, I want to remember everything, or at least put it somewhere it can be found. He sold me a video camera, a digital tape recorder, and an external drive to capture all of it. The devices would do what I could not, which is remember everything, code it into ones and zeroes and serve as digital witnesses.

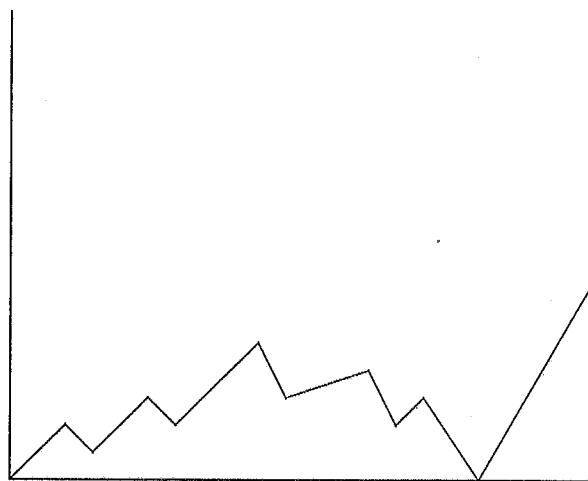
For two years on and off, I would call a long-lost person, set up a time, and then come in with a bunch of questions, the video camera and a voice recorder. I would engage in small talk and then point to some huge scab from the past. "Do you mind tearing that off?" It was a profoundly embarrassing exercise, but it brought with it no small number of epiphanies. I was wrong about a lot of things. In the novelized version of my life, I was basically a good guy who took a couple of wrong turns and ended up in the ditch. In the reported version, I was a person who saw the sign that said dangerous curves ahead and floored it, heedlessly mowing down all sorts of people at every turn.

Some people I interviewed wanted me to say I was sorry—I am and I did. Some people wanted me to say that I remembered—I did and I did not. And some people wanted me to say it was all a mistake—it was and it was not. It felt less like journalism than archaeology, a job that required shovels and axes, hacking my way into dark, little-used passages and feeling my way around, finding other pieces that did not fit, and figuring out that I was working off the wrong map to begin with. It would prove to be an enlightening and sickening enterprise, a new frontier in the annals of self-involvement. I would show up at the doorsteps of people I had not seen in two decades and ask them to explain myself to me.

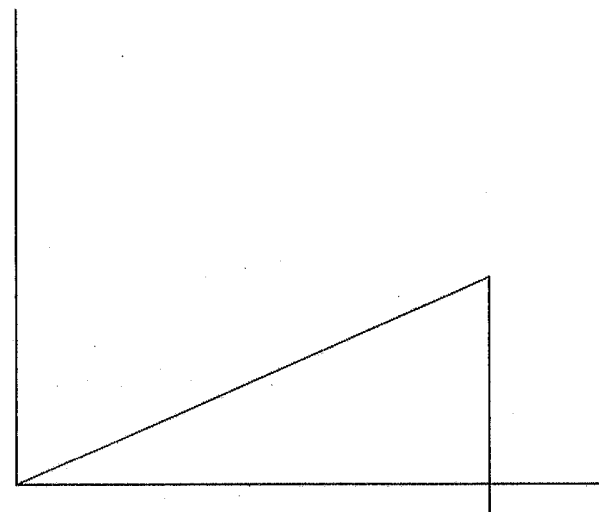
This is what they told me.

BONGO, TONY THE HAT, AND STEVE

If memory is fungible, then time is its wingman, stretching and compressing to conjure a coherent story. In retrospection, I've always thought of my career, both as a journalist and an addict, as a series of rapid ascents and declines. Sort of like this:



But after a year of investigating my past, it became clear that I had been chugging along pretty nicely until 1986, and then dropped off the face of the earth in 1987 when I started smoking cocaine. What I had remembered as four years of struggle had actually been about eighteen months. Documents, interviews, and pictures suggest that I kept all of the balls in the air until I didn't. Sort of more like this:



Who knew? I lost my job in March of 1987, and by the end of the next year, I had multiple arrests, and I was in long-term treatment at Eden House. In the recollection and the telling, I had always thought I washed out of journalism for many years, but it was more like a single year, counting the time I spent in the booby hatch, and even in there, I wrote stories. Regardless of what happened to me, I rarely stopped typing. Perhaps I was worried I would disappear altogether if I did.

At the start of 1987, the components of my jerry-rigged life started flying off in all directions. The longer deadlines at the monthly business magazine created more room for mischief and unaccountability. Every-

thing I did was somehow transformed into an adjunct to my addiction. In the final months of my employment at *Corporate Report*, it was decided that I would do a story about Roger, a prep-school teacher turned bookie turned "sports betting consultant." It was a match: We were both guys with some history of professional accomplishment and smarts who were now in a barrel heading over the falls.

Roger was brilliant and mordantly funny. He was romantically involved on and off with Rebecca, the city's chief madam, who ran a bunch of massage parlors. She was a source and subject I had covered on and off. The story about Roger was supposed to be about a guy who had found a way to make a living off of what he was good at even though it was not technically legal. The assignment quickly became a story about addiction—his jones written through the prism of mine. In a series of conversations at the marginal office spaces he rented and frequently slept in, he schooled me in gambling, which I did not know much about. Those daytime reporting trips morphed into late-night conversations with lots of booze and coke, which continued even after I was fired and the story had been published.

The profile, entitled "Playing the Game within the Game," was a weave of his wiseguy and academic philosophies. Roger had been a highly respected teacher at the St. Paul Academy. He had a nice touch for betting pro football, and his wins eventually tipped over a St. Paul bookie, who handed him the business to pay him off. He ended up out of teaching, caught a couple of federal cases, and did some prison time. The sports information service hosted a phone bank that gave out tips to subscribers, but Roger was no longer living on the vig, and his betting touch had soured. He was in debt—six figures, probably more—and had tapped his girlfriend Rebecca for some of his losses. He was increasingly dependent on a madam for money, while I was leaning on a drug dealer to help me get by. We made quite a pair.

Roger had a good mouth, even though he hated guys who made speeches and was laconic in the extreme.

"In the stock market, it can take six months to find out if you made the right decisions. With betting, you lay down a bet, and you know

that you made a mistake three hours later when a shot by some jerk you'll never know rolls off the rim," he told me during an interview in 1987. I sat next to him in front of the television a few times when that happened, a bad bounce taking tens of thousands with it, and he always smiled, laughing at the absurdity of his disenfranchisement. Roger—his pals called him Bongo—made above-average picks for the sports information service, but that did not prevent him from heading steadily south as a gambler.

"It is very important for you to understand that handicapping and gambling are two separate things," he told me for the story. "Gambling is money management. I have never had much success managing money. I was successful enough in the beginning to get away with being reckless, but I just continued to gamble more until I got in trouble. I had trouble with the downside."

Don't we all? It is the stopping, the quitting, the walking away that we cannot abide because the ceaseless activity keeps the accounting at bay. The mania of addiction, as expressed by anything—coke, booze, betting, sex—finds renewed traction every time it halts because once the perpetrator stops and sees how deeply and truly his life now sucks, there is only one thing that will make him feel better: more of same. Often the only thing that imposes limits on someone who is hooked on his own endorphins is money.

"I don't care about money until I run out of it," Roger said, speaking for me and many, many others. "Then I have to crawl around and beg people to borrow me some. Then it becomes very important." Roger had over a million bucks when he was going good. I asked him if it would have made any difference if another zero had been added to that first big winning streak.

"Now you are beginning to understand. It wouldn't have mattered how much I won. Eventually I would have bet until it was gone. I would be in exactly the same position I am right now."

Listening to him, I began to hear the parallels in our narratives. I had gotten started with a good job, no huge financial burdens, and eventually had Anna's kilos more or less at my disposal. Now I was

headlong on my way to nothing. All addicts are gamblers working with a bad hand. The chance that you will pick up a substance that had kicked your ass before and somehow manage to walk away whole are so low as to be immeasurable.

"I seem to be living a cliché," he said finally. "The one about all gamblers dying broke. There's a lot of truth in those clichés. Things like how you don't pick your passions, they pick you. I think that's true."

So there, poised on what would be my final run, I had all I needed to know about how it would end. I was fired before the story came out, but reading it two decades later, it was a manual that foretold all that followed. Roger knew the score, he just couldn't bet it correctly. And neither could I.

After Anna found out she was pregnant, she went into treatment at the end of 1987. I watched her kids with the help of her family. When she got back, she seemed to have some new friends from treatment and began disappearing. One night I confronted her at the front door and began fishing around in her pockets, not precisely sure what I was looking for. My index finger came out of her shirt's front pocket stuck to a needle. I raged, lectured, talking about the dangers of overdose, but probably sat down with her and began shooting cocaine later that same day. It was a dangerous, bloody activity. I feel a profound sense of shame even typing about it. No one can really describe how lost you have to be to get on the treadmill of sticking a needle in your arm, leg, foot, or hand every twenty minutes.

By the spring of 1988, both Anna and I had been through treatment and relapsed, both of us in an intense state of cocaine dependency. Things became more unpredictable still. I was in and out of Anna's place, and in and out of work at a weekly football paper where I had landed.

One of the few people who was present during those days was Steve, Anna's ex-husband. He came over to take care of the two kids she already had. He chipped a bit when it came to the coke, but many

times he was the only one sober enough to function. Oddly enough, Steve and I always got along very well. After I met with Anna, I called him in Colorado, where he now lives with Anna's son. I asked him about those months before the twins were born, in part because I had almost zero recollection of those murky, chaotic times.

"You were drunk every day," he said. "You would slug a pint on the way to work. Those were rough days, weren't they? Very tough times. You beat yourself to death. I'd say that you are lucky to be alive at all. You didn't give a shit one way or another. You were on a monthslong bender. The jobs weren't going good, you had all the powder you could use and all of the alcohol you could drink, and that's what you did."

He had a front row seat, so I had to ask him: Did I take Anna with me as I headed into the ditch?

"The trouble for her was inevitable," he said. "You didn't cause it. You certainly didn't help it, but you didn't cause it. You end up losing it with that shit anyway. It is pretty hard for anybody to keep it together."

"People would come over, and you guys would start cooking that shit up. It wouldn't be five minutes into the deal, and somebody would lose something or drop something. Everybody would be crawling around on the floor looking for something, and other people would be standing there with a piece of lint in their hand, thinking they had found something. It was all so crazy. I smoked it a few times, but who in their right mind would want to get like that?"

"You guys were completely, completely off your rocker. I was in no great shape, but I could not do what you guys were doing. No one could for long."

Anna and I were as far out there as you can get. Anna's business was crumbling. A shipment came in, and we took a kilo to a suburban hotel to break it up. In addition to the newly arrived merch, we brought an elaborate glass pipe, a box full of fresh screens, and a blowtorch. We planned on staying one night to prep the goods and make deliveries the following morning. We stayed in that room for three days, sliding \$100s under the door to pay for another night when housekeeping came by.

Somewhere in there, I passed out, and I can remember waking up and seeing Anna at the table in the room, her face covered in soot from the pipe, going back at it. The phone rang constantly, each time an insistent voice saying a lot of people were waiting on us. No matter. We did what we did. When we finally left, geeked and spent, we got out to the car and realized we had left thousands of dollars in the couch. Anna told me to go get it. I fetched the money at her command.

When you are so far gone that you spend time only with people who are enmeshed in the drug lifestyle, it falls to the only people you see—dealers, fellow hypes, and drunks—to tell you that your shit is out of pocket. Tony the Hat was on my case almost constantly. Tony was a full-on gangster who talked with an accent straight from the mining towns of northern Minnesota; he was a joyful piece of work in his own way. He was wrapped in his particular dialect and folkways. To do business was to “wrang,” as in wrangle; a full-on sweat was called a “lath,” for lather; and he always, always called me “Fridge.” He always marveled at my ability to do all sorts of cocaine and still stay fat. Boys liked Tony, girls did not, except his sister Dee, who was devoted to him.

Tony was a talented athlete and had been on his way to pro hockey, but a catastrophic knee injury ended that. He would have made a fine goon—even with a blown knee, he skated with a great deal of finesse. He and Dee had a pretty serious retail drug business in South Minneapolis. You didn’t just bring anybody by—he was a moody dude—but if the stars were aligned, it could be off-the-hook, buck-wild fun. One night a huge rain created a flash flood by the creek down the hill from his house. The rest of the cokeheads stayed bent over the mirror, but Tony and I went outside and swam out into the rushing water overflowing the creek. A car came floating by, and Tony jumped on it and pulled me up. We rode it for blocks, shouting like loons.

Nobody ever sat in Tony’s chair; more of a throne, really, with a cooler for coke on one side and sometimes a big handgun on the other.

He wasn’t one to wave it around, but he was a guy who just felt more comfortable with a piece. One night right before my friend John was leaving for Central America, where he worked as a reporter, we stopped at Tony’s, and Tony bought John’s car right off him for cash.

I called John in Bogotá, Colombia, in the summer of 2007 to ask him about his recollections of Tony the Hat. “He was a very menacing guy, even compared to some of the narcotrafficientes I had covered. He offered me, like, one hundred dollars for this crappy VW Rabbit I had, and it sort of seemed like the kind of offer you couldn’t refuse.”

Everyone in the Life loves to talk about how old-school he is, but Tony lived it. He had his own code about what it meant to be a man. One night in 1988, the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension came in—riot gear, forced entry, all get-the-fuck-down and keep-yer-hands-where-we-can-see-’em. Luck of the draw I was not there, but some of the guys went all girly-man when it happened, freaking out and crying. Not Tony. True enough, it was his place, but Dee was really the boss, which is not how he put it to the cops. He protected his sister and caught a significant county sentence followed by probation.

Tony had some other ticks. He loved Warren Zevon—too much—and hated crack and the people who did it. Bad for business, a bunch of twitchy fucking paranoids in the basement messing up the wrang, made it unpleasant. Sometimes when he sold me coke, he made me snort it right in front of him. “Don’t be sneaking off and making crack balls out of that, Fridge,” he’d say.

I pretended I wouldn’t, and he pretended not to notice when I did. One night before he got busted, I called him very late. He sounded happy to hear from me. When I got there, the usual mopes were not hanging around the basement. I got the sense that Tony had dismissed them. He was not what I would describe as a public intellectual, but he respected the fact that I was a writer; that I did something besides knucklehead stuff. And he surmised correctly that I was in the process of screwing that up.

“Fridge,” he said, setting out a line, “I hear stuff about you. Bad stuff.”

"It's probably true," I said. I liked Tony enough not to bullshit him now that it was man-to-man.

Both hands went to the arms of the chair, and the knuckles went white.

"You know what I could do to you?" he said. "Don't fucking lie to me. You are deep into the crack shit. I hear you're shooting up too."

Yes to all, I said. He looked like he might jump out of his chair and choke the living shit out of me. His nostrils flared, he tugged at his long hockey hair, and then he softened and looked at me. "You see what it does, you see who is doing it, you know how it goes. That is not a way for you to go, Fridge. Do you hear me?"

That's how I recall it and it will have to suffice. Tony sobered me up and became a hockey coach, but that big, scary heart gave out in 2000.

MUGGED: A COMIC TRAGEDY IN THREE ACTS

