

# BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

## Chapter 1

Rich wasn't sure how it came to him - The Thought - the thought to drive out to the Black Hills of South Dakota and blow up Mount Rushmore. Since The Thought had settled into his mid-50's sclerotic brain, he just couldn't think of much else. He wondered if it began with Dee Brown's "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee" that tortured him that he had read some 30 years before and the reading of which had burrowed its way into his shriveling grey-matter like a tomato horn- worm (he is Italian after all) – not that Brown himself had anything to do with The Thought, or its worming ways. No, it definitely wasn't JUST Brown's tale of White Man's mistreatment of the Indians, even though on thinking about it Rich did remember that when he finished reading said book he did ceremoniously throw it - a la Sandy Koufax - across the living room he was sitting in at the time in a little old farmhouse in Upstate New York and put a large or small hole (he didn't remember) in the opposite 150-year old gypsum and lathe wall. But that was 30 years before. It probably was festering all that time, but he couldn't come up with the precise moment that everything had crystallized into it - The Thought.

For the past year Rich had been constructing scale models of Rushmore. Out of clay, plaster, wood, found objects, had done numerous paintings of the mountain, made a kind-of shrine to it with burning candles, small sage fires to purify his apartment, and had had ritualistic roasts of small rodents he caught in his Have-A-Heart traps. And other than going to work – he did have to pay the rent, heat, taxes, etc. – Rich hardly ever left his one-room cold-water flat in the little village he now lived in. He was thinking that he was, subconsciously (of course), becoming like the Richard Dreyfus character in Spielberg's "Close Encounters of the Third Kind", only he knew that (unfortunately for Rich's sense of aesthetics) French film director Francois Truffaut - who played a scientist in "Close Encounters..." –

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would not be there to greet him at Rushmore (he had died years before), when all of a sudden the door flew open. It was Bill. Bill the Laughing Buddha. Rich hadn't seen him in awhile; his friend of the last thousand lifetimes.

"Hey...," Bill says as he takes in the sights, twiddling his fingers and rocking on his heels like a tourist perusing the sights. "A little obsessed are we?"

Rich looks up at him (he is kneeling as he tries to join Teddy Roosevelt's foam-core mustache to the old Prez's wooden head), "Yeah...so?"

"I didn't know you had such a sense of...of..." Bill says, looking around and smiling through huge chiclet teeth.

"What!? Sense of WHAT!?" says Rich, with his now daily irritation newly stoked.

"I don't know..." laughs Bill.

"Don't laugh, man!...What? You got something to say about this?" and Rich gestures haphazardly to the various homages that fill the room.

"No...no...just that I never saw it as...as..."

"As what, man?" says Rich through gritted yellowing teeth.

"Sublime...I never saw Mount Rushmore as sublime as you, apparently, do."

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Rich is worked up. "IT isn't sublime, Bill!...IT is ridiculous! The fucking thing is ridiculous!"

"Oh," says Bill, looking away and trying to sound absent-minded.

"It's full-blown, man! Full-blown! Full-blown fucking ridiculous!"

"Oh...OK," says Bill, checking out the three-foot-by-six-foot plaster mountain that sits in the middle of the apartment, right where Rich's futon/bed used to be.

"And I'm thinking of driving out there with a car full of explosives and blowing the fucking thing to smithereens," says Rich, looking up at Bill as Teddy R's stache refuses to adhere to his wooden face,

"...and," he mutters to himself, "I need some epoxy instead of this Elmer's shit!"

"Smithereens? Isn't that the next town over?" says Bill, chuckling to himself.

Rich stares up at Bill. "Try to be literal, OK Bill?"

"I'll give it a go...So, here goes...Why do you want to blow up Mount Rushmore?"

"For the fucking Indians, man."

"Which ones?"

"All of em! Whatta you mean, which ones?"

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“Do they know about your...plans?”

“Naaaah...it’s karmic, man, just karmic.”

“Like with the Buddha? That kind of karmic?”

“I guess so...We’re just gonna do to them what they did to the Indians.”

“Huh, WE’RE gonna?...Huh...but these are stone heads, Rich, not people. And besides the Buddha doesn’t believe in revenge of any kind. It’s not the dharma.”

“Karma? Dharma? Who gives a rat’s ass!...Look, man, I’m goin’, and do you wanna go with me and blow the fucker up or what?”

Bill thinks for a moment. A long moment. Then, smiling down at Rich, tells him, “Sure...Why not?...Always game for a little road trip to blow up a national monument.”

Rich jumps up and pats Bill’s back. He is happier than he has been in a long time. Probably since the last time he saw Bill. “Great...but we’ll have to get some supplies along the way.”

“Supplies.”

“Yeah...fireworks, propane tanks, fertilizer...and yeah, an alarm clock.”

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“Fertilizer? You mean like chicken shit?”

“Yeah, it’s very explosive.”

“Chicken shit is explosive?”

“Yeah, that’s what that guy McVeigh used.”

“The guy from Fleetwood Mac?”

“I don’t know the town he came from...You know, the guy who blew up that building in Oklahoma and killed all those people?”

“Oh, him...didn’t they execute him for that?”

“Sure,” laughs Rich, “but we’re not gonna kill anybody, man, just blow up a national monument...You know, Bill, like you said, just some stone heads.”

### Chapter 2

Bill and Rich had met 30 years before at a mutual friend’s house in Peekskill, the little city along the Hudson River where Rich came from. Rich hated the place, but liked to visit his old friends. And Bill was a friend of a friend of that particular old friend that Rich had gone to visit. On that now-fortuitous day, Bill

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mistook Rich for someone else their mutual friend had described and thought he, that friend, sounded like “an asshole” – to put it in Bill’s terms - and Rich thought that Bill was, though humorous, somewhat mentally disturbed. Eventually the halting conversation between them got around to, as it often does with two people who share certain anomalous traits, the Hutus and the Tutsis of Rwanda (this was not particularly prescient, even though this conversation did take place many years before the Hutus slaughtered 800,000 Tutsis in one month in the 1990’s).

“How do they tell the difference?” asked Rich, as he played with his one-year old son Cloud, laying in diapers on a blanket between them.

“I’m not sure,” said Bill. “Maybe ID cards?”

“ID cards?...So before either a Hutu or a Tutsi chops somebody’s head off, they check their ID card?”

“I guess so...Sounds fair to me.”

“To me, too,” said Rich. “But what if a Tutsi steals a Hutu ID card and tries to pass himself off as a Hutu?”

“The ID card has a photo?”

“A photo...but they look alike, don’t they?”

“You mean Black people?” laughed Bill.

“No...,” laughed Rich, “THESE Black people...it isn’t like there’s any distinguishing characteristics

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between them, is there?...One group aren't pygmies, are they?"

"I'm not really sure," said Bill.

From this first encounter Bill and Rich slowly formed a lasting friendship, both figuring that an uninformed conversation about Hutus and Tutsis on a balmy summer afternoon in Peekskill was somehow karmic. Bill was a teacher in Yonkers. Taught English to Black and Hispanic high schoolers. Not an easy gig, but one made easier by Bill's reputation as a crazy. Big, red-haired, Irish, Bill was a visually imposing presence to the students. And his "don't give me any shit" attitude cut short any behavioral problems in their gestation stage. Shortly after Bill and Rich met, Bill made two major decisions as to the direction his life would take. One was to look into being an advertising guy; the other, a Buddhist. Rich, though an artist/painter, and living then in that little old farmhouse in Upstate New York – the one where he hurled "Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee" against the wall – worked cleaning a bowling alley. He had no phone and the only way that Bill could reach him was to call the alley. And even though there was the difficulty in making arrangements to get together...they did. And Often. Bill would show up at Rich's house unannounced, driving up from Yonkers a couple days a week (taking off sick days from school) and they would sit around like before, on a blanket, playing with the diapered Cloud, who lay between them, and discuss Bill's decision to abandon teaching while smoking hundreds of cigarettes and eating Devil Dogs. Since Bill and Rich both despised advertising and Bill was doing it to revolutionize that eternally compromised world – after all he was a poet – and Rich wanted to help him out with that endeavor, they came up with an unusual "campaign" for Joy, a high-end perfume, that included images from Auschwitz and some pithy quotes from Adolf himself. "The idea should grab people's attention right away," Bill told Rich. Obviously, the "campaign" – though well-thought out and with a high-potential for attention-grabbing – didn't get off the ground. "It didn't fly," Bill told Rich, using the parlance of the advertising executives at the Young and Rubicamp agency where he was trying

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to get a job. In the end Bill didn't really care all that much anyway. He looked at the whole thing as a way to spend time with Rich.

Buddhism was another story. And Bill took seriously the Buddhist adage that, "If you see the Buddha on the road...you kill him." He liked to collect ringing bowls, prayer flags and bells, knew the difference between the Tibetan and the Chinese versions of the dharma, was ordained into the Chinese-style at the Big Buddha monastery outside of Carmel, New York, and on the day he was ordained went to the local diner with Rich and ordered breakfast. In keeping with the solemnity of the day Rich ordered just black coffee and a buttered bagel, and thought twice about the butter. "In honor of the occasion," he said to himself. Bill, in a festive mood, ordered a stack of pancakes, two eggs, sausage, bacon, home fries and coffee, with extra cream and sugar.

"Bill...I thought denial of sensual pleasures was part of Buddhism," asked Rich, watching slabs of pancake quickly disappear into Bill's mouth.

Bill looked surprised. "Yeah? So?"

"And aren't Buddhists supposed to be vegetarians? You know, respect for all sentient beings and all that?" and Rich points at the sausage and bacon on his plate.

"Yeah? So?"

"Well...?"

"Fuck 'em!" said Bill, laughing, as pieces of sausage clung to his huge teeth. And of course they both

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started to laugh. Hysterically. They often did when together.

Afterwards they shared a smoke. Newports. "For Edward Hopper," Rich toasted Bill, with a grin.

The duo had also developed a highly sophisticated interest in the Spanish Civil War, with each interpreting events from the Republican and the Fascist sides, both reading Hugh Thomas's soup-to-nuts history of the conflict, Orwell's "Homage to Catalonia", John Cornford's war poetry, Stephen Spender's and Julian Bell's, studying the Lincoln, Jefferson and Washington Brigades that were slaughtered in that conflict, and would cue each other as to which battle they would discuss on any particular day. One day Bill would be Fascist General Mola advancing on the Ebro and Rich would be Durruti the Syndico-Anarchist burning down a church in Zaragoza; the next time they got together Bill would be the Republic's Dolores Ibarutta (la Passionaria) exhorting the masses to "No pasaran!" and Rich would be General Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera, who founded the Falange (Fascists), similarly exhorting the Church and the bourgeoisie to stamp out the "Republic." Both had traveled separately in Spain during the Franco Era...and seen the bullet-holes still shining blood-red on stone walls in the hot sun.

"Fascist firing squads," Rich told Bill when he returned.

"Like they did with Lorca. They shot HIM in the asshole," Bill told Rich when he returned a few months later.

In between these travels, recitations and remembrances, Bill and Rich would feed each other lines from the John Ford film of John Steinbeck's "Grapes of Wrath", with Bill always being Muley to Rich's Tom Joad. "I was born on it. Farmed it. Gonna die on it. And that's what makes it arn," Bill (Muley) would tell Rich (Tom), kneeling down to scrape up a bit of dirt from some parking lot or other where they would meet every couple weeks. One day Rich came home from work and there was a message beeping-red

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on his new phone: "Hello...This is Mrs. Joad...Is my son Tommy there?" said the plaintive high-pitched voice. It was Bill. Both were also adept at voicing Grandpa's displeasure when he refused to go to "California!" Or switching roles when Ma Joad tells Tom at the dance: "Ain't you gonna say goodbye, Tommy?" They both memorized Tom's labor-organizer speech at the end of the film and would sing Casey the Preacher's "Yes, Sir, That's My Savior" in unison as they drove around in Bill's Ford Fiesta. They would end up the recitations either laughing or sobbing. Either/or. Nothing ever in between.

In the end, Bill stayed teaching. Kept trying to kill the Buddha. Saw Rich every week or two, until Rich, one day, disappeared into The Thought.

In between that fateful meeting in Peekskill years before and The Thought, Rich, stocky, hairy, Italian, 50ish like Bill, had held a strange succession of jobs (painting backdrops for department store displays, making artificial trees, working in a bogus soap factory, janitoring, truck driving, shoveling shit on a horse farm, the bowling alley, postal-worker, clerk in a book-store, teaching in a prison, etc.), blew his marriage, and decided that he was just better off alone. Painting. Thinking. Musing. Alone. And when Bill burst in on him constructing his "many Rushmores" he had been toiling in pleasant anonymity for the local paper in the small town he had settled into when his marriage when bust. Cloud, who was now in his thirties and who he saw a couple times a year, had started a family and had become a farmer in the South. He was, like Bill and Rich, relatively content with his life.

So, that's kind of where Bill and Rich were at when Bill decided to join Rich on the cross-country trip to blow up Mount Rushmore...it was as Bill's border-line personality Mom used to say when he would give her a gift for her birthday that he had saved up for all year: "Bill, that's nice, but it's always just The Thought that matters most!"

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## Chapter 3

Bill drives as Rich sits and rides shotgun across America. They watch as the industrial revolution in all its rust and poisoned rivers streams by.

“God, is this shit or what...where are we?” asks Rich, edgy and getting edgier as the hours of grim and grimey Pennsylvania roll by the window of Bill’s Ford Fiesta. “Jesus! What shit!”... Where are we, Bill?”

“Golgotha,” says Bill, smiling at the Biblical reference. He was like Rich, once a participating Catholic. Both having started to unparticipate in their teen years.

For Bill it was a natural progression in his thinking, being raised in southern Illinois where God’s tornados ripped apart several small, poor farming communities every Spring and Summer, and where He then buried them in 30-feet of snow in the Winter months. “Fall was nice,” was all Bill would say about living out on the Great Plains. “That’s when people usually snap and shoot their families...Winter was coming.” For Rich, raised in the non-tornado Eastern corridor, it was a traumatic experience, losing his already shaky devotion when Diane, the girl he was fooling around with when he was 14, was not struck by lightning as she went to receive Holy Communion one Sunday morning. They had gone to confession the night before with her parents, then went up to the park for some dry-humping before he went home and they all went to Mass the next morning. He knew that if they went to the altar that morning they, both he and the frolicsome Diane, would be struck dead. In Catholic-world it is a mortal sin to receive the transmuted body and blood (read: bread and wine) of Jesus if you were in sin. But Diane went anyway. Just gobbled down that host that was offered her by the priest and then sashayed her

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sweet-ass back to the pew with a little smile dancing across her lips. Rich dared not go up to the altar. He didn't want to die. To be struck by lightning. Not there. Burnt like a charcoal briquette as he kneeled in terror at the altar. Rich expected Diane to be struck dead on the spot, but nothing happened. Nothing at all. Diane smiled and winked as Peekskill continued to pulse outside the church doors. So, after this close non-encounter with God's retribution, Rich and Diane continued their Saturday evening confessions and subsequent Saturday night dry-humping, followed by Holy Communion Sunday morning for the next few months, when Diane, out-of-the-blue, announced their relationship over. It was another guy. But Rich knew it was God.

Bill sees a McDonald's on the Pennsylvania Interstate and pulls off and parks the car in a handicap spot.

"Somehow this trip makes me feel handicapped," he tells Rich, as they stand at the counter waiting to be served.

"Can I help you?" says the counter-boy. He is all of 16.

Bill orders two hamburgers, a cheeseburger, a Big Mac with bacon, large fries and a Diet Coke.

"I thought you were still a Buddhist," asks Rich, still edgy. "Aren't they still vegetarians? You know, still have respect for all living things."

"French fries aren't living things."

"Yeah, I know French fries aren't alive, but...isn't the Buddhist philosophy still one of self-denial?"

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“Not for me.”

The counter-girl asks Rich if he wants anything, calling him “sir”.

“Sir!...No one calls me sir, Miss!”

The counter-girl, herself all of 16, is puzzled. “Mister?”

“Mister!”

The girl is getting worried, wondering if she has a sociopathic mass murderer at the counter. She looks over to the counter-boy - “Senor?” she says to Rich, hoping that instead of an insane person she is dealing with a Mexican with a language problem.

“SENOR!”

The counter-girl is becoming alarmed and readies her index finger to press an alarm that will bring the local police, when Rich demures: “It’s Rich, young lady...and me and Bill here are on our way to Mount Rushmore to blow the fucker up...You know it?”

The counter-boy, overhearing asks Rich: “Rushmore? Isn’t that a movie?”

“A movie! What fucking movie?”

The boy smiles nervously at Rich and rushes away to get Bill’s order.

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"It's a national monument, man...a FUCKING NATIONAL MONUMENT!"

The boy hands Bill his food. "I'm sorry, I don't know it."

"Don't know it? The heads of the Presidents carved into the Indian's most sacred mountain?"

"Indians? Here in Pittsburgh," says the boy.

"Naaah, man, in South Dakota...And these heads are carved into the Paha Sapa...the holiest place of the Plains Indians...You know the Sioux?"

"Sue?" and he turns and points to the counter-girl, now hiding behind him. "Pahasapa? No, no one works here with that name, sir, there's no Sue Pahasapa working here."

"How about the Blackfeet?"

"This is an equal opportunity restaurant, sir..."

"Rich, my name is Rich," says Rich.

"This is an equal opportunity restaurant, RICH, and we don't discriminate who can eat here. Blackfeet, Whitefeet, Yellowfeet, or whomever..."

"It's a tribe, man."

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“Tribe, group, ELKS Club, Girl Scouts...we don’t discriminate, sir.”

“Rich.”

“Rich...we don’t discriminate, Rich.”

“Rich?...Why don’t you order something?” says Bill, munching his way through a Big Mac.

“What?...Oh, yeah...Could I get a bottle of water.”

### Chapter 4

As they travel through the bowels of Ohio...

“Listen,” says Bill, pointing to a little homely, forlorn house sitting toad-like by the side of the highway.

“If I’m ever living in a place like that off some God-forsaken highway outside of some desperately horrific town in some frighteningly miserable Midwestern state, please kill me.”

“A promise,” says Rich.

They drive in silence for awhile, taking in the beat-up, down-trodden middle of the country. Finally...

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"I hope we get laid on this trip," says Bill.

"This is bigger than us getting laid, man," responds Rich.

"Not for me...maybe an Indian girl."

"What Indian girl?"

"Someone like Princess Summer-Fall-Winter-Spring," answers Bill, staring absentmindedly through the front windshield as Rich drives.

"From the Howdy Doody Show?"

"Yeah...I had my first hard-on watching her."

"What were you, five? And she wasn't an Indian, Bill, she was an actress."

"She was beautiful. I used to dream about her naked...Do Indian girls give blow-jobs?"

"What?...Blow-jobs? I have no idea."

"They must...I'm sure the Princess would give me a blow-job."

"Bill...she's not a fucking Princess...and she's probably 75 years-old by now."

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"I don't care."

"You don't care that you're being blown by some 75 year-old?"

"Look, man, she's not just SOME 75 year-old...she's Princess Summer-Fall-Winter-Spring!"

"Yeah," says Rich, "how stupid of me."

They continue to ride along in silence...then...

"God," says Rich, shaking his head in disbelief, "how fucking ugly all this is...It wasn't like this when the Indians..."

"Hope not," says Bill. "Otherwise we should get our glass beads back."

They drive in silence.

"Whatta ya say we get off the highway and get on some back roads?" says Bill.

"Why?" counters Rich. "Who do I look like, man, that Least Heat Moon guy?"

"He's an Indian...and they have all the greatest names..."and Bill starts to chuckle to himself and repeat Least Heat's name over and over.

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“What?” says Rich, staring at Bill, his hands off the wheel as he hits 90 and the nose of the car enters Illinois.

“We should rename you,” laughs Bill, “Rich ‘Least Sane’ Carrazzini!”

They both chuckle: Bill’s near to a full-throated laugh; Rich’s closer to a gargled grimace.

“You know, man, I have an old girlfriend in Minneapolis.”

“She an Indian?”

“Don’t think so. Her name was Tina...short for Concertina...”

“Concertina? You’re kidding, right?”

“NO...that was her name, her parents were accordion players...You know, ‘Lady of Spain’ and all that...”

“Great! One of my favorite tunes...Maybe they can come along and entertain us.”

“Ah, she’s probably married...changed her last name...”

“What was it?”

“What”

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“Her last name?”

“Wilson...they changed it from Mastrogiacomantonio.”

“Is that the literal translation? Wilson?”

“Nah...immigration did it.”

“What made you think of her?”

“Mount Rushmore.”

“Why? She look like Thomas Jefferson?”

“Yeah...that’s it, Bill...”

“So, Rich, you think she might want to reacquaint herself with the 55 year-old version of The Mad Greaseball? I know it would sound enticing to most women to reconnect with some old boyfriend from 35 years ago who lives in a one-room apartment, works for a dying newspaper in some little one-horse town and who is on his way to blowing up a national monument with chicken shit...Sounds enticing to me, but especially for a woman who looks like Thomas Jefferson.”

Rich isn’t listening. They ride along in silence, with Rich slipping into what passes for him as reverie.

After a few minutes...

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“She was fucking beautiful, man.”

Bill laughs, a short staccato burst of air. “Aren’t they all?”

Rich is silent. Thinking of Tina. His Concertina.

“Wanna know how we split?”

Bill looks over at Rich and smiles. “Why do I feel you’re going to tell me no matter if I do or don’t.”

“Well...,” and Rich downshifts, “we were living together in the Village, in the City. Cornelia Street. And we were happy as hell, me doing my art thing at the School of Visual Arts and making those fucking artificial trees to pay my way and her working up the block at Met Life. We were supposed to meet for lunch one day, but she didn’t show. She quit her job that morning. Disappeared. Just disappeared. No note. No message. Gone. Nothing for four days...and we had fucked that morning before leaving our place. Everything seemed OK. Then I get this call from Rapid City...”

“Police?”

“No. It was her...Tina. She was frantic. Had been having nightmares about Mount Rushmore...”

“Ah...I see...”

“She told me that she had to go there, that something was driving her, or she felt like she was going to

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go fucking mad.”

“Sounds like most tourists.”

“C’mon, man,” says Rich, annoyed with Bill once again, “I’m baring my fucking soul here...She said that she was being called to it. A voice in her head. It drove her crazy. She couldn’t get it out of her head.”

“Had she just seen ‘North By Northwest’?”

“I don’t think so...”

“Then...”

“I don’t know. She wouldn’t tell me when she got back to the City. But she wrote me a letter breaking it off with me. Permanently. I saw her once after that, but not since...I think she may have been living with another guy.”

“OK, I know this may be hard to deal with, but maybe she was with Cary Grant.”

“Cary Grant?”

“Remember when he was hanging off George Washington’s nose at Rushmore. I always felt he was in a very vulnerable position at the time, and very susceptible to the wiles of a completely crazy woman with a preternatural obsession.”

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“Yeah,” says Rich, annoyed, before he slips back into his reverie of Tina, Concertina Wilson, his young love. “She was incredibly beautiful, man...”

Bill just nods and stares out the windshield.

“Wanna go find her?” says Rich, snapping from his reverie like whiplash.

“Think she’ll blow me?”

The pair drive for awhile in silence, both thinking of Tina. Rich, the Tina he remembers from long ago; Bill, the Tina he wants to know, carnally. Building a hunger, they stop at another McDonald’s. It looks strangely familiar. They go inside and the same counter-boy and counter-girl are waiting for their orders.

“Could I help you gentlemen,” says the counter-boy.

“Sir?” the counter-girl addresses Rich.

“I told you my name before,” he tells her.

“Sir?” says the counter-girl, looking perplexed.

“Don’t call me SIR, I told you before...it’s Rich!”

The counter-boy steps into the fast-rising inexplicable tension. “OK, Rich, would you like a value meal?”

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“Value?” as he stares incredulously at the boy, then the girl, and back again. “Where am I?”

“McDonald’s,” says the counter-boy. “Can I get you something to eat, Rich?...A value meal, perhaps?”

“Value? It’s all a question of what you mean by value?” says Rich, his mind reeling at the possibility of a pair of twins, a female and male double-dip, working in two separate McDonald’s in separate states.

“Unbelievable?” he finally says.

“Value? Unbelievable? What do you mean, sir...er, Rich?” says counter-boy.

“I’ll ask the questions!” he snaps.

“While these two are exorcising their Socratic dialogue, I’ll have two more hamburgers, a couple more cheeseburgers, two more Big Macs, large fries and a Diet coke,” says Bill, smiling at the counter-girl.

“Yes...ah...er...your name?”

“Sir.”

“OK, Sir,” and she walks away from the counter.

“So, what is of value here, man?”

“I’m not sure what it is your asking me, sir...ah, Rich?” says the agitated counter-boy, his fingers ready to press the button under the counter to call for the manager and maybe even the police.

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"It seems pretty clear to me...How about you, Bill?"

"Seems pretty clear to me," shrugs Bill.

"Are you asking if the meals are of value in-of-themselves or if one value-meal is of more value than the other...Rich?" says counter-boy.

"What the fuck are you into, man...Kierkagaard?"

"No, Rich, I'm not into that kind of stuff...I'm a heterosexual."

"I didn't ask you that, man."

"Oh, sorry...Rich...What are you asking then...er, Rich?"

The counter-girl brings Bill his order. "Thank you, Sir...Is this to go?"

"Unfortunately for you, no."

Rich leans across the counter and eye-balls counter-boy. "Don't you realize that the fucking White man stole the Paha Sapa from the Indians, the most sacred place on the planet for them, the center of their universe, and renamed it Mount Rushmore?"

"Sorry, Rich, but I had nothing to do with it...I was working here."

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“And then,” continues Rich, “they carved out the faces of those four jackals on that sacred mountain?”

“Again I’m sorry, Rich...Maybe we can offer you a free value-meal to make up for it...Can you wait a moment and I’ll get the manager?”

Bill is standing next to Rich eating. He taps Rich on the shoulder. “You should at least try the fries.”

### Chapter 5

Bill and Rich travel across the plains of Illinois.

“God, what a fucking wasteland. Empty. Horrible. Deadly...Didn’t you come from somewhere around here?” asks Rich, still driving as Bill watches the flat land disappear into the horizon.

“Just passed it.”

“I feel like George Eliot,” says Rich.

“T.S.,” says Bill, matter-of-factly.

“TS? What? Tough shit?”

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"No...T....S..." says Bill.

"What is that, some kind of Irish code word or something?"

"You said 'Wasteland' and then said George Eliot...so, as a corrective...it was T.S. Eliot."

"What was T.S. Eliot?"

'Who wrote the 'Wasteland'...George Eliot wrote 'Silas Marner'.'

"Who the fuck is Silas Marner?"

"A miser," answers Bill.

"You really have to stop this literary shit, Bill, I'm going to drive off a fucking bridge if you don't...I just want to blow up Mount Rushmore not debate which of the Eliot Brothers wrote which story...CHRIST!"

"Well...they weren't brothers...and one of them was a woman..."

"Which one?"

"George."

"What, he have a sex-change or something?"

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“Yeah...or something.” And they drive along in silence, Bill thinking of his youth spent looking at 30-foot snowdrifts that buried the family house, his Father the doctor becoming rabidly insane, his Mother aloof to the point of invisibility, his brother and sister degenerating into feral creatures. “You know...they say that the reason so many serial killers come from the Midwest, and artists and writers too, is because of the Winters here...they’re so...so...,” and he falls silent. Rich isn’t really listening anyway, he’s thinking of a man having his genitals severed. Poor George Eliot, he thinks, How fucked up must he be to do that? Bill breaks their reveries. “You know any actual Indians? Other than Tina?”

“I met Russell Means once.”

“The AIM guy?”

“Yeah, I interviewed him 20 years ago.”

“For that little asshole paper you work for?”

“Yeah, one and the same.”

“What was he like?”

“Hated White people.”

“You, too?”

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

“Do I hate White people?”

“No...did he hate you, too?”

“Of course...listen.” And Rich reaches into a bag and rustles around for a tape. He takes it out and pops it into the portable player under the dashboard. They listen as Russell Means screams at Rich, threatening to cut off the interview if he persists in asking him about his talk the night before at Skidmore College. “I TOLD YOU ABOUT ALL THAT LAST NIGHT AT THE LECTURE, MAN. IF YOU’RE TOO FUCKING LAZY TO NOT HAVE MADE NOTES ON THAT, THEN IT IS JUST TOO FUCKING BAD! I’M NOT HERE FOR SOME WHITE MAN TO MAKE MONEY OFF OF!”

“It went downhill from there,” Rich tells Bill, and shuts off the tape.

“Wasn’t he Chingatchcook in...”

“Yeah,” answers Rich, “he killed Magua...I liked Magua...He wanted to butcher every White person, except Madeline Stowe.”

“Madeline Stowe?...Why would anyone want to butcher her?...And wasn’t Magua that actor, the one with the pock-marked face?”

“Yeah...Wes Studey...used to be a football player.”

“I thought that was Jay Silvertoes?”

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

“Silverheels...and he was Tonto.”

“Oh, yeah,” smiles Bill, “and the nice Indian in ‘Dances With Wolves’?”

“Graham Greene?”

“The Third Man?”

“The Indian.”

“Oh,” says Bill, losing interest as they enter Minnesota. “I sure hope we get laid on this trip...Maybe in Minneapolis.”

They drive past the Minneapolis exit.

As they do Bill waves to it. “Goodbye Rich’s old girlfriend that ditched him at Mount Rushmore for Cary Grant!”

“I’m sure she’s married and has kids,” says Rich.

“With Cary Grant,” says Bill, and then turns to Rich. “Is that what this is all about, man, revenge for Cary Grant stealing your girl? Making off with her as you slaved away in those pathetic jobs. Knowing that he probably took her back to Hollywood, did lots of fucking, a blow-job here-and-there, had a few kids that look like movie stars, all living in some 35-room mansion in Beverly Hills, driving a Jag back-and-forth to the hair stylist, ooodles of money...and you think she might have given all that up and is living back in

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

Minneapolis and waiting for you to call?"

"Yeah...probably not," says Rich.

### Chapter 6

They reach the Dakotas and travel the straightest highway known to humankind. It mesmerizes Bill, at the wheel, while Rich, riding alongside, just stares out the windshield.

"God," says Rich, "this is the ugliest fucking place in the world. The Indians liked this place?"

"Must have," says Bill, "they fought awfully hard to keep it."

"Why, do you think they should have shared it with fucking Whitey?"

"Rich...," says Bill.

Looking over at Bill. "What?"

"Look into the side mirror." He looks.

"Seeing anything in particular?"

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

“No...Why?”

“You’re a White guy!”

“Only on the surface, man, underneath, in my soul, I’m a full-blooded Sioux warrior.”

“They know that?”

“Who?”

“The Sioux.”

“How the fuck do I know, man, they’re fucking Indians for God’s sake. Who knows what they know? They just hang around banging tom-tom’s all day, chanting, praying for rain and all that shit. And they have that weird way of talking with their hands. Send messages to each other with fucking smoke and blankets. Stick needles in their tits and swing from poles...Man, if they had just a bit of the knowledge we have now they wouldn’t need me and you to blow up Mount Rushmore for them...There probably wouldn’t even be a Rushmore if they had some of the knowledge we have now...”

Bill is puzzled. “What knowledge are you referring to?”

“Advanced technology,” says Rich. “You know, like we have now.”

“They had chickens.”

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

“Yeah, but no way to make the chicken shit into anything useful...”

“No surprise there,” grins Bill.

They see another McDonald’s up the highway and pull in. When they go up to the counter they notice that it is the same counter-boy and counter-girl that were in the previous McDonald’s outside of Pittsburgh and in Illinois.

“This is weird,” says Rich, as he studies both of them.

“They must move them around,” says Bill.

“Maybe they’re doppelgangers,” says Rich.

“Sad if they are,” says Bill. “Condemned for eternity to a McDonald’s somewhere in time.”

“Kind of like ‘Invasion of the Body Snatchers,’” says Rich.

“Think they’re pod-people?” says Bill.

“Let’s say something funny to them and see if they laugh. Remember, pod-people have no emotions.”

“Like my Mother,” says Bill. And they move up to the counter.

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

"Hi...Can I help you?" asks counter-girl.

Rich is laughing. "Yeah...I put a bomb in the bathroom just now and it's going to blow up in two minutes."

"What, sir?" asks counter-boy, standing by counter-girl's side.

"A BOMB!...There's a bomb in the bathroom..."

Counter-boy calmly reaches for the ubiquitous button under the counter that calls the manager and the police. Rich reaches across the counter and stops him from pressing it. "Only kidding, man...Only kidding ...and it's Rich, not sir," and looks over at Bill, who is ogling the lunch menu. "See, Bill, no sense of humor at all...They're fucking pod-people!"

Bill asks the counter girl if Rushmore isn't nearby.

"Rushmore?" she giggles, "that's a movie!"

Bill smiles at her and then at Rich. "She's definitely not a pod-person."

"How about him?" says Rich, still holding the counter- boy's hand to stop him from pushing the button under the counter. "He seems like one...And her, maybe she just hasn't fallen asleep yet. You know the person becomes a pod-person when..."

"I know how someone becomes a pod-person...," and Bill asks the girl to get him six

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

cheeseburgers to go, a large order of fries and a diet coke, as Rich releases counter-boy's hand.

"You wanted to know about Mount Rushmore?" says counter-boy to Bill.

"Yeah, is it near here?"

"It's a few hundred miles across the Badlands."

Rich hears the magic name. "BADLANDS?!...That was Martin Sheen and Sissy Spacek!"

"Sorry, sir, what did you want order?" asks counter-boy.

"It's Rich."

"What's Rich?"

"His name," says Bill.

"And what does he...er, Rich...want to order?"

"I don't want anything...I just said Martin Sheen and Sissy Spacek were in 'Badlands'," says Rich.

"I'm not familiar with them...Do they have a souvenir stand there, sir?"

"Rich...and no, they don't have a souvenir stand there, man."

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

"I'm so sorry...ah, Rich...but I only moved here recently. But would you like something else?"

"He'll have a bottled water," says Bill.

### Chapter 7

Bill and Rich drive through the Badlands. For hours. The temperature is over 100-degrees and the ancient stones are melting in the sun.

"God, this is the worst place on Earth...Do you think they have a hardware store around here?" says Rich.

"Probably...every place has a hardware store."

"Because we need supplies..."

"Yeah," says Bill, "and maybe there's another Body Snatchers McDonald's nearby."

"A theme restaurant?"

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

“Go in and come out a pod-person.”

“It would be difficult for us to become pod-people, but more so for me than you,” says Rich.

“How so?” says Bill.

“I’m Italian.”

“How true...How true...”

In the sweltering dusty haze that hovers over the road through the Badlands, Bill spots a shimmering outpost of civilization. “Look!” and he points to what looks like a store. A hardware store.

“I knew there’d be one around here somewhere,” says Rich, as they drive into the parking lot of Mohammed’s Jihad Hardware Oasis.

“Looks like the right place,” says Bill.

Behind the counter is Mohammed, a 40-ish man of swarthy complexion and dark beard. He wears a black jalaba and turban, with a scimitar tucked into a golden sash around his waist. “Can I be of zom zervice to you gentleman?” he says, with a thick accent.

“Yeah,” says Rich, “we’re looking for some stuff to make a bomb.”

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

“A bomb? A bomb you zay?”

“Yeah,” says Rich, “we’re headed to Mount Rushmore to blow it up.”

Mohammed starts to giggle and asks Rich, all wide-eyed and childlike, “You’re going to blow up Mount Rushmore?”

“Yeah,” says Rich.

“Why?” says Mohammed.

“Why Mount Rushmore?” says Rich.

“Yes, that izzz what I asked,” says Mohammed.

“Do you know what ‘s on Mount Rushmore?”

“Of course,” says Mohammed, “four great American prezzzidents.”

“Great?!” says Rich, looking over at Bill and then back at Mohammed.

“Of courzzzze. Great men. Four great men!”

Rich can barely get out his response. “Great!...” he sputters, “THEY’RE FUCKING SWINE!”

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

“Zwine? Like pigzzzz? With cloven hoofzzzz? No, no, no, they are men, great men,” says Mohammed.

“They suck!” says Rich.

“No, no, zir...they don’t zuck. They are great men, zir!”

“Do you know what those cock-suckers have done, Mohammed...You are Mohammed, right?”

“Yes, zir, and if they have unlawfully eaten a few roosterzzzz...what iz the harm?”

“Rich.”

“Pardon?” says Mohammed.

“It’s Rich.”

“What iz Rich?”

Bill points to Rich. “His name.”

Mohammed smiles and begins laughing. “Oh...that izzzzz a good name...a very good name.”

“I guess he’s not a pod-person,” Bill tells Rich.

“You think Thomas Jefferson was a great man, do you Mohammed?” asks Rich.

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

"I don't know, Mr. Rich...wazzzzn't he? His fazzze is up there on the mountain."

"That's my point, Mohammed."

"What izzz your point, Mr. Rich?"

"That you don't know a fucking thing about him, but he must be a great man if he's up there on that motherfucking mountain! Right, Mohammed? Did you know that the fucker owned slaves, Mohammed?"

"Mr. Rich, could you watch your language...pleazzze...the other customerzzzz."

Bill and Rich both look around at the empty store.

"He owned slaves, Mohammed. Black people. He owned Black human beings."

"Yezzzz, Mr. Rich, that waz a very bad thing to do."

"Fuckin' eh it was! And he sold them just before he died. Didn't give them their freedom...Wanna know why, Mohammed?"

"Wazn't he...you know...in carnal relationzzzz with them, Mr. Rich?"

"That wasn't why, Mohammed. You know why, Mohammed? Wanna know why?"

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

“I think Mohammed wants to know why, Rich,” says Bill, looking bored.

“Yez, yez, of course...Pleazzzzze tell me, Mr. Rich.”

“To save his fucking farm. His mansion. The plantation. To save fucking Monticello...He needed the money he got from selling those people to keep his land!”

Bill leans over to Mohammed, who stands looking at Rich with a mixture of wonder and incredulity. “Got that, Mohammed?”

“Yez, yez...Got it, Mr. Rich.”

Rich, warming up to his ‘I Hate Thomas Jefferson’ diatribe, flails around the hardware store. “I went there not long ago – to Monticello – just to hear what those racists would say about him, and this docent...”

“Pardon, Mr. Rich...what izzzz this ‘do-zen’?”

“Guide,” Bill tells him, as Rich sputters and fumes to the point of near apoplexy.

“Yesssss...and the fucking flunky, this guide told all the tourists – all White I may add – that the day Thomas Jefferson sold his slaves...SOLD THEM!...he watched from his huge picture window as the slaves were sold off and had tears in his eyes...‘It was Mr. Jefferson’s saddest hour’, said the guide... HIS SADDEST FUCKING HOUR!”

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

“Yez, that izzzz zad, Mr. Rich.”

“SAD! It’s fucking despicable, Mohammed!”

“I think Mohammed understands the dispicableness of it,” Bill tells Rich, who stares wild-eyed at Mohammed across the counter, his head in full-twitch mode.

“Yez, yez, Mr. Rich, he was dezzzzpicable. A real zhit. No fucking good. He zhould have been decapitated and buried upzzzide down in a pile of camel dung as 52 virginz pizzzzed on his headlezzzz body...But, other than that, what do you need for thizzzz bomb?”

Rich has slowly stopped twitching. “Oh, yeah...yeah...I thought you might know.”

Mohammed is shocked. “Me? Why me?”

Bill leans over to Rich. “I thought you knew how to build one of these things...the Fleetwood Mac guy and all that...”

“I read the manual,” says Rich.

“Manual? What manual?”

“The one I bought at Wal-Mart,” says Rich.

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

“Wal-Mart sells manuals to build bombs?”

“Oh, they zell everything there, zir,” says Mohammed to Bill. He is smiling and gleeful now that Rich seems to have calmed down. “Everything. Grozzzeriez, explosivezz, toilet paper, woman’z itemz...next they’ll be zelling zlavezzzz...Black onezzzzzz! Like Mr. Jefferzzzzon did!”

Bill and Rich stare at Mohammed – Bill with an amused glint in his eye; Rich trying to contain his nascent fury. “Look Mohammed,” Rich finally asks, swallowing his bile, “can you advise us on the best bomb materials to blow up Mount Rushmore?”

“Of course. Let me get Fatima, my wife, zhe is the knowledgable one in zzese matterzzz...FATIMA!...”

And Fatima appears from behind a bead-curtain at the back of the store, she is covered head-to-toe in a black robe and veil, with two eye holes to see through, her hands covered in spirals and curli-cues of red henna. Bill tells Rich she looks like the woman who set the bomb in the French milk bar in the “Battle of Algiers”. Outside of The Grapes of Wrath, North By Northwest and The Third Man by Graham Greene – “Not the Indian” - it is his favorite movie. So Bill takes this as a good sign. Rich, who hasn’t seen the movie, asks Bill how could she look like anyone, covered from top-to-bottom in a “bathrobe, with a veil?”

“Her ass,” says Bill, smiling at Fatima’s bottom as she quietly talks with her husband a few feet away. “I can tell. I can always tell. Asses don’t lie, Rich.”

At that, Mohammed tells Bill and Rich that they need some ammonium nitrate, a detonating device, a timer...”and 100 poundzzzzz of fertilizer.”

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

Rich looks over at Bill. "Fertilizer!"

"I guess you were right," shrugs Bill. "Chicken shit here we come."

"Would an alarm clock work as a timer?" Rich asks Mohammed.

"Yezzzzz, that would be good. We zell them here."

"And a detonator?"

"You can uzzzze fireworkz...I think M-80'z are the bezzzt...We have zem alzo."

"And the fertilizer?"

"Zat, I'm zorry to zzzzay, we don't have...You'll have to go to the feed ztore for zat."

"Close by," asks Bill.

"Just a few miles down the highway. At the end of the Badlandzzzz."

"Why is called that?" asks Rich.

"Pardon?" says Mohammed.

"The Badlands...Why is it called that?" asks Rich again.

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

Mohammed starts to laugh. Hard. He begins to choke he is laughing so hard. Finally he squeezes the words out: “Mr. Rich, have you looked at zis fucking place?!”

Rich laughs with Mohammed, and like Mohammed, he can barely get his words out: “Yeah! (yuk-yuk-yuk)...It is fucking horrible! (yuk-yuk-yuk)...A hell-hole that I wouldn’t wish on my worst enemy! (yuk-yuk-yuk then followed by one slow yuk)...So why do you live here?”

“It remindz me of home,” smiles Mohammed.

### Chapter 8

Bill and Rich drive to the end of the highway and find Mohammed’s Jihad Feed Store Oasis at the intersection of the Badlands and the Interstate. It is decorous, like Mohammed’s Hardware, with two towering minarets and is made of adobe, painted on the exterior with geometric patterns.

Bill looks over at Rich before they leave the car. “A brother?”

Bill and Rich enter and go to the counter. And there stands the same Mohammed as in the hardware store.

“How could he do that?” Rich whispers to Bill. “We just left him up the road. This isn’t more pod-people

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shit, is it?"

"Teleportation," says Bill quietly. "I don't think Arabs know about 'Invasion of the Body Snatchers'."

"What the fuck is that?" says Rich, about 'teleportation', then turns to the man – "Mohammed?" – behind the counter.

"Good morning," says this Mohammed, exhibiting no accent whatsoever. "Can I help you?"

"Aren't you?...Didn't you?" Rich sputters to this Mohammed. "Is he...?" he asks Bill, who stands beside him smiling like the cheshire cat. "He got rid of his accent."

"They all look alike...or maybe he went to Berlitz in between our leaving there and coming here," says Bill, his grin beginning to look moronic to Rich, who is befuddled by everything, including this, the apparently double Mohammeds.

"I thought that was Blacks and Orientals who looked alike? And Arabs have never been to Berlitz. How would they get there, Bill? On a fucking camel?"

"Yeah...that's right," says Bill. "My mistake."

"So, gentleman?" asks Mohammed.

After getting past their consternation at the two Mohammeds they exit the store with a 100-gallon drum of liquid fertilizer. They try to get it into the trunk of the car, but it won't fit. Rich suggests that

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

they tie the drum of fertilizer to the roof of the car.

“With a sign that says we have explosives attached to it?” says Bill.

“Fertilizer, man...fertilizer!”

“Yeah, I forgot,” as Bill helps Rich get the drum up onto the roof. “We can tell people we’re gonna farm.”

They set the drum precariously on the roof of the Fiesta. It makes an alarming bulge over the driver seat of the car.

“I’ll go inside and get some rope,” says Rich, as Bill holds the drum steady. Rich returns with a few bungee cords and the two proceed to strap the drum of fertilizer to the roof of the car. “All set to go,” says Rich, as they step back to admire their ingenuity.

“Maybe we should put an ‘I’m Going to Blow Up Mount Rushmore’ sticker on it,” says Bill.

“You got one?” laughs Rich, becoming deliriously happy, giddy almost, at the prospect in front of him. Well, THEM...but it is Rich’s dream, his Thought, that they have come this far...“So far, we’ve come so far,” he repeats, imitating Gandhi preparing for the Salt March that led to India’s liberation. Rich has no such grand designs. In fact he has no designs at all except his personal repulsion at the four presidents – “jackals” to him - who sit not-so-benignly passing judgement on those far below...most of them Indians. Not the Gandhi Indians...Rich doesn’t know many of them. Only one really. A girl he met in high school. She was an exchange student from somewhere in India. “It was hot there,” she told him. Rich tried to woo her, in a way – he was very young – but she was cosmopolitan, which shocked Rich, for he thought

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

that all Indians from India lived in mud-huts and in terrible squalor. She thought he was nice, but told him he was “limited...mentally”. Rich didn’t understand what she meant. She went back to India and Rich never saw or heard from her again. He got her address from the family she had lived with and sent her a pair of nylons and some chocolate bars, “I saw it in a World War II movie,” he said, but figured the chocolate had melted onto the nylons and ruined them. “She said it was hot there,” he remembered. And that was that.

Bill and Rich hop into the car with the 100-gallon drum of fertilizer strapped to the roof and take off for Rushmore. And on the way up the winding mountain road...

“I always wondered why those things are called bungee cords,” says Rich.

“Probably named after the guy who invented them,” says Bill.

“BUNGEE!...That’s a fucking stupid name. And it’s just a big fucking rubber-band, man! How can somebody invent a big rubber band?”

“It’s America...People jump off bridges with them tied to their ankles.”

“Yeah...What the fuck is that all about?”

“It’s America...free country, right?”

“Going over Niagara Falls in a barrel?”

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“America.”

“Flag-pole sitting?”

“America.”

Squeezing 50 morons into a phone booth?”

“America.”

“Carving the heads of four fucking mass-murderers into a sacred mountain?”

“Yup...America.”

“I wonder if she ever got the nylons and the chocolate bars?” Rich mutters to himself, as he stares through the side-window, suddenly thinking of his past, and her.

“If who got nylons and chocolates?” asks Bill, looking over at Rich.

“An Indian girl.”

“Tina! You sent her nylons and chocolate?...I knew it! You ARE planning on meeting her out here, aren't you?...Aren't you?”

But Rich doesn't answer Bill, instead thinking about the one time that he and Kamala went out on a

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

date. It didn't go well. He wanted to impress her; she just wanted to have sex. And since he had little to no experience in this regard, he could barely impress her, this worldly young Indian girl. So he made up amorous adventures for himself, but she knew, from her real amorous adventures, that he was just making things up. She was amused, but in the end, became frustrated with Rich, and his incessant talk of sex with with Jane and Jean and Joan and Jill and Jessie and Jo and Jenny and Jasmine, and then Barbara and Billie and Babs and Bertie and Beth and Betty and Bette, and then Angie and Annie and Ann and Anna and Artis and Artemesia and Andi again, and...on and on...and on.

"Jesus...was I a fucking asshole or what?" Rich says to himself, thinking of Kamala playing with his willie through his chinos. He thinks he had an erection..."What the fuck was I waiting for?" he says, again under his breath..."Was I afraid?"

"What?' asks Bill, overhearing Rich's mumurs. "Waiting for what? Afraid of what?"

They pass a young Indian man hitch-hiking on the side of the road. Bill stops and waves to the young Indian, who walks up to the car.

"Where you headin', Chief?" asks Rich through the open passenger window.

"Chief?"

"Great Sioux warrior?"

The young Indian starts laughing..."Warrior?"

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

“Whatever, man, where you headed?”

“Up to Rushmore.”

“Rushmore! Why you goin’ up there?”

“I work there.”

“YOU!...You work at that fucking travesty?”

“Yeah, it’s pretty fucking stupid, isn’t it?”

“More than that...right Bill?”

“Yeah...sure...” says Bill.

“I mean, how the fuck can you work there?”

“Need the job, man...I need the job.”

“But the history of that fucking place.”

“I need the job.”

“But it’s the Paha Sapa.”

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

The young Indian laughs, but is starting to get annoyed. "I need the job, man."

"Rich...he needs the job," says Bill.

"And besides," laughs the young Indian, with a certain degree of sarcasm, "what do a couple of Pale Faces know about it?"

Rich is indignant. "I ain't no fucking Pala Face, Tonto, I'm Italian!"

"Ooooooooh...sorry about that man," says the young Indian, laughing, "but you guys all look alike to us."

Bill and Rich are amused by this young Indian and tell him to hop in. They ride for awhile in silence.

"You really goin' up to Rushmore?" asks the young Indian.

"Yeah." asks Rich.

The young Indian checks out Bill, then Rich, and smiles. "Touristas? You guys don't look like regular touristas."

This amuses Bill. "Oh, yeah...What does a regular tourist...tourista...look like out here?"

"You know...bermuda shorts, Hawaiian shirt, baseball cap, American flag-pin, usually carting a couple obnoxious kids that want to see us, THEIR Indians, do some kind of war-whoop, or speak to them in

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Indian-talk..."

"What's Indian talk, man," asks Rich.

"C'mon, man, you've seen the movies...'How, little brother. Your heart is true. No speak with forked tongue...' and all that shit...Lone Ranger and Tonto stuff...set us back 100 years..."

"Nah," says Rich, "we're not like that. We're not tourists...we're gonna blow the fucker up!...Didn't you notice the drum of fertilizer tied to our roof?"

The young Indian laughs, but is puzzled by Rich's off-the-cuff intensity and Bill's laissez-faire non-involved passivity. "Smelled it...But I thought you were just a couple of White assholes who were gonna try and farm out here...it's been tried before."

"See...farmers," says Bill, with a big smile. "Farmers."

They ride for awhile in silence...

"Blow it up?" says the Young Indian under his breath, then to Bill and Rich..."Blow up Mount Rushmore? What the fuck you want to do that for?"

"For you," says Rich, smiling and patting the young Indian on the arm.

"For me?...I work there."

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“Don’t worry, man, we won’t do it when you’re there, and then you’ll qualify for unemployment.”

“Unemployment? This is the first fuckin’ job I’ve had in two years.”

“Don’t worry,” says Rich, “you’ll get it.”

The young Indian thinks within the car’s silence, looks over at Bill, who drives along placidly, then to Rich, who is smiling to himself as he stares through the windshield. “Hey...,” and he points to a dirt road snaking away from the highway, “why don’t you turn off here?”

“Why?” asks Rich.

“There’s somebody I want you to meet,” says the young Indian.

Bill turns the little Fiesta off the main road to Rushmore and takes the dirt track heading down into a little valley. The drum of fertilizer bounces and booms on the roof, its impressionistic dent caving closer and closer to his head. “You think the fertilizer will hold up there?” he asks Rich, gesturing to the roof of the car.

“Got to. Bungee. America...right, Bill?” answers Rich, laughing.

“Yeah, I forgot.”

They come to a dead end and there is a beat-up old trailer surrounded by old, rusted cars, refrigerators, washing machines, stoves and other detritus from the machine age.

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

"This it?" asks Bill.

"Yeah," says the young Indian, "honk the horn, he's probably watchin' TV."

Bill honks the horn. It echoes through the pine-covered valley.

"TV? At this time of day?" asks Rich.

"Yeah, he likes the soaps."

"Who likes the soaps?" asks Bill.

"My Grandfather."

And an old Indian man comes to the door. Dressed in nothing but jeans and a T-shirt, barefoot, with long braided white hair, he looks to Bill and Rich like Chief Dan George from "Little Big Man", his face a cross-country map of folds and creases. The TV, partially visible behind him, blasts "The Days of Our Lives" through the door of the broken-down trailer.

"Grandfather, I brought you some visitors."

The old Indian nods and walks over to the Fiesta. "What's this?" he says, pointing to the drum of fertilizer on the roof.

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

"Fertilizer," says the young Indian.

The old Indian looks amused. "What are they gonna blow something up?"

Bill and Rich look at each other and smile.

"Yes, Grandfather...Mount Rushmore."

The old Indian smiles and waves Bill and Rich out of the car and welcomes them into his sweltering trailer, points to a couple of busted chairs for them to sit on and offers them a drink. "Fire-water?" They both decline. As the old Indian sips from a tumbler of whiskey he points at the loud, blaring TV. "It's stupid."

Bill and Rich nod in agreement.

"Watch just to see what White people are up to," says the old Indian, smiling at Bill and Rich.

"They want to blow up Mount Rushmore, Grandfather," says the young Indian.

"It's too late."

"Why, sir?" asks Rich.

"Where were you 100 years ago? Now it's like TV. No one cares, it's just there."

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

"We do...right, Bill?" says Rich, as Bill, bathed in sweat, nods to the old Indian and mops his brow.

"Why?" asks the old Indian.

"Because it is the Paha Sapa," answers Rich.

"The Paha Sapa?!...What do you know of that place?"

"I know it was the center of the Sioux universe."

"Still is," says the old Indian, staring at Rich as if at a rare species of animal.

"And those four heads are an insult to all Indians."

"They're meaningless."

"But we want to blow them up."

"Why, are you a Sioux?"

"No, not an Indian, or Sioux, by birth, but an Indian of the spirit," says Rich, with a certain uncomfortable bravado.

"You don't say?" says the old Indian.

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

"I...We...believe in what you believe in."

"Leave me out of this, I'm just along for the ride," adds Bill, his 300-pound girth suffering in the heat.

"It's like a fucking toaster oven in here...Can we go outside?" And Bill goes over to the door and stands facing the slight breeze that wafts through.

"Do you?" says the old Indian to Rich.

"Yes...Of course...I believe in what you do."

"And what is it I believe in?"

"That that mountain is the heart of the Sioux Nation and it was stolen by the White man, who then, to rub the Sioux noses into the dirt after destroying their culture, built a monument to the White man that looks down upon not only the Sioux, but any of us who care about the Sioux and their way of life."

There is silence. Rich stares hopefully at the Old Indian. Bill stands in the doorway catching a breeze, as the old Indian says to his Grandson in Lakota: "I think your friend here needs to get laid."

"They're both insane," says the young Indian, answering his Grandfather in their ancient tongue, as Bill and Rich look on. "The big one reminds of that character from that Steinbeck book."

"Yes, I see what you mean," says the old Indian in Lakota, "the one who likes rabbits...Do you think we should kill them?"

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

“We can’t do that, Grandfather,” answers his Grandson in Lakota, “as stupid as they look they probably have some White women living with them and who, stupidly, will look for them.”

“Ah, White women!” says the old Indian in Lakota. “I had one of them once!”

“Really,” asks the young Indian in Lakota, “when Grandfather?”

“Long ago, before I mated with your Grandmother,” the old Indian answers in Lakota. “Yes...Yes...she wasn’t very good. Didn’t want me to mount her, instead wanted to...what is that phrase?”

“What phrase, Grandfather?” asks his Grandson in Lakota.

“The English phrase for when a woman puts a man’s erect penis into her mouth and sucks it like a peace pipe?” says the Old Indian in Lakota.

“Oh...a blow-job,” says the young Indian, returning to speak in English.

Bill, by the door, hears the magic words and turns to Rich. “BLOW-JOB! What about a blow-job?...I knew it. These Indian women like to give blow-jobs. Just like the Princess.”

“Blow-job?” Rich asks the young Indian.

“Grandfather was just reminiscing about a woman he knew many years ago.”

“I guess you were right,” Rich says to Bill.

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

“Ask your Grandfather if she’s still around,” says Bill to the young Indian.

### Chapter 9

After leaving the young Indian with his Grandfather, Bill and Rich detour through the Pine Ridge Reservation. Realizing that their attempt to blow-up Mount Rushmore could be misinterpreted as a twisted, paranoid White response to real-or-imagined personal slights that each has incurred through the first 50-or-so years of life...they now knew that they needed Indian allies. Especially after talking with the old Indian.

“Wanna go find Russell Means?” asks Rich.

“I thought he hated you,” says Bill.

“He did.”

“Thought you were a White piece of shit.”

“That’s what he told me.”

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

“And that if he ever saw you again he’d crush your balls with a stone tomahawk.”

“Yeah, he did say that.”

“So,” says Bill, “where do we find Russ?”

They drive through the reservation. Burned out and rusting cars are everywhere.

“Something tells me, oh kemo-sabi, that your Indians aren’t into technology,” says Bill.

“Can you blame them?”

Bill shakes his head no. “I’m hungry.” And he spots something through the road-dust that swirls across their front windshield like dry fog. “Can it be?...”

“You think?” says Rich, marveling at the tall golden arches standing above the dust and dirt like the gates of heaven.

“Let’s find out,” says Bill, gleefully, as they drive into the parking lot of the Pine Ridge McDonald’s.

Bill and Rich walk up to the counter and the same boy and girl are there again, only this time wearing war bonnets.

“Are you two real Indians?” asks Bill.

“Of course not,” giggles the counter-boy, “we’re Presbyterians.”

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

Bill and Rich look at each other with sighs of relief.

“Can we help you?” asks the counter-girl.

“I’m looking for a Russell Means,” Rich tells her.

“And I’ll have four cheeseburgers, two large fries, two apple pies and a diet coke,” says Bill.

“So that’s four cheeseburgers, two large fries, two apple pies and a diet coke for you,” as she nods to Bill. “And a Russell Means Special for you,” and she nods to Rich.

“A Russell Means Special? What the fuck is a Russell Means Special?”

The counter-boy comes over to Rich and in a low voice asks him to control his language. “This is an Indian Reservation, sir...Let’s show some respect.”

“IT’S RICH! YOU KNOW IT’S RICH!...YOU FUCKING POD!”

“Please, sir,” whispers counter-boy, “please...”

IT’S RICH!!!...YOU FUCKING DOPPELGANGER! FUCKING CLONE OF AN ASS-HAIR!...IT’S RICH! AND YOU GOD-DAMN WELL KNOW IT!!!

“If you don’t control your language, sir...er, Rich... I will have to call the manager!” says counter-boy,

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

with more urgency.

“Who’s that, Red Cloud?!” interjects Bill, chuckling to himself.

“Yes, as a matter of fact it is,” says counter-boy.

“GOOD GOD, BILL,” screams Rich, “I’M GOING TO EVISCORATE THE LITTLE BASTARD!”

“Hold on, man,” as Bill grabs Rich and asks counter-boy, “You’re telling me your manager’s name is Red Cloud?”

“Yes...we all have Indian names.”

“BILL...LET ME KILL THE LITTLE TURD! SCALP HIM!” And Rich grabs a plastic knife from a tray and tries to lunge across the counter.

“You all have Indian names?” Bill asks counter-boy as he struggles to hold back Rich from leaping across the counter.

Counter-boy is terrified of Rich and steps back further from the counter. “Of course.” As he answers, counter-girl brings Bill’s order.

“And yours is?” he asks counter-boy as he holds Rich with one hand and takes his order from counter-girl with the other.

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

“Thunder-Thud,” giggles counter-boy.

“CHIEF...Thunder-Thud?” asks Bill, nearly beside himself with glee. He tries to calm Rich, who is swinging the plastic knife around recklessly...“From Howdy Doody!” And he turns to the counter-girl. “Oh my GOD!...If he’s Chief Thunder-Thud then you must be...” and he crosses the fingers on the hand he has wrapped around Rich’s mid-section,

“Princess Summer-Fall-Winter-spring,” she says, smiling with trepidation.

“MY GOD!” and Bill releases Rich from his grasp, who then falls against the counter, exhausted. Bill is beaming. His heart aflutter. His hands atwitter. His face flush...“I’ve found you! My God, I’ve found you!”

A short-time later outside the Pine Ridge McDonald’s, Bill and Rich sit in the car. Bill eyes the front door to the fast-food joint and eats ravenously while Rich stares at him.

“What the fuck is wrong with you?” Rich asks as he watches Bill tearing through his cheeseburgers.

“What?” answers Bill, his mouth full of cheeseburger.

‘What? What?...You’ve been like eating 10 meals a day this whole trip.”

“So?”

“So?...You to have prepare yourself for the job at hand, Bill.”

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

"I am," is Bill's muffled answer through yet another cheeseburger.

"You are? You're getting ready to blow up Rushmore by eating like 50 cheeseburgers a day?"

"Hamburgers, too...Fries...Big Macs...An occasional chicken nugget or two..." as he keeps eating.

Rich stares at Bill for a long time. "What the fuck, Bill? Why did we come here, anyway?"

"I know what you're here for, but I'm in it for the sex," says Bill, just beginning to see to the end of his cheeseburgers.

"SEX! What sex?"

"With..." and Bill nods toward the McDonald's, "the Princess."

"Princess?! Bill, she's not a fucking Princess. She's a fucking teenage Presbyterian dressed in a fucking war bonnet!"

"She's a Princess to me."

"Anything that walks is a Princess to you."

"Not true!...I've been...you know..."

"You've been what?"

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

“Nothing.”

“What?”

“Nothing...nothing at all,” and Bill finishes the last of the cheeseburgers and fries and gurgles the last few dregs of Diet Coke.

“Chief Thunder-Thud told me that Russell Means has a ranch over near Porcupine,” Rich tells Bill.

“You take the car and go see him.”

Rich can't take his eyes off Bill. Watching him eat and watching him smiling to himself. He takes the keys to the Fiesta from Bill. “What the fuck is goin' on, Bill?”

“He's your friend.”

“And while I'm getting scalped what are you gonna be doing?”

“I'll be waiting here...over at that table.”

As Rich drives away for his hoped-for pow-wow with Russell Means, Bill sits at the picnic table outside the Pine Ridge McDonald's, his Princess Summer-Fall-Winter-Spring – the great love of his youth – inside serving up Big Macs and fries, and begins to day-dream...

Bill is sitting by a river. The Greasy-Grass. He is wearing a loin-cloth made of deer-skin, a chest-plate of

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deer-bones, his big belly protruding from under it. On his feet are moccasins made of deer-hide. He has eagle feathers in his hair. He is an Indian. A Sioux warrior. And he is waiting for his Princess. She glides across the meadow near the river and comes upon Bill sitting and meditating, his legs crossed in a lotus position. She sits down next to him as he chants. She looks at him as an Indian maiden would a great warrior, especially now that he has brought his tribe here to the Greasy Grass for the great meeting of the tribes. There are more than three-thousand Lakota and Cheyenne braves here at this place and she has chosen Bill – Big Red Man he is called by others – to sit with. They talk, but the words are muffled. Buffaloes, rabbits, owls and eagles roam about, smiling and waving to Bill and the Princess. They are in love and the scene is filled with lush colors: the grass too green; the water too clear; the sky too blue; the clouds too white, as Bill and the Princess stand, hold hands and walk to the water's edge. Bill looks into the water and in its clarity he sees himself as a young man, his hair in long red braids, beardless, chiclet teeth gleaming in the too golden sun. The Princess is tall, slender, her raven-black hair parted in the middle, her McDonald's head-band holding it in place. They are in love and Bill takes the Princess into his arms and kisses her softly. Bill hears music in the distance, coming from the Indian camp. It is Louie Armstrong singing "It's A Wonderful World" - What is he doing here? he thinks, as he smiles at his Princess. All is perfect and he is in love. "Everything in its place," he says to himself, as the animals prance around them and he and the Princess exchange wedding vows. "As long as the grass is green; as long as the sky is blue; as long as the rivers flow; I am yours," they say to each other. Bill has never been happier. Even the birth of his daughter Maeve many years before and in another lifetime, didn't make him so happy. And he loved Maeve more than life itself. As Bill and the Princess kiss standing in the Greasy Grass and the winding river's sparkling water dances around their legs, there is a strange sound. A blaring trumpet from afar. Not from Louie Armstrong. No, this is a grating sound. A harsh, violent, aggressive sound, ripping through Bill's brain and draining the dream of color. He turns and the Princess is gone; the grass is red with blood; the sky black with thunder clouds; the animals disappeared; and the river filled with bodies – Indian bodies - that float into the distant world. This world is no more. Bill, Big

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Red Man, is no more... this dream has ended.

"Hey!" calls a policeman, an Indian, standing by a snow-white squad car. He walks over to Bill, who sits forlorn at the picnic table. "OK, big boy...What's going on?"

"My world has just ended," says Bill, absentmindedly.

A second policeman, also an Indian, walks over. "Watta you doin' here, big boy?"

Bill can't answer. He is devastated. Finally, with tears rolling down his cheeks, he tells them: "Waiting for the Princess."

"What Princess, big boy?" asks the first cop.

"Princess Summer-Fall-Winter-Spring," Bill says, a slight glimmer of hope in his words.

"What, she gonna meet you here? In Pine Ridge?" says the second cop.

"Nah, she's inside."

"Inside McDonald's?" asks the first cop.

"Yeah, I've been searching for her forever, and now I found here...just like with John Wayne."

"John Wayne? The Duke?" asks the second cop.

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

“Yeah,” answers Bill, “in that movie with Natalie Wood.”

“West Side Story?” asks the first cop.

“Nah, the other one,” says Bill.

Both cops stand and stare down at Bill, who is hunched over with a distant gleam dancing across his eyes. He stares at the McDonald’s. “It’s over, isn’t it?...I heard the bugle sound...”

As Bill is questioned by the police at the Pine Ridge McDonald’s, Rich drives around the reservation looking for Porcupine. And Russell Means. He honks the horn of the Fiesta to all the Indians he sees along the way. Friendly-like. But no one knows where the one-time leader of AIM lives. Or they just don’t want to tell a White guy. He finally stops by a young Indian man sitting on a burned out Oldsmobile Delta 88.

“Hey, man...You know Russell Means?”

“Yeah.”

“Great!...Know where he lives?”

“Yeah.”

“Can you tell me where?”

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“Who are you, man?”

“A friend...Well, not exactly a friend...More like an acquaintance...I interviewed him once...Maybe 20 years ago...He hated me...Threatened to crush my balls with a stone tomahawk...Scalp me...Cut out my innards with a dull buffalo knife...Decapitate me...Put my head on a pole and piss on it...”

“That sounds like him.”

“So,” asks Rich, “you know where I can find him?”

“Yeah.”

“Where?”

“New York.”

“New York? What the fuck’s he doin’ there?”

“What the fuck YOU doin’ here?” smiles the Indian.

“Me? I’m here to blow up Mount Rushmore.”

The Indian looks at Rich, sizes him up, and then starts to laugh. And laugh. He can’t control his laughter. Rich just stares at him as his laughter builds to a crescendo, with wave after wave circulating in the still

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air. He finally reaches the apex, then pauses, starts laughing again so hard that he bends over to catch his breath. "Wow...that was a good one."

"I'm serious," says Rich.

"I know," says the Indian, and he begins laughing again.

### Chapter 10

Bill sits handcuffed in the police car looking out at the McDonald's. The first policeman walks the counter-girl over to the car and asks her if she recognizes Bill as the man who has harassed her. Bill sits quietly in the back-seat, as she says "yes...he kept saying something about Howdy Doody and a blow-job....and calling me Princess."

"Do you think this Doody is the other guy?" asks the second policeman of the first.

"More than likely," says the first policeman, "perverts usually work in pairs."

"What else did he say to you?" the first policeman asks counter-girl.

"Not much else, just something about Mount Rushmore." And both policeman give knowing looks. "And something about Russell Means." Both policeman nod to each other.

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“Think we should take him in?” asks the second policeman of the first.

Rich drives through the rest of the reservation heading back to the McDonald’s and Bill. As he nears the Golden Arches a police car passes, with Bill sitting stiffly in the back seat. Rich looks through the rear-view mirror, making sure it’s Bill, pulls over into the sagebrush and watches the police car disappear into a cloud of dust...

“And a hearty height-ho Silver!” he yells to himself, then laughs, more from exasperation with his long-time Buddhist friend with the sexual obsession than from mirth. Rich doesn’t feel mirthful. He feels put upon. He turns around and follows the dust-trail into Pine Ridge, thinking of a good story to tell the cops.

Bill and Rich sit in the Fiesta in front of the McDonald’s...once again.

“You almost got us found out,” says Rich, after a long sullen silence.

“Yeah,” says Bill, absent-mindedly, “sorry about that,”

“Bill, you gotta yourself under control.”

“Right,” says Bill, looking at Rich out of the corner of his eye.

“You’re gonna get us killed with this Princess Summer-Fall-Winter-Spring shit.”

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“Right, Rich...but no one is wondering why we’re driving around with a 100-gallon can of chicken shit bungeed to our roof...Where’s their curiosity?...They only care about sex.”

“It looks that way...So what did you tell them?”

“About the Princess?”

“FUCK! BILL!...Not about the fucking Princess...about Mount Rushmore?”

“Nothing...they didn’t ask...What did they ask you?”

“I told them we were from New York and that I was your nurse. That you had had a mental breakdown and just wanted to see the West and places like Mount Rushmore to help you get better. And maybe even buy some land out here.”

“That’s it?”

“Well, when they heard I was your nurse they quickly put two-and-two together and asked if we were homosexuals...I didn’t answer. Told them I’d take the fifth.”

“The fifth what?”

“You know...making incriminating statements.”

“So they think we’re gay?”

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“More-or-less. They asked about Russell Means and I told them what he had told me, so that was it. Then they asked me if I knew about the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1867 and how it prohibits people like us - supposed White homosexuals, I guess - from buying land on the reservation...I told them I didn't know that...and then they let you go...in my care.”

“That's fitting.”

Bill and Rich get back on the road to Rushmore, their notion to enlist an Indian in their plan to blow it up coming to nothing. It's evening and the twilight bathes the surrounding Black Hills in a velvet mantle.

“Beautiful, eh Bill?”

“Yeah, beautiful.”

“Bill?...You ever think we'd be here doing this?”

“Doin' what?”

“Driving here to blow the fucker up?”

Bill smiles. “You know when I was a kid my Mother had all this planned. To take my brother and sister and me on a Western vacation for the Summer...Mount Rushmore...the Grand Canyon...Mesa Verde...Bryce...Arches...Zion...the Four Corners...”and he chuckles to himself, “the whole sheeee-bang!”

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

“Did you go?”

“Nah, my Father hung himself that Summer. I guess he was depressed.”

“So you didn’t go?”

“No...My Mother went without us. She left us with my Aunt and Uncle, my Father’s brother, who was a pervert...He liked to take baths with us, my brother and I...”

“Huh...a pervert,” says Rich, thinking back to a big 1950’s bright red Cadillac convertible pulling up to a group of young boys playing baseball in the street. The driver is a large greying man in his mid-40’s and wearing a New York Yankee baseball cap. He motions for them to come over to the car, and holds up a ball and baseball bat for them to hold. The boys are friendly to the man...they know him from the neighborhood as Chip, who once – so he said – played in the minor leagues for the Yankees. A pitcher he said. “I knew Mickey Mantle...he was just starting out when my arm went bad,” he would tell them, smiling, always smiling. He liked to chat with the boys. Tell them baseball stories. One day he invites one of the boys – a 10-year old – to go for a ride in the car. The boy jumps happily into the front seat as Chip gives him the bat to hold and puts the Yankee cap on the kid’s head. Everyone is smiling and laughing as he drives off with the young boy. From that day on through the Summer, Chip would stop and talk to the boys, regale them with baseball stories again, and give the boy another ride. The boy’s parents knew Chip and liked him. And they knew that Chip liked their son. And since Chip, though married, had no children of his own, they would tell the other neighbors that Chip treats their son as his own. After those first few rides in his big red Caddy, he took the boy to baseball games at Yankee Stadium that Summer. To the Bronx Zoo. To Bear Mountain to go swimming. And to his apartment on the other side of town. Then one day, as Summer was winding-down and Chip honked the Caddy’s-horn outside his

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

house, the boy told his parents that he didn't want to go with Chip. Not anymore. His Mother went outside to tell Chip and he drove off. That was the last time the boy saw Chip.

### Chapter 11

Bill and Rich pull into the parking lot for Mount Rushmore and look out the window at the faces on the mountain.

"Wow!" says Rich, "I never realized..."

"Yeah, " says Bill, finishing Rich's statement, "they're big...Really big...I wonder where the house is?"

"What house?"

"The one on top of the heads...in the movie."

"Movie?"

"North By Northwest...you know, Hitchcock?"

"Oh yeah...they probably tore it down after the filming, like with that town in 'Ryan's Daughter'."

"The David Lean movie? The one in Ireland?"

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

“Yeah, the guy who did ‘Lawrence from Arabia’.”

“What does that have to do with Mount Rushmore?”

“Nothing,” admits Rich.

Bill looks at Rich and shakes his head. “He went downhill after ‘Lawrence’. Ryan’s Daughter was a real piece of shit.”

“You only say that because your Irish.”

“Nah...it was just a piece of shit. Wasted Sarah Miles.”

“Yeah, why would anybody wanna waste Sarah Miles?”

“Yeah,” says Bill, staring dumb-struck at the hugeness of the four heads.

“Yeah,” says Rich, musing on the four heads. “Fucking big, eh Bill?”

“Yeah, I wonder how long it took that guy to do this?”

“Fifty years.”

“You sure? We can ask in the guy in the office...the Ranger.”

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“Ranger?”

“Yeah, that’s what they call the guys out here who watch places like this.”

“You sure you’ve never been here before?”

“Nah...that Summer my Mother came out here we were all being fucked by my Uncle.”

“Oh yeah, I forgot,” says Rich. “Let’s go and see the ranger.”

Bill and Rich walk into the rustic-looking information center and sure enough, there is a Ranger there standing by the desk and wearing a Smokey-the-Bear hat. Bill asks him for some information about the Mount.

Smiling and friendly, the Ranger begins: “ Sure...The Mount...”

And Rich cuts him off: “Originally called the Six Grandfathers by the Lakota Sioux...”

The Ranger looks over at Rich and smiles. “Yeah...that’s right...It was re-named for Charles E. Rushmore, a prominent New York lawyer, during an expedition in 1885, and was sculpted by Gutzon Borglum...”

And Rich interrupts again. “Who was a member of the Ku Klux Klan.”

The Ranger stops and stares at Rich, who grins at him. He continues...”and later his son Lincoln from

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

1927 to 1941, and features the heads of former presidents...left to right...George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln...and are 60-feet in height. South Dakota historian Doane Robinson is credited with conceiving the idea to promote tourism in the area..."

"Which was part of the route that Lakota leader Black Elk took on a spiritual journey that culminated at Harney Peak," adds Rich.

"Yes...that's correct," says the Ranger, staring at Rich.

"And the ownership of the area has been in disputed by the Lakota Sioux on the basis of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty..." says Rich, nodding toward the Ranger and Bill.

"The one that stops homosexuals from buying land out here?" asks Bill.

The Ranger continues to stare at Rich, then smiles broadly. "Man, you certainly know a lot about this. Why are you asking me?"

"It's your job, isn't it?"

"I could do this," says Bill. "I could be a Ranger at Mount Rushmore."

"But that's not why we're here," says Rich quietly to Bill.

"Oh yeah, I forgot."

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“So...Clayton Moore...” says Rich to the Ranger.

“The name is Roger...Roger Deer Paw.”

“You’re a fucking Indian?!”

“I need the job,” the Ranger tells Rich, “so get off my case!”

“WOW! Another real Indian...Do you know Princess Summer-Fall-Winter-Spring?” interjects Bill, grinning from ear-lobe to ear-lobe.

### Chapter 12

Bill and Rich stand by the Fiesta looking up at the four heads on Rushmore, as dusk settles in around all of them: Bill and Rich and the heads.

“Which one was the worst?” Bill asks Rich, already knowing the answer, but wanting to hear him rant and rave. It always made Bill’s blood circulate faster; his brain whirl quicker; his eyes roll around like pinballs inside their sockets. In other words – he liked it.

Rich pretends to think about it, but he knows that Bill knows the answer, and he also knows that Bill has a deep appreciation of his emotional outbursts. “Rich is no pod-person,” he tells anyone who asks.

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

“Probably Jefferson,” says Rich.

Bill acts surprised. Like he never heard this before. “HmMMM...Jefferson?...Is it all that stuff you said to Thunder Thud back at McDonald’s?”

Rich isn’t listening. He stares at the heads. “Roosevelt was a war-mongering asshole...Bully-Bully! And all that shit...And Washington was an unrepentant Indian killer...also owned slaves...and Lincoln, if for the Emancipation Proclamation should be excluded, but his attitude toward Blacks was no different than some fucking Klan members...Thought they were like children. Unable to handle ‘freedom’, irresponsible...But Jefferson...Jefferson...he was the biggest hypocrite of them all. All his flowery bullshit in the Declaration of Independence. And that Manifest Destiny crap...What a fucking hypocrite. A fucking slave owner to the end. Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness, my ass!”

Bill tells Rich –post-rant – that he doesn’t think they can get close enough to blow up the heads.

“We’ll see when it gets dark,” says Rich, sounding annoyed.

“Yeah, but Ranger Roger in there isn’t going to let us unload all this bomb stuff and walk it up onto the mountain. Even if he is an Indian.”

“We’ll see when it gets dark,” says Rich again, obviously annoyed.

“But he’ll see us...”

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

“How’s he going to see us when it’s dark?”

“I don’t know...a flashlight?”

“Indians don’t carry flashlights, Bill...only torches,” says Rich, getting pissier by the second.

They stand by the car as Ranger Roger approaches...carrying a flashlight. He’s laughing. “Watta you guys staying the night?”

“Yeah, Roger, we want to get the full effect,” Rich tells him.

“Yeah, the full effect,” nods Bill.

“That’s a cool idea,” says Roger, “but the park closes at nightfall. So maybe you boys should check into a motel or campground somewhere.”

“Yeah, that sounds like a good idea...right, Rich?” says Bill. There is no answer as Rich stares at the heads. He seems in a trance. “Rich?” but there is still no answer. So Bill tries again. “It seems like a good idea to stay at a motel or campground, right Rich?”

Rich jolts to awareness...“What?...Oh, yeah...a motel...”

“Or a campground,” says Bill, shaking his head as Roger stands off to the side. The Ranger has already come to the conclusion that the two are druggies, stoned on something or other. But figures that that isn’t his problem. He thinks, ‘Hey, there just a couple of idiot White guys...what do I give a shit for?’

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

“Ok,” says Roger, “have a nice night, boys,” and he walks back into the visitor center.

“You’re right, Bill, we can’t get close enough to the fucking heads without Tonto over there seeing us, so...”

“Why don’t I like the sound of that...”

“So look, Bill, maybe we should drive the car as close as we can to it and blow it up there.”

“Blow what up?”

“The car.”

“The car?!...It’s my fucking car!...And how do we get home?”

“I don’t know...and what difference does it make anyway?”

“What difference does it make?!...It’s MY fucking car!”

“I know, I know, but it’s what we came here to do.”

“NO!...No, no, no way! That’s not what WE came here to do! Blow up the mountain...yes, OK, but not my fucking car!”

“It’s the only way,” says Rich, looking at Bill with pleading eyes.

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

"It's my fucking car, Rich!...And you don't even drive, at least legally."

"Look...You can collect the insurance...say you were the victim of random terrorism...anybody would understand THAT!"

"What terrorists?...WE are the terrorists!...And what about Roger?"

"What about him?"

"He saw us. Talked with us...He knows who we are."

"He won't do anything."

"WHAT?! How do you know that?"

"He's an Indian isn't he?"

"Yeah, but...but...but," and Bill is sputtering, he is so distraught, seeing 20 years behind bars and him wearing that hideous prison jump-suit to meetings with Maeve. 'I'll look like an orange,' he thinks.

"He's an Indian, and deep down he wants us to blow this fucker up."

"What did you channel him or something? How do you know that?"

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

“I know Indians, Bill.”

“You don’t know any Indians!...Just Tina over there in Minneapolis...what the fuck are you talking about?!”

Rich seems calmer as Bill becomes ever-more excitable. It is another facet of their friendship. “Look, Bill, I’m gonna push the car over there,” and he points to a parking space near the Information Center. “Then after Tonto leaves we’ll set off the bomb...You with me on this?”

“We came all this way to blow up the Mount Rushmore Visitor Center ?...I think I’ll wait here...”

So Rich, using every ounce of his strength, hops into the driver’s side of the Fiesta, steering with his right hand and with the door open, pushing the car along with his left leg along the parking lot macadam toward the visitor center. It’s not easy, but he is dedicated, as dedicated to now blowing up the center as he was originally about blowing up the four heads on Rushmore. Bill sits watching, dispassionately, on the ground 100 feet away. Rich then squeezes under the car and begins to hook up the wires to the detonator that will set off the chicken shit that will blow up the car, the visitor center, but hopefully not Roger Deer Paw, one of the Indians who he came to save from the treacherous White man. As he works on the wiring, checking the Wal-Mart manual with his miniature flashlight as he does so, Roger walks over from the Visitor Center.

“Hey, man, you OK? Car trouble?”

“Yeah...Roger...but it’ll be alright...”

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

“Look, man, I don’t want to rush you, but how long you gonna be?”

“Not long, Roger...I’ll get it going in a couple minutes. You can cut-out if you want.”

“I’m not supposed to leave anyone here, but...Are you sure? If you don’t get it going and I’m gone it’s like a five-mile walk to the nearest motel.”

“It’s OK...If it doesn’t get going we’ll call someone. We got a cell phone.”

“I can wait a bit more.”

“Don’t fret, Roger, we’re OK.”

And Roger looks over at Bill, who sits stoically watching the scene play out. “What about him? He looks depressed.”

“He’s OK, he’s just bi-polar and now he’s at the South Pole,” says Rich, and both start laughing. Rich, his head jutting out from under the car and Roger leaning against the fender and looking down at him.

“Yeah,” says Roger, continuing to laugh, “my Grandfather is like that. One minute laughing and the next talking about starting a war to regain the Paha Sapa for the people. Then he goes over to Bear Butte to sit around and chant all fuckin’ day!”

“Ha! Is he a Buddhist?...He is,” and Rich extends his arm from under the car and points back at Bill.

“A Buddhist? My Grandfather? No, he’s Lakota. I don’t think he ever heard of Buddhism. He’s never left

## BILL AND RICH GO TO RUSHMORE

the Black Hills in all his 88 years. Couldn't. He was always looking for Crazy Horse's heart."

"I've seen him chant all day," says Rich, pointing again at Bill.

"Maybe he is Lakota," smiles Roger.

"He wishes...Irish...different tribe."

Roger looks over at Bill, who has lain down on the grass looking up at the bright stars overhead. Nothing is visible except the soles of his sneakers and beyond that, like a mountain itself, his big belly. "So you guys will be OK if I cut-out, right?"

"Yeah, Roger, thanks for everything, man, but we'll be fixed up in a couple minutes."

"OK..." and he walks over to his Olds 88, jumps in and drives away quickly, beeping his horn as he disappears into the night. It is dark save for the stars overhead and the sudden flash underneath the Fiesta, as Rich walks back toward Bill. He sits next to his long-time friend and watches the flame slowly engulf the entire car...but there is no explosion. Bill and Rich watch impassively as the car burns, turning itself into a blackened hulk sitting in the Mount Rushmore parking lot, just 20-feet from the Visitor Center and nearly 100 yards from those heads.

"I must have done something wrong," says Rich.

"You think so?" says Bill.

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“Probably,” says Rich.

“Probably?” says Bill.

“Think we should get out of here,” says Rich.

“How? You burned the car,” says Bill.

“Wanna call a taxi?” says Rich.

“With what?” says Bill.

“Your cell-phone,” says Rich.

“It’s in the car,” says Bill.

“Why is it in there?” says Rich.

“Sorry, I didn’t think that you would need it...here,” says Bill.

“You don’t have to be sarcastic, Bill.”

“SARCASTIC! Who’s sarcastic!...You drive me out here with the promise of sex with an Indian princess...”

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"I never said..."

"...so you can blow up Mount Papa Doo Wop over there..."

"...Paha Sapa, and it..."

"...and you don't even know a fucking Indian – except that chick from 40 years ago..."

"...Tina, her name was Tina..."

"...and yet...AND YET!...You wanna blow this fucker up because of people you heard had fucked them up over a hundred years ago..."

"...it's well documented, Bill..."

"...and that THEY, the Indians, obviously don't give a shit about anymore..."

"Russell Means does!"

"He wanted to kill you, cut off your balls with a stone tomahawk..."

"He was confused..."

"How about the rest of them?"

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“They’re in denial.”

“So, for these Indians in denial, you want to blow up Mount Doo-Doo here...”

“Rushmore.”

“...and wind up turning my car, my only car, my beloved Ford Fiesta, into a charcoal briquette without any damage to not only the Visitor Center, who never did anything to you or your friends the Indians, or to those four stupid fucks up there on Mount Jerk-off who did...”

“Rushmore.”

“THERE!” and Bill points to Rushmore. “UP THERE, RICH! LOOK, FOR CHRIST’S SAKE! ARE THEY STILL UP THERE?!”

“You don’t have to be so bitter about it, Bill.”

“BITTER?! WHO’S BITTER?!”

### Chapter 13

Bill and Rich sit in the grass 100 feet from the car watching the fire smolder and eventually go out. They

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sit like that for a long time. Rich thinking of the next opportunity - Maybe next year we can come out again with a better plan, not one from Wal-Mart, and a better car; and Bill thinks of Princess Summer Fall-Winter-Spring at the Pine Ridge McDonald's running to him in slow-motion, large fries in hand – She was so beautiful, just like on the Howdy Doody Show.

"I wanna go home," says Bill, breaking their reveries.

"Me too," says Rich, and he gets up and walks toward the Visitor Center as Bill watches. He is looking for a pay-phone outside the building. Finding one on the side of the center he drops a quarter into it and waits. Fifteen minutes later Mohammed's Jihad Taxi Oasis pulls into the Mount Rushmore parking lot.

"A cousin?" says Rich.

"Must be," says Bill.

And Mohammed, who is the spitting image of the Mohammed from Mohammed's Jihad Hardware Oasis and Mohammed's Jihad Feed Store steps out of the taxi and walks over to Bill and Rich.

"A pod?" says Rich.

"Probably," says Bill.

"You called for a cab?" says Mohammed, with an accent somewhere between Mohammed Hardware's very pronounced one and Mohammed Feedstore's nearly non-existent one.

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"It looks like it," says Rich.

Mohammed looks over at the burned-out car. "Your car?" he asks Rich.

"Mine," says Bill.

"Oh...sorry," says Mohammed, bowing and twirling his right hand toward Bill.

"Thanks...Mohammed?...We were trying to blow up the mountain and it didn't work out," says Rich.

"Oh...sorry," he says, and bows to Rich, making that circling motion with his right hand that Arab men offer as a sort of prayer, saying: Sorry old chap, I'm sorry, but I'm glad it was your car and not mine.

"So we need a ride to a motel," says Rich.

"Ok...Fine...My cousin Mohammed runs a very good one nearby."

"Is it...like, you know...does it have...you know..." and Rich stumbles over his words.

"You want to know if it is a tent made of goat skins, with droppings all over the dirt floor, with no running water and you have to shit in a hole?"

"Sorry," says Rich, "we meant no disrespect."

"Of course you did! And yes, it is a tent of goat-skin with droppings all under foot, no running water at

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all...and yes...YES!...you do have to shit in a hole!” and he smiles at them, benignly.

“How much?” asks Rich.

“Including breakfast?”

“What’s for breakfast?” asks Bill.

“Goat,” says Mohammed.

“The same one that...?”

“...leaves droppings all over the floor? OF COURSE!” and he starts laughing. Benignly, of course.

“Sounds holistic,” says Bill.

“We’ll take it...So how much?” asks Rich.

“Will that be one straw bed or two? They are queen size.”

“Two,” says Bill.

“A good choice...Now we’ll have to put your breakfast outside for the night,” and Mohammed laughs, shaking his head at his own ironic humor. “Ahhhhh, Mohammed will be so pleased...customers.”

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“So how much for the room, two beds, breakfast?” asks Rich. “And do you take credit cards?”

“350,000 dirham, with the taxi ride...”

“That’s pretty steep,” says Rich.

“Yes, I’m sorry,” and he calculates the rate of exchange in his head as Bill and Rich stare at him. “It is 6.75 in American dollars...and yes we take all credit cards, debit cards, even library cards,” and Mohammed once again cracks himself up. “That was a joke...we don’t take debit cards,” and once again he starts laughing, as Bill and Rich look at him stone-faced.

Bill and Rich sit in the back of Mohammed’s taxi, winding through the dark night, when police lights flash by.

“I think they are headed up to the Mountain,” says Mohammed, as Bill and Rich sit in silence, not wanting to answer their driver and not wanting to turn around and look.

“Maybe you should just drop us at the bus station,” says Rich.

“The only one is Rapid City and that is 25 miles away,” says Mohammed.

“How much will it cost to take us there?” asks Rich.

“\$6.75...and can I ask you boys something?”

“Sure,” says Rich.

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"I mean it is none of my business, but...Why did you want to blow up Mount Rushmore?"

Bill looks over at Rich. "Would you like to answer our good driver here?"

"It doesn't matter now," answers Rich.

"Was it some kind of secret mission?"

"Yeah...it was for the CIA," answers Rich.

"The CIA?! You two are CIA agents?! That is incredible," and Mohammed starts to guffaw...and loudly.

Rich stares at Mohammed. "Actually, Mohammed...it IS Mohammed, right?...It was for the BLT."

"BLT?...I don't know that one...another government spy agency?"

"No, a sandwich," says Bill.

"A sandwich?"

"Naaah, Mohammed, we just had nothing better to do," says Rich.

"Really, nothing?"

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“So, we figured we might as well go out to South Dakota and blow up Mount Rushmore.”

“But why this one?”

“For the Indians, right Rich?” says Bill, oozing sarcasm.

“Mohammed laughs. “For the Indians?”

“Why? You think that’s funny, Mohammed?” says Rich, irritated.

“No, sir.”

“Rich.”

“Who’s Rich?”

“Him,” and Bill points at Rich. “Him, that’s his name.”

“And you?” Mohammed asks Bill.

“Bill.”

“Bill and Rich...ah, very nice American names...Bill and Rich go to Mount Rushmore...” and Mohammed laughs.

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“Eh, Mohammed...Can I ask you something?” says Rich.

“Sure, Mr. Rich, fire away!...Is that right: fire away!”

“Yeah...fire away...but what I want to know is why YOU'RE here?”

“Me?”

“Yeah...You...Why?”

“I don't really know.”

“Sounds like us,” says Bill.

“Yes,” says Mohammed, laughing, “maybe I am just as big an asshole...is that right: asshole?...as you two.”

“You think we're assholes?” says Rich, his irritation rising.

“Yes, if that is the word for a totally ignorant person who has no idea in the world what they are doing...don't be offended Mr. Rich, Mr. Bill.”

“And that's you, too?” asks Rich.

“Of course,” laughs Mohammed, looking into the rearview mirror at his two solemn passengers, who

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may just be BLT agents..."Hey, lighten up!...Is that the phrase: lighten up?...Like most people in the world I have not a clue what I'm doing here, or anywhere...like you two, also...real assholes, the three of us!...real assholes!"

Bill pats Rich's arm and smiles. "So lighten up, Rich?"

"What are we to do, kill ourselves? You might as well blow up Mount Rushmore Mr. Rich and Mr. Bill. Right? Enjoy yourselves...Look, the way I see it, not being born in America, this so country is so full of assholes like us that I have a hard time taking any of it seriously. Look at those men carved into the mountain...I checked them out when I moved here..."

"With the other Mohammed's?" asks Bill.

"Yes, with them...I found out to some people that they were great men and to others they were no different than goat droppings..."

"So?" asks Bill, wondering where Mohammed was going with this.

"So, Mr. Bill, where I come from there is only one type of man."

"Who is?" asks Rich, also wondering what Mohammed is talking about.

"Not who, Mr. Rich, but what..."

"OK, Mohammed...What kind of man?"

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“A man who will not ask or answer questions.”

“What is this a fucking riddle?” says Rich.

“Go on, Mohammed,” says Bill.

“That is why I came West.”

“So you can ask and answer questions? That’s fucking stupid!” says Rich.

“Not to me it isn’t, Mr. Rich.”

The three of them, Mohammed driving, Bill and Rich in the back of the taxi, ride along in silence.

“What question would you like US to answer, Mohammed?” says Bill.

“I am not sure you will know the answer.”

“It’s OK, man, I’m a Buddhist, so I understand your reticence.”

“What is this ren-a-sense, Mr. Bill? Something from Italy?”

“Not renaissance, reticence,” laughs Bill. “R-E-T-I-C-E-N-C-E...or is it R-E-T-I-S-E-N-S-E?...Whatever it is it means not sure of doing or saying something.”

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“YES! That is the perfect word, Mr. Bill, for how I feel about this question I want to ask!”

“Go ahead, Mo,” and Bill smiles at him, “Can I call you Mo?”

“Mo? Is that an American name, Mr. Bill?”

“Kind-of...it’s a nickname.”

“Ah, a NICKNAME...Mo...a nickname...”

“So ask away,” says Bill.

“Ask away!...That is good!” and Mohammed chuckles to himself. “Veery good...veeery good...”

“WELL!” says Rich, his patience since the Mount Rushmore abortion at a very thin edge.

“Oh, yes, my question,”

“We are almost in Rapid City for fuck sake!”

“You curse a lot, Mr. Rich.”

“Will you ask your fucking question, man?”

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OK...here goes...," and Mohammed takes a long pause..."Mr. Rich, Mr. Bill, do you know where I can get a blow-job?"

"YOU TOO!" shouts Bill, and pats Mohammed on the shoulder.

"Is that the word? Blow-job? You know when the woman takes a man's yaya and she...you understand?...the women in my country don't do this...it is...it is..." and Mohammed never finishes the sentence as the taxi rolls into the Rapid City bus station. He drops off Bill and Rich and drives away, beeping and waving, his question forever unanswered.

Bill and Rich sit quietly in the bus station, waiting for the next bus, any bus, East. Over the loudspeaker comes an announcement: "Ladies and Gentlemen, the next bus out is the 7:05 local to Minneapolis-St.Paul, arriving shortly."

"TINA!" yells Bill, his arms waving overhead.

"You may get one yet, Buddha-boy!" laughs Rich.

"Yeah, too bad Mohammed's gone."

Bill and Rich sit in the back of the bus to Minneapolis-St. Paul, watching and dreaming along with the American heartland.

"God, it is fucking ugly out here," says Rich.

"I'm hungry," says Bill.

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Somewhere in Minnesota the bus pulls into a McDonald's and Bill and Rich disembark with the rest of the riders.

"Whatta you think, Rich?" asks Bill, as they walk under the golden arches.

"About what, Bill?" answers Rich.

"Pod-people," says Bill.

### Epilogue

A few months after the trip to South Dakota and their thwarted attempt to blow up Mount Rushmore, Bill died. An aneurysm. He had collapsed one evening tutoring a student in English, was taken to the nearby hospital and died on the operating table. Maeve, Bill's now 20-year old daughter, tried to reach Rich, but he had no phone. Again. She finally remembered the name of the little café in the town he lived in where she had visited him with her Father and left a message for him to call her. Rich was surprised to hear from her. "Is everything OK?" he asked, thinking that the call had something to do with his "Thoughts of Rushmore" exhibit that was opening that very night at the local college Art Gallery and that Bill, and possibly Maeve, were going to attend. At least he knew that Bill was. He had hoped that Maeve would too. But he heard Maeve crying on the other end of the line. "What is it? Is everything alright?" he asked again. But Maeve couldn't speak. "Is it Bill?" Rich asked, suddenly so sad that it seemed that most of the light on that perfectly bluer-than-blue-sky September day had been

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quickly extinguished. “No,” said Maeve, nearly unable to mouth the words: “Dad didn’t make it.” Rich heard himself sob. “No...no...no...no...” is all he could say to her, then dropped the phone and ran out into the streets of the little town. Walking. Walking. Thinking the thought. The thought of Bill. His friend of thousands of years. He roamed the little town alone until it was time for his Art opening at the college. He went, but felt blank. Didn’t tell anyone about Bill. He didn’t want to share his friendship with Bill. His feelings of Bill with anyone. After the opening and driving home on the darkest stretch of road on the darkest of nights Rich saw him illuminated in the headlights of his car - the Buddha – smiling and waving to him from the side of the road. So he killed him.

It was the only thing to do.

And in memory of Bill, and crimes committed and contemplated, Rich said goodbye.

The End

“Bill and Rich Go To Rushmore”

as told by

Richard Corozine and Bill Ford

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e: [richardcorozine@yahoo.com](mailto:richardcorozine@yahoo.com)

(still no phone)