



# THE RADIO GYPSIES

BY J. BLACKBURN

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Baltimore

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## DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my brilliant and beautiful wife of 33 years, Chancey Blackburn, whose love and support made the book possible. Writers are hell to live with. She does it with grace.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to acknowledge:

Claude Hall, a teacher, a mentor, and a good friend for the last 38 years, read the first draft, gave advice and helped me through the publishing process. Here's my best effort at capturing the history of the times, Claude. For everything you have meant to me, I am grateful.

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My wife, Chancey Blackburn, who fixed spelling, timelines, grammar, and dinner.

The Loop Troop who owned Chicago.

And all of the people at Publish America who brought my book dream to reality.

Any mistakes found in the book are entirely my responsibility.

## FOREWORD

This is a novel about the radio wars of the 1970s as seen through the eyes of two mid-level consultants. If you think you recognize a character or story, you don't; it's fiction. There are some real people mentioned but the main characters are fictional. On the other hand, I've tried to make this book as real as possible. It was written for those of us that lived through it and for those people that are still in our business, trying to do their best.

The '70s were the last years of truly creative, competitive radio. In 1980 Mark Fowler was appointed FCC Commissioner. At first we all thought this was a good thing. He loosened up a lot of the rules that governed radio.

However, about the same time that Commissioner Fowler was appointed, the investment bankers and the Wall Street sneaks took a look at some of our P&Ls with 40% to 60% profit margins. They thought, "Geez, with enough of these little stations, we could make some real money." And things began to change.

If a company owned 8 or 10 stations in a market, they didn't have to compete; they owned the competition. And basically, that was the end of the Competitive Engineers, the creative programmers and everything else that went in to radio as we knew it.

This is the middle book of a trilogy. When you start a novel sometimes you just don't know where it's going. I didn't know about this

phenomenon until I was told by other experienced writers, but I understand now.

Frankly, it is the younger people that are still fighting the good fight that convinced me to write the other two books. The first book focuses on the earlier years of Geoff and I.P. and the radio stories from the '40s and '50s—history.

The third book focuses on those people still out there in the trenches, doing their best both with terrestrial, satellite and streaming and internet radio. They are the people that might have been touched by Geoff's and I.P.'s stations.

It's only fiction and it's only Rock & Roll.

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## CHAPTER 1

# THERE'S A BAD MOON ON THE RISE

It was almost twilight. The Green Monster was throwing up a rooster tail of dust behind us as we sped down an unpaved farm to market road just outside of Waco, on our way to the KWAA studio/transmitter site.

Only one of us in the Mustang was happy and it wasn't me. My partner, I.P., had his arms folded across his chest. His wide set green eyes were slits and his jaw was tight. He was not happy. "How happy are you I.P.?" I asked.

"Happy as a puppy dog with two tails."

In fact, the only happy soul in the Mustang was Sun Tzu, my blue eyed, grey masked kitten.

Sun Tzu was always happiest when we were traveling. He loved being in the car, any car. He also loved any hotel, motel or temporary apartment we were in. He sniffed every corner and delighted in smelling out bathrooms.

He's the only cat I've ever known to pack his own carrier. Tzu had a leather mouse, a cloth mouse, a ball of yarn and a stuffed lion cub that was as big as he was. When he saw my luggage come out, he lined up his gear in front of his carrier and sat on top of my suit bag until it was time to go.

I.P. had been A/B-ing between KWAA, the turkey we were there to consult, and our competition. As evening set, KWAA suddenly went off the air.

"Oh man, a fucking daytimer," I groaned. "Another eunuch; a 10K daytimer, but a daytimer none-the-less."

“That explains why we’re meeting the on air staff at dark—so no one is on the air and they could all be here.”

In the distance we could see KWAA’s antennas. One tower had no lights. The other two sticks had some missing lights. “Well, that’s a big FCC no-no,” I.P. noted, stating the obvious. “Oh, fuck. This is going to be a joy.” I.P.’s green eyes got darker. When he was pissed those green eyes went black and small like hard marbles.

Two days earlier, Norton Horton had called me at the trade-out apartment in Arlington. The moving guys were loading the truck with our furniture. We had just finished with the Willins Chain and we thought we were moving to The District. Ken Camden had hinted that I.P. and I should be closer to the Camden Corp. office. We didn’t officially work for the Camden Corp., but we didn’t work for anyone else unless Ken said so.

I told Norton our furniture was on its way to our sublet at the Watergate and that I.P. was not in pocket. “Well, find him and meet me at the Dobb’s House in Waco in two days, 8AM.” And he hung up. Norton did not like wasting money on long distance. Norton was cheap, but not a bad guy, except he didn’t like anyone that was taller than he was and everybody was taller than he was. The one exception was John B. Johns, one of our jocks who shook the walls when he spoke.

I knew where I.P. was; he was in Temple, Texas. It had something to do with a greengrocer, a dentist and the dentist’s daughter. There was also something about a Class C construction permit. I never understood all the implications because I.P. always played his cards close to his vest. What I did know was the dentist daughter’s dowry had something to do with that FM construction permit.

On the appointed day, very early in the morning, I drove to Temple, picked up I.P., drove back to Waco and met Norton at the Dobb’s House as directed. We figured since Norton worked for Ken, that’s where we should be. And we got there on time, despite the fact that being on time was not one of I.P.’s strong points.

The Dobb’s House is a franchise that specializes in breakfast. Norton Horton laid out our next gig over greasy eggs, hash browns and bacon. I.P. took leave of his eggs early, took my keys to the Green Monster and went out to do our usual sneak and peak.

When Norton and I finished our eggs, we walked down the street a block, went in to the KWAA sales office and did all the things we were supposed to do. We talked to the General Manager, the sales department and then we went through the books.

Ah, the books. Nina, the 73 year old bookkeeper let me know she was not happy that I was going through her work. I looked at the AM's books and it was making a little money. The AM profit margin was about 10%. We expected at least a 40% margin. When I asked Nina for the FM's books I was told she didn't keep books on the FM. "It never makes any money, so we turned it off", she explained. I damn near fainted! They'd even disabled the studio and shipped the gear to other stations

When I.P. finally hooked back up with us, he had our competition's Hot Clock, their play list and a run down on their audio chain. So we like to win.

Now it's twilight and I.P. and I drive the nine miles out of town to the studio/transmitter site, pulling into the gravel parking lot in front of the cinder block building. Sun Tzu was bouncing all over the car. I could hear him in my head. "Oh, boy, a new place!" Not everyone can speak Felinese but I'm fluent.

Pickup trucks were arrayed in the parking lot in no discernable order. There was also a bread delivery truck and an almost-new Cadillac. We assumed the Caddy was the GM's car, the lovely and talented Goodman McKee McKay. The bread delivery truck belonged to one of the jocks—that was his early morning job.

I.P. and I stepped out of my Mustang. It was nippy. After all, it was early December. I.P. was wearing his usual uniform; jeans, a Columbia Records t-shirt and his leather jacket. I guess my outfit was a uniform too; a brown herringbone tweed jacket with matching vest and light brown trousers.

The guy that came out of the building's only door was immediately recognizable to us. It was Eddy Gregg. He had a cardboard box under one arm and a guitar case in the other hand. He spotted us and started in with "Fuck you, Cliff. You fired me twice, but you're not firing me again. You too, I.P. I told them all about you. So fuck you both."

Putting one scruffy old boot in front of the other, he made his way to

his transportation, one of the rusty old Chevy pickups. Eddie threw the cardboard box into the back of the pickup and then gently laid his guitar case in the passenger seat. He took off, spraying gravel onto the Cadillac and the Green Monster. "Damn," I.P. said, "I wanted to fire him again. What an asshole!"

Sun Tzu jumped up onto my left forearm, his favorite place to be carried. I.P. shot Eddy the finger and the three of us walked through that front door into the station. We walked in like we owned the place and in a way we did. After all, we were the Pros from Dover.

We were stunned with the smell of hot electronics and stale urine. The urine smell was so strong it would fog your glasses. Tzu started wiggling on my arm. He was compelled to check out the urine smell so I let him down and he ran right into a restroom with no door.

That front door opened into a long narrow room. To the right was that doorless restroom. To the left was a small office with one of those old metal desks and an ancient office chair. In between was a long space, furnished with a green vinyl couch, stuffing and springs poking out here and there. To the left of the couch were two matching chairs in the same condition. Behind the couch was a long window that looked into the production room. On the far side of the production room was yet another long window that looked in to the control room.

Norton expected me to be there on time and he knew I would have I.P. there. When we swaggered in, he and Goodman were already introducing us. As Norton was finishing, I looked around at the worst collection of jocks I had ever seen. They were lined up on the tacky couch like school boys. The Chief Engineer was in one of the matching chairs and his assistant was in the other.

Norton finished up and turned the room over to me; then he and Goodman fled in the Caddy. I.P. looked around, and then walked over to an old soda machine with the Barq's Big Red logo on it. Somehow he knew just where to smack the unit to make a Big Red come down the shoot.

I began by telling the Consultants Lie; you know, "We are just here to make recommendations. We aren't going to fire anyone."

I.P. starting handing out contraband Big Reds. "Here have a big Red",

he invited the jocks. "Goodman's buying." Some jocks and the assistant engineer took one in each hand.

I continued with the Consultants Lie; "Every time jocks hear that the consultant's here, they assume they're about to lose their jobs. That's just not true. I.P. and I are here to help with a bit of training, help with promotions and maybe work with you to clean up the formatics a bit. And we're here to get the F'M back on the air."

There was no reaction. I struggled on, figuring it was time to turn things over to I.P. "Now, you all know that engineers are a little nuts and my partner, I.P. is no exception. I.P.?"

I.P. took my place front and center, holding a Barq's Big Red. "OK, fellahs, I might help out some with the AM processing, but I'm really here to get the F'M back on the air." While I.P. was talking I was watching the old Chief, George Westin, turn different shades of red.

I.P. went on, "Now, fellahs, we'd like a chance to get to know you better, so Geoff and I are buying dinner tonight. We've heard that Leslie's Fried Chicken has good food. Does that work for you?"

The jocks stood up and shuffled over to the Barq's Big Red machine, still very leery of us. I.P. started telling stories and generally working his magic and loosening them up. There was even a laugh or two.

I saw the Chief wave a finger at me, gesturing me to follow him. I walked a short way down the narrow hall that led to production, then to the control room. On the right was an indentation that was the Chief Engineer's shop. The space was walled off with beaver board that reached almost to the ceiling, equipped with a raw plywood slab for a door.

As I stepped into the shop, the old man slammed the plywood door behind me. With a red face and a screeching voice he yelled, "You young bastard! Do you think that the two of you can come into my stations and start changing things? I know about your kind, you fuckers, and you can't get away with it, so just think again."

I didn't know it at the time but the Chief knew of I.P. because his freckled, ginger haired assistant engineer had gone to high school with I.P.

I let the Chief's ravings run down and then I whispered to him, "Mr. Westin, you are 67 years old. If I fire you, and I can, I think it would be

hard for you to find another job. So, from now on, when I say 'jump', all I want to hear from you is 'How high, Mr. Cliff?'. Do we understand each other?"

The staff could hear old Westin's yelling, but they couldn't hear what I said. I pushed open the plywood door, carefully stepped out of the nook, gently closed the door behind me, only to be handed a Barq's Big Red by I.P. "Drink up, Geoff. Goodman's buying!"

I was taking a sip of the too sweet soda when the old engineer opened his plywood door, took two steps out, clutched his chest and fell face forward on the floor. The assistant engineer ran to him, knelt down beside his head, placing both of the Barq's Big Reds on the floor. He tried to wake George up, but he was gone.

"Oh my God, he's dead. He's dead! My God, you killed him, you bastard!"

I.P. nudged me in the ribs and whispered, "Thank God, Geoffrey. I had no idea what we were going to do with the old fart!"

Tzu went over to the body, gave it a good sniff and patted it with his right front paw. Then he came back over to me and did figure eights around my ankles demonstrating his approval.

After the ambulance had taken the body away, I.P., with that smile meant to piss everyone off, said, "So. How about some of that fried chicken?"

Later that evening, back at the only hotel in Waco-fucking-Texas, I.P. was grumpy again. Here we were, in another run down Hilton. I'd made reservations for a suite as soon as we got the call from Norton, but this suite was not quite what we'd hoped for. Once again, the only happy one was Sun Tzu. He had two bathrooms to sniff out—all Tzu ever asked for.

Room service was slow and the menu was limited. I ordered a cognac. They didn't know what that was, so I asked for a brandy. I.P. ordered a burger.

Just because Waco is dry doesn't mean you can't get a drink. The Baptists like a little drink occasionally too. The county line is close so the hotel sent the bellman out. I didn't just get a drink, I got a fifth of E.J. VS. Vile stuff but I drank it anyway.

I.P. received a flat greasy burger-like sandwich. He was not just grumpy about being in Waco. I'd told him what we were being paid and,



as usual, Norton Horton had fucked us. We were in as Line Executives at \$250 a week with no reimbursable expenses. All we got were four cheap apartments for two months. At least that provided some crash pads to stash the jocks we were going to bring in.

"Jesus, I.P., I've got to call Kenneth Alexander Camden and tell him I've killed the Chief Engineer! I may have lost us the client, but I've got to call him before Norton or Goodman does!"

"Right. Lord Kenneth loves to be called at home at 11PM." I.P. had a mean streak. Nevertheless, when I called Ken he told me not to worry about killing Mel Eckert's Chief Engineer. Mel was the owner of the station and a small chain of stations in other markets. "Call me at the office at 10AM Eastern and get a good night's sleep".

I called exactly on time. "Geoff, don't worry. We have not lost our client. In fact, four other owners have called me to see if you could come and give their Chiefs a heart attack too!

"Now listen up. You and I.P. dress up and go sign the visitor's book at the funeral home. Use the Camden Corp. Gold AmEx card and send flowers. Make sure I.P. wears his Armani. Neither of you wear sunglasses! Got it? And go to the funeral."

I relayed all of this to I.P. and asked him to order a big spray of flowers as Ken had said. My end of the deal was to give my condolences to the family in person.

Ken and Norton couldn't attend the funeral, but they wanted their names on the flowers. The bosses were close to closing the Willins deal. \$12.8 million for the chain, including KBYU, and not a minute too soon. WFAA and WBAP had announced their agreement. WBAP was getting the clear channel and going country. They were about to throw down the Dolly Parton glove. Everyone assumed KBYU's value would head south immediately. Oh well. The new owners of KBYU would think of something...maybe.

There was a back story that Norton had not told us. Ken, Norton and Sean Grabowski were thinking about buying KWAA and the rest of Eckert's chain. Ken had a study done and they thought that they could get fulltime authority for KWAA. The three of them had decided it would be best not to tell us lest we spill the beans. I don't think Goodman knew either.

When the sale of the Willins' chain closed, I.P. and I would share about \$60K in commission. Ken suggested we wait a month or so to be paid; he meant after the first of the year for tax purposes. Ken also thought we needed a real tax guy instead of H&R Block. We also needed somebody to help us invest.

The next day I.P. and I showed up at the funeral home to sign the visitors' book. I took a peek around to look at the casket and see if I could pick out the spray of flowers that we'd sent. Sure enough, I knew instantly which flowers were ours. Sitting next to the casket on a standing easel was a great big horse shoe of flowers, at least 4 feet high. A silken banner with red sequins, positioned just so diagonally across the horse shoe, proclaimed 'Good Luck, Duck'.

I turned to I.P., and said, "Good Luck, Duck?" and started to laugh out loud. I hid my face, hoping the other people there to view the body would think I was crying. I.P. said, "What the fuck—it was on sale!" Then I.P. started to laugh, hid his face, and we knew it was time to run for it.

The burial was the next day and we went as Ken had ordered. No sunglasses, suits with ties. We found chairs toward the rear, but we could still see it. There it was; standing next to the casket—a big horse shoe of flowers with a 'Good Luck, Duck' banner. We had no choice but to run for it again, stifling uncontrollable giggles with our fists.

We made it back to the Hilton, laughing our asses off. But when we got there, we were busted. I had forgotten to hang the 'Do Not Disturb' sign on the door knob. When the maid came in, Sun Tzu cornered her and wouldn't let her out of the room. Tzu was barely 6 months old, but he had already chosen his job—security! Felines eventually decide on their life's work. Sun Tzu had decided protecting me was to be his thing. One does not 'own' a cat; they own you.

When we walked up to the room, the maid, an older Hispanic woman was still screaming. Sun Tzu was hissing and spitting, jumping at least a foot in the air threatening anybody that moved, including the brave manager that had tried to come to the maid's rescue.

We packed up and checked in to a really tacky motel. They took pets.

"Goddamn, I.P. How the fuck did we get here? I mean. Waco-fuckin'-Texas?"

## CHAPTER 2

# JUMPIN' JACK FLASHBACK

I knew they were going to extend my first tour in the 'Nam, so I just volunteered to stay on for another tour, hoping they would give me an early out in exchange. I came home in November '67.

I'd been a Second Class Petty Officer running an EOD team. Counting myself, our team had 7 guys. We were at a fire base up close to the Parrot's Beak. On the base, we also had Force Recon and Special Forces—what most people called Green Berets—but they disliked being called that. We also had Air Force Intel guys and even some SAS Brits.

But now I was home. They had given me the early out with GI Bill benefits, so I could go back to school.

I'd been addicted to radio from the time I was 13. As my younger sister, Farris, and I did the evening dishes one night, she turned on the radio to KJLIF. I had never heard anything like it. It was 1958. We were listening to 'KJLIF the MIGHTY 1190'. Sexy Remy Miller was on the air. He rolled The Coasters. "Charlie Brown, you're a clown. You're gonna get caught, just you wait and see. Why's everybody always pickin' on me?" Then this huge voice came rumbling out of that little kitchen radio.

"Ladies and gentleman, The Old Scotsman, Gordon McLendon, with a statement of editorial opinion."

Then another big voice. "We think Lord Bertrand Russell is a nut..."

After Gordon's editorial, the first big voice came back, "The informed citizen is the cornerstone of Democracy." I was blown away!

I did not know it at the time, but I was hooked! My addiction started

out like most addictions. At first, I just listened to the two Top 40 stations in the market; KLIF and KBOX. (Big KLIF was by far and away the better of the two). Next came hero worship for McLendon, Bill Stewart and all of the jocks.

I listened to KBOX, but it just wasn't as good as KLIF. One of the things I noticed was KBOX just did not 'sound' as good as KLIF. I later learned from I.P. that I was hearing the high end frying and IM distortion on KBOX.

Also, the promotions on KLIF were just better. I mean, for god's sake 'The Walking Man'! All you had to do was to go up to a 'walking man' and ask "Are you the KLIF Walking Man?" And he would give you \$1,000. People all over town were talking to each other!

Or how about Bill Stewart's 'Money from Heaven'? That's when he threw money from the top of one of Dallas' highest buildings. This immediately became a news story on all of the stations in town, not just KLIF. What a news story—crazy man throwing money into the street of downtown Dallas! As soon as a large enough crowd had gathered and the story was flying through the airways, Mr. Stewart unrolled a huge KLIF banner two stories in length. I was just a kid, but I could imagine the red faces in all of those newsrooms. It didn't stop there; the story also made the papers, and the local TV news.

Most AM stations were not union so jocks were expected to take the transmitter readings and to do that you need a First Class Radio & Telephone License, or as everyone in the business called it, a "First Phone". The best place to get your First Phone was Elkins Institute. Lucky for me, Elkins is located in Dallas, and that's where I went to school and that's where I met I.P.

The GI Bill paid my tuition, but I.P. had to pay his own way. We both needed and wanted to get a job in radio. I.P. needed a gig so he could pay for school. I needed one because I wanted to live anywhere but home. We hit all the radio stations. I also tried the TV facilities.

I.P. landed the teeny-bop drive time shift at KVIL, rolling Top 40. I hadn't taken that job because it was on FM. I'M was not a player, even though they were doing Top 40.

My God, you should see I.P. run a board. It would give you a heart

attack. He just left the turntable running. When he was rolling the jingle he would throw the 45 on, drop the needle and the timing was always perfect. I was a little more meticulous.

I landed a job as a booth announcer at KERA-TV. They also used me as a floor man. I was paid \$75 a week. Public stations don't pay very much, but I didn't know that when I took the gig. Hell, it was a top 10 market and a VHF station. I mean really, \$75 a week! In the mean time, I.P. was knockin' down \$125 a week.

After I had been at KERA a month or so, they gave me a show. I should really say they made me do a show. It was live TV. They dressed me up in a cap and gown with a big fake book that was supposed to be a dictionary. The show was from 9 to 9:30 in the morning, aimed at preschoolers. The object was to teach vocabulary.

Wait, it gets worse. The show had four puppets to help me out with the big words. The puppets were Mr. Sun, Mr. Moon, Mr. Star and Mr. Astronaut. The guy that worked the puppets was also the station's Program Director. Everything went well for several weeks, until one of the cameramen came to work with a monster hangover. The guy's name was Schlossman. About eight minutes into the show Schlossman vomited all over his camera. Those old RCA cameras ran hot and the vomit started to cook. What a smell.

When he threw up, Schlossman tilted the camera toward the floor and all of my cue cards slid off. The director threw it to Camera 2. That cameraman's name was Oley and he was laughing his ass off. Then, the puppet guy was laughing so hard he knocked over the puppet stand. It wasn't like you could go to a break. Finally Camera 2 tightened up on me. The floorman kept motioning me to adlib. That was when I decided television was not for me.

I.P. and I had a nodding acquaintance at Elkins. I thought he was older than me. We were the same height—6'1"; we both had wide shoulders. And that's where the similarities ended. He weighed in at about 250 pounds. He also wore bellbottom jeans and t-shirts. I was about 150 pounds and always wore a tie with either a sport coat or suit. I hadn't yet realized how much things had changed during the four years I'd been away.

I.P. and I both breezed through classes. Before I even got my First Phone, I'd gotten an offer from Elkins to teach the class! But I wanted to jock, so I said, "No thanks."

Two days later I was sitting in the Elkins snack room with a cup of coffee when an older guy sat down across from me. He asked me if I'd like a job doing mid-days at a suburban Houston station. I asked him all of the usual questions and I got all of the right answers so I took the gig—jocking mid-days at KCMO.

When I drove up to the station, the first thing I saw was a big sign in the window of the control room that read "Honk if you're going to vote for George Wallace". Worse, people were actually driving by the station, honking and waving! Lots of pickup trucks.

As I'm exiting my Camero that I bought as soon as I got out of the Navy, fumbling with my brief case, I'm thinking "Oh fuck, what have I gotten myself into?" Coming from an old Democratic family, I was a bit shaken. This was my first lesson in 'Do whatever you have to do to gather a large demographically correct audience'. I just didn't know that my real radio education was now beginning.

I sucked it up and went to meet my new boss, Cooper Wallace. I was immediately shown to Cooper's office. Red carpet, light blue walls. Cooper was wearing red slacks, blue blazer and Beatle boots of a light tan color. This should have given me a clue, but I was less than a month from turning 23 and I was naive.

Cooper invited me in and motioned to a leather chair, all the while looking me up and down. I didn't know it at the time but I had done a few things right. First I had short hair, white cashmere turtle neck, green sport coat and light green slacks.

I had been trying to pick the station up from about halfway down I-45. Finally a few miles outside of town I picked it up and it sounded like shit. This was not KLLF. Anyway, Cooper started to give me a run down on the operation.

Then I did another smart thing; I told him I wanted to learn sales. I knew I would have to understand this aspect of operations if I was to move up to larger markets and bigger stations. Cooper beamed and told me that he was so pleased. Most young guys just wanted to jock and had



no interest at all in sales. So, I got mid-days on 'KCMO 9-double O' and a client list. My starting salary immediately changed from \$550 a month to \$650 a month and the usual 15% on whatever I sold. Plus Cooper arranged a 3-bedroom brick house on a corner lot and some trade furniture. Well, fuck me with a bilge pump. Playing Faron Young might not be all that bad, even if I was selling spots for \$2 a holler.

After 3 months of building up my list and practicing the rule of "one more call" and using Radio Advertising Bureau materials to put together pitches, Cooper made me the Sales Manager. I had been 23 for less than 3 months.

I continued to try and get better processing gear for KCMO. My God, all we had was an old Gates Level Devil. We had a 1968 Chevy wagon with a Marti rig for our remotes.

I took Cooper and our part time engineer out to the Chevy and A-B'd KILT and KCMO—one station on each button, back and forth. Both of the guys were tone deaf. They couldn't tell the difference. I found out later that Cooper couldn't tell the difference because he was in talks with Earl Fletcher to sell the property. The engineer, Harold Coker, just couldn't hear.

Cooper had been doing morning drive himself, but he was tired of it. He called me into that gaudy office and told me that I could use my time more effectively if I did morning drive. KCMO had pre-sunrise authority, so I signed on at 6 AM, called my show *The Poverty Program*, rolling George Jones and Porter Wagner until 9:30; then I did a talk show called 'Tradio' for 30 minutes.

On Tradio, people would call in and say things like, "Hey, Geoff, we got us a really fine wheel barrow that us'ns don't need no mo'. Think you could find us'ns a good trade?"

"Sure", I would say, "who am I talking to?"

"Aw, hey, you know me. This is ol' Toby Groghan".

And so it went. After a week or two Cooper called me into the production room. "Listen to this," and he punched off a cart. It was a jingle for my morning show! "Geoff Cliff," they sang with a country twang, "Home of the Poverty Program, KCMO, 9 double O".

"I got it from Pepper Tanner," Cooper said with pride. "It's a trade. All we have to do is play Harvest Time on Sunday."

"It's just great, Cooper! Thanks," I told him.

"Come on, let's take the day off and drive up to Huntsville for fried chicken."

Three months after the new jingle hit the air I was made Station Manager. The salary jumped to \$750 a month plus my commission and now an override, altogether about \$1200 a month. I thought I wasn't doing too badly—23 and a Station Manager. So, the months passed and I learned as much as I could.

In August of '69 I got a call from one of my clients, the Ford dealer in our little market. It seems a well meaning Mom and Dad had ordered a '69 Mustang fastback as a graduation present for their darling son. The problem was that the little devil was expelled in his last semester. The dealership was willing to give me a good deal. The Mustang was specially equipped with the handling package, 428 cubic inch engine; power everything including an 8 track tape player. The car had been sitting on the lot since last April.

So, I bought the car. I traded out mag wheels for the Green Monster and had the 428 "warmed up"—an Isky Cam, the Big Holley carburetor, the heads ported and polished, tuned headers, scavenger pipes and 50/50 shocks all the way around.

I'd done all this before I knew that Cooper Wallace was selling the station to Earl Fletcher. Not only was I going to be on the beach... I was going to be on the beach with car payments. At least with this car, I would be hard to catch. Just a metallic green blur.

Before Cooper got the station sold, we had the Great Gonorrhea Outbreak. First, my P.D. walks into my office and asks me if I know anything about venereal disease. An hour later I get a similar question from my secretary. The afternoon jock also wants to know about the clap. I called everybody in and asked what's up?

Turns out I had six 'for sures' and two 'maybes'. I loaded up the KCMO remote unit and drove everybody to the free clinic in Houston.

When I started working for Cooper KCMO was billing around \$7K to \$8K per month. When Cooper announced the sale to Mr. Fletcher we were billing an average of \$16K per month. The population of our little 'burb was 16,000, so basically we got a dollar a head per month.

## *THE RADIO GYPSIES*

I wasn't mad at Cooper for selling. It was time to move on anyway. The man had treated me well with those rapid promotions and the house. I even got to speak at an RAB conference in Dallas. At that RAB meeting I was introduced to Chuck Blore. Blore was another of my heroes.

The new owner, Earl Fletcher, wanted me to stay on and work for him, but not as a station manager or even as sales manager. He wanted me to jock. I quit.

## CHAPTER 3

# YOU JUST MIGHT FIND YOU GET WHAT YOU NEED

My first time on the beach! What the fuck?...over? What do you do when you'll be turning 25 in a few months, you have a house full of furniture in storage in Houston, a Green Monster of a car with a corresponding payment and \$500 dollars in your pocket? And on top of all of that, you're on the beach? Answer? You move home. Going home to Jane Anne Cliff was the last thing anyone would want to do, but I was desperate!

"Oh, Honey, we're so glad to see you. Will you be able to stay long?" my Mother asked. That's Jane Anne-speak for, "How soon will you be leaving?"

Things had changed at the house while I was in the Navy. Mother had sold my 17<sup>th</sup> birthday present, a TR3-A Triumph, because it was just too dangerous. Actually, she had tried to drive the TR3 to work one morning and rear ended a pickup. Now, this accident could not have been her fault; thus, the sports car had to be dangerous.

Some other changes had been made as well. My room had been small, but was crammed with models. At 9 I decided to try and build every weapons platform used in WW2. I had damn near made it. But since I no longer lived at home and hadn't bothered to take all of that nasty war clutter with me, why keep it? Out it went.

Mother had the wall between "my room" and the master bedroom

knocked out because she wanted a larger sitting room. She also put in another bathroom.

Mom also had the garage enclosed and made into a den/library. It had one of those couches that pulled out into a bed—the ones with a steel bar that hits you right in the middle of the back. That's where they put me. Believe me; my stay would be as short as possible.

I immediately started looking for a job. It was two weeks before Christmas and I was not having much luck until my beautiful younger sister, Farris, showed up for the weekend. Farris was 22, beautiful and smart. She was the assistant manager at an Art Gallery that specialized in Western Art.

When I told Farris my woes, she said, "Big brother, don't worry, I can fix this."

"Okay, I'll try anything."

"Now's the time, Older Brother. Mom is checking out her restaurants, Dad is hiding out at the university, as usual, and Little Brother is out with his pals. Go into the den, shut the door and take off all your clothes."

"Okay, okay. Anything you say."

Naturally, I took off all my clothes. I told her I was ready. Farris opened the door slightly and passed me two lighted candles. "Now Geoff, take these candles, one in each hand. Extend your arms and turn around 7 times repeating this phrase, 'I will be hired'. Say that seven times as you turn. Got it?"

I did it. I'd just gotten my clothes back on when the phone rang. I answered.

"Geoffrey Cliff?"

"That's me."

"I'm Mike Morton, the station manager at KBYU. I just found out you might be available."

"Yeah, Mike, I am definitely available."

"My family lives in Cut N' Shoot near Houston and I've caught The Poverty Program a time or two. I can even sing your jingle." In a country twang Mike sang, "Home of the Poverty Program, KCMO 9-double O". You are funny. Do you want to talk?" I swear to God, that call came within minutes of Farris' ritual!

Damn tootin', I wanted to talk. Yeah, it was another goat roper station, but it was a 50,000 watter in a major market.

"You guys are the 50K country in Ft. Worth, right?"

"Yep. Hey, Ken Knox told me what you'd done with sales. From \$7—\$8 grand a month to \$16 grand a month? There's only 16,000 people in that market. You were getting a dollar a head per month! Damn, I wish we could do that."

"Mike, I'm interested. What do you have in mind?"

"Mornings and P.D. The pay is \$250 a week and a two bedroom apartment in Arlington."

"Should I bring over an aircheck and a resume?"

"No, Geoff. If you want the job, you're hired."

Fuckin' A douche bag, pard!

"You, sir, have a new employee. Mike, I have my furniture in storage in Houston..."

"We'll pay to bring it up. Can you start the day after Christmas?"

"Yes, but I'd like to do overnights between Christmas and New Years. I can hit the air doing mornings on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, ok?"

"You got it."

"See you the day after Christmas. I'll be in early to meet the troops and see the gear."

"Sounds good. I'll see you then."

Not 10 minutes later the phone rang again. It was Phil Ambrose offering me a weekend gig at KLIF. For the first two weeks I'd been home I'd hit all of the stations where I wanted to work, especially KLIF. No luck! I told him that I was flattered, but I had to tell him I had taken the P.D. deal at KBYU. At that moment in time, I wondered if I had done the right thing. Within a month I had the answer and I've never looked back!

"Alright Farris, how did you do it?" I found Farris in her room and gave her a big hug, thanking her profusely. Farris raised her arms, twirled around and said, "Magic!" My sister has always been strange.

I celebrated Christmas that year with the family. I received linens, towels, and a few pieces of copper cook ware to go with my other copper. My Grandmother presented me with the usual—underwear and a



cashmere turtle neck sweater. Occasionally she would surprise me with a hand knitted sweater from Ireland.

“So, Geoff,” my mother asked, “when do you think your furniture will be here?” This was Jane Anne-speak for “When will you be out of my house...Honey?”

“This week, Mom.” The translation of Geoff Cliff-speak was, “As soon as fuckin’ possible...Mom.”

I spent the week between Christmas and New Years doing overnights at KBYU getting used to the board so that my hands were automatic and I didn’t have to think about the console. The studios were in a shopping center. That was a big deal. Owners and GMs thought it was a good thing if the jocks could be stared at by the shoppers. The jocks hated it except when they picked up new girls.

I thought I would also need a little time to get used to the format. I thought a 50,000 watter in a major market would have a more sophisticated format than what I was used to; the format must be more complicated than I had put in KCMO. My God, was I wrong.

I was appalled. Sitting next to the board were two wire racks of 40 slots each. In the first wire rack were the first 40 singles on Billboard’s country list in no particular order. The second wire rack held the next 40 singles on the chart, also in no particular order. Under the cart machines there was another rack that held current country albums with some old albums mixed in. At the back of the control room were shelves of Oldies.

So the format was this; you played one tune from rack one, then you played a single from rack two. And somewhere you were supposed to play a track from an album and somewhere else you were supposed to play two Oldies. The spots? Well, you poked those in wherever you could. Jingles? Well, they just went anywhere the jock felt like; between spots, before spots, after spots, between records—the format was a cluster-fuck! They didn’t even have a hotclock!

I went to meet the staff the day after Christmas. Mike was the Station Manager. He introduced me first to the G.M., Roy Lee Orange. I got the feeling he didn’t like me. Roy Lee, like most GMs in those days came up through sales and was clueless as to product. The guy barely understood the ratings book.

Then I met the office staff. Caroline was a combination of receptionist and executive secretary. Ms. Salinas handled traffic and billing. Sharon, the Proud Bird with the Golden Tail, was the sales secretary, long legged and very blond. If you didn't believe she was a true blond, she would prove it to you in a heartbeat. She proved it to me the second day at KBYU. It was real, alright!

We had 6 people on the sales staff, all males. Women were rarely hired as sales people. Most of the sales guys were not memorable, but the two sales guys I remember best were Billy Campbell and Bob Dato. I remember Billy because he was one of my weekend guys and he was dumber than a stump. Dato was that salesman that we've all encountered, the one that would sell his mother. He thought he could obligate programming to all kinds of idiotic promotions.

Our Chief Engineer was Morgan Watts. KBYU was 50K daytime and 5K nights. The station was also a 7 tower directional. Watts was almost as slow as our Chief at KCMO, and KBYU sounded almost as bad as that little 500 watt daytimer.

My on-air staff was a little better. Charlie James did mid-days. He was a tall, good looking man about 30 and did an adequate job on the air but off the air he was an asshole. Tom Ford had afternoon drive and he was very good. I knew I would lose this jock soon to a bigger market and a higher paying gig. From day one I was looking for a new afternoon driver. Don Rogers did a half assed 7 to midnight shift. He was not a bad jock, but he needed a real format to support him. His real name was Eddie Gregg and I had already fired him once at KCMO.

The overnight guy had the house name of Bubba. Overnights typically turned over quickly because they always felt isolated, but this Bubba was happy enough and he enjoyed having me do his shift for a few days.

After practice time in the overnights, I hit the air on January 3<sup>rd</sup> 1970, doing morning drive in a major market. I was stoked. By my third day, I was doing shtick. I'd stolen a character from Irving Harrigan—Jim Bob Jump-Back. Charlie Brown and Irving Harrigan were big heroes of mine when they did mornings at KJLH. Then in the late '60s Harrigan and Hudson used Jim Bob at KILT in Houston. Billy Ed Young was the KILT

P.D.—God, he was great! I'd practiced until I could do Jim Bob's voice perfectly and could almost interrupt myself.

I also added drop-ins and used the phone. I got that from Robert W. Morgan when he was on KHJ. He used the phone better than anyone I've ever heard. I always arrived at the station an hour and a half early, checked the morning papers, drank lots of coffee, lined up my oldies and wrote my show. Now all we needed was a real format and some audience.

Country stations hold on to audience naturally. At least, usually they hold on to audience. Our quarter hours weren't all that hot, but first we needed what the ratings books called *cume*—non-duplicated, accumulated listeners!

After my shift on that third day, I went to my office and shut the door. I've never been one for the open door policy. But Roy Lee and Mike just barged into my little cubbyhole anyway.

"What are you doing?" Roy Lee sneered. Mike just shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, Mr. Orange, I'm working on smoothing out our format a bit."

"You can just stop that. We have a consultant and I think he'll have something to say about that!" Roy Lee turned on his heel and left my office.

"He doesn't like me, Mike. What's up with that?"

"Oh, Geoffrey, there's several things. The way you dress. He can't abide your custom clothes, your manners, your vocabulary. And he's been hitting on Caroline for almost a year and gotten no where and you come in and in a week both Caroline and Sharon are swooning."

"Caroline is swooning...over me?"

"Yeah, and you have not hidden your contempt for some of his idiot salesmen."

"Whoops!"

"What he didn't mention is that the three of us are having lunch with the new consultant tomorrow and you were specifically asked to attend. That really pissed him off."

## CHAPTER 4

# TAKE ME TO THE PILOT

KBYU was part of a chain of 7 AMs and 7 FM's. The owner had hired this consultant without talking to his GMs and no one knew who this guy was except Mike. He had some idea because he'd called Ken Knox at KILT in Houston and found out that a 'Mr. Camden' had worked for Gordon McLendon. That was all anyone knew, except he would arrive the next day and the three of us were to meet him at his hotel in Dallas.

All I knew about consultants was what I'd read in Vox Jox, Claude Hall's column in Billboard magazine. Claude was the editor of the Radio and TV portion of the magazine. The only consultant, or 'Radio Doctor' as Claude called him, I'd ever heard of was Bill Drake.

When I was in Vietnam, we would occasionally get a Billboard magazine. It might be two or three months old and raggedy but there were a couple of us that were radio freaks and we devoured Claude Hall's Vox Jox. He was a hero to me before I ever met him.

So I was working in the Dallas-Ft. Worth market as a PD for less than two weeks and I was about to meet a real consultant out of the McLendon organization. I was so inexperienced that I didn't yet even know the consultants lie, "Don't worry. No one's going to get fired."

The next day Roy Lee, Mike and I loaded into Roy Lee's Lincoln and headed for Mr. Kenneth Alexander Camden's hotel in Dallas. Mike usually dressed in jeans, one of those cowboy shirts with pearl looking snap buttons and cowboy boots. Roy Lee was in his polyester three piece

suit. I was dressed as usual; a wool and silk blue blazer, tan slacks and brown tasseled Bally loafers. At that time, Satel's did not have a decent shirt maker, so I bought my shirts at The Custom Shirt shop. I had my shirts made without pockets. I didn't like the American way of putting the monogram on the cuff. My initials were just under where the left pocket would normally be. I also wore a dark red tie with matching silk pocket square. The way I dressed pissed Roy Lee off.

We parked and strolled into the dining room of the hotel. Roy Lee strolled because he was scared shitless. Mike strolled because he didn't give a damn one way or another. I strolled because I was trying to contain my excitement.

Ken Camden was easy to spot. He had chosen a table in the back of the restaurant and had taken the chair that put his back to the wall. That was the chair I normally took—the power chair. I began seeking that chair when I was in Saigon. I didn't want to get shot in the back. I wondered what Mr. Camden's reason was.

Mr. Camden was wearing a grey cashmere jacket with a black knit tie, his monogram on his cuff. Hands were shaken, orders given and chit chat ensued. When Communications Theory came up, Mr. Camden and I talked about Gutenberg's Galaxy, The Medium is the Message and the tribal drum. We went on to talk about Gertrude Stein's Salon in Paris during the '20s, and Dorothy Parker and the Round Table at the old Algonquin. Neither Roy Lee nor Mike had any idea of what Ken—yes, he was Ken to me by then—and I were talking about.

I was totally impressed. Ken told stories about McLendon, Don Keys and other heroes of mine. Eventually he let us know he had been McLendon's number two guy.

It was a long ride back to Ft. Worth. "Ok, what was that all about and who the fuck is this guy, McLuhan?" Roy Lee demanded. That's all I got from Roy Lee Orange all the way back to KBYU's studios.

"What kind of sissy-ass talk was that and who is Gertrude Stein?" He was still at it as Mike and Roy Lee walked back into the Mall where the studios were located.

I went straight to the green monster and drove right back to Ken Camden's hotel. I took the elevator to his floor, found his room and

knocked on the door. When he answered the door he said, "I wondered how long it would take you to get back to me."

Without preamble, I asked for a job. I told him that I had never met anyone that had that much knowledge of the business and that I would do whatever job he asked.

He said, "Desire is 90% of getting the job done. For now, just go back and run the station. In a few days I'll send you some information in the mail. Read it and act on it. "And yes, you are hired. I'll be in touch."

*Shit a motherfucking brick!* I was hired by a big time consultant! Son of a bitch! I was a consultant! I knew I was going to learn more about radio than I ever thought possible. I was stoked!

The following Tuesday, I was finishing up my shift doing my final bit.

"Say, Goff", started Jim Bob, with a hard "G".

"It's 'Geoff, Jim Bob."

"I know, but you spell it funny."

"Jim Bob..." I said ominously.

"So, Goff, do you know how hard it is to be an Indian these days?"

"No, Jim Bob, I don't. How hard is it?"

"Well, Goff, have you ever gotten your quiver caught in a revolving door?"

I punched off the first spot in the stop-set.

When I got off the air I went to the front office to check my mail.

"Geoff, I think you've been waiting for this," Caroline said. The beautiful Caroline batted those large brown eyes at me. Actually those eyes were more the color of dark honey. She had the manila envelope in her small long fingered hand.

Caroline was an exotic beauty. She was slim, almost skinny with long black hair with blue glints. She also had very large breasts. I knew she was the daughter of the Costa Rican Consul. I also knew that she was born in the States and had gotten her degree from the University of Chicago. But I had no idea she was interested in me.

My creepy mid-day guy was hanging around her desk. He had been hitting on her since long before I'd come on board. I took the envelope addressed from Mr. Camden and started toward my small windowless office. I've always preferred a windowless office. I really didn't like to be distracted.

“Geoff? Geoff, the Governor called again. He wants you to call him back,” Caroline informed me.

“Caroline, if he calls again, please tell him that I will call him tomorrow just after 8AM.”

Jim Bob and I had been calling the Gov every morning. It was just a bit that I had learned from Robert W. Morgan. I called the Governor every morning just to see if he was at work. My pickup driving audience loved it. The old Gov along with Ben Barnes had been caught up in a bank scandal and they were very touchy.

The attention that I was getting from Caroline confused me. I’d never had to ask for a date since I was 15. Well, that’s true, mostly because I’m basically shy and wouldn’t ask first. The other reason is that I’m generally clueless about what other people are thinking. Oh, I can read other folks if my antenna is out, but usually—and here’s the problem—I just don’t think it’s worth the effort.

Finally, I sat at my desk and opened the package from Ken. There were three things in the parcel; a letter on Camden Corp. letterhead that read, “Study these two documents, use what makes sense to you. I’ll be back in town in two weeks. I’ll expect a report.” The letter was signed ‘Ken’.

One of the documents was a ratings book for the New York market. It was the Fall, 1969 Arbitron. Jesus, Ken had worked a miracle! In New York City he came up number 3, Women 25+ middays. You can’t do that with a cowboy New Jersey station! Can you?

The other thing was something I had never seen before. It was titled ‘Format Guide’ for a ‘Countryopolitan’ station in Hackensack, New Jersey.

I read it and re-read it. Then I sat in my small office and thought about what and how much I had learned. The 40 page document I held in my hands contained more programming information than I had ever imagined. Epiphany! I read it again and again. Even though the guide was written for a union operation, so much of the information was immediately applicable! With this knowledge, I could make this 50K mother sing.

I pulled out a yellow legal pad and started to work. The first thing I noticed that wasn’t included in the guide was tempo control. At least I could add that. I also noted that the Hackensack station only ran 12

commercial minutes an hour. My idea was to not count minutes, but to count units. Listeners don't hear minutes, they hear commercials. It doesn't matter how long the commercials are, they are just interruptions. I wrote my version of a Format Guide.

I was lost in writing and lost all sense of time. I wasn't close to finishing when there was a knock on my door.

"Geoff, can I come in?"

"Of course, Caroline. You can always come in."

"Geoff, it's almost seven. I thought I should tell you."

"Damn, I haven't checked my production and done the Jim Bob drop-ins. Shit!"

"I checked and you only have two spots to cut but you missed lunch.

"Everybody is very interested in what was in that package you got today. Roy Lee was going nuts."

"What's his story?" I really wanted to know. Roy Lee didn't like me very much. He kept calling me the Junior Executive and sneering. In fact the sales staff in toto didn't like me. I expected it was going to get worse.

"Caroline, let me cut those spots and then I'll buy you dinner, OK?"

"I have two steaks. Would you like to come over?"

"Absolutely, but only if you let me supply the wine."

"Sure."

"Let me run over to the apartment and pick up an appropriate wine."

"Well, why don't I pick up the steaks—my place is very close—and I'll follow you to your apartment. We could have dinner there."

"That'll be just fine."

Caroline followed me back to the production room. I cut the two spots. When I finished, she took my hand and ran my right index finger down her left breast. Those amber eyes looked up at me and I nearly melted.

"I think this will be a good dinner," she said. I could feel her nipple harden under my finger. I got hard. I didn't wear underwear—a lesson I'd learned in the 'Nam. Underwear meant crotch rot. A lesson you never forget!

Have you ever noticed that women know more about sex than men? Or maybe it's just me. I followed Caroline to her apartment and she



picked up the steaks. Her little Volkswagen bug was easy to follow and follow it I did. I was surprised that she knew exactly where I lived. I think she was taken aback by the apartment; it was not what one would expect from a Country station P.D.; Persian rugs, some art and decent furniture.

I opened a '64 Beychevelle. "We need to let this breathe a bit. Let me put on the potatoes."

"I have the idea you've done this before!"

"Caroline, if I hadn't done this before my sister and little brother would have starved to death. My Mother owns restaurants and was never home. Worse, she couldn't cook for shit. I'm sorry. I should ask if you'd like a drink."

"Yes, please. A martini?"

"Shaken, not stirred?"

"You've read too many 007 books. Why don't you show me the rest of the apartment?"

"Not much to see; it's your typical suburban place."

"Oh, you might be surprised at what I find."

First, I excused myself and changed into a black silk shirt and jeans with a lace up fly before shaking her martini. I handed it to her and we strolled toward my bedroom.

Caroline purred, "Lay back on the bed." She'd undone my fly and began to work magic with those small hands and long fingers. Her mouth was hot and soft. Before I knew it we were both naked.

"Just lay back now and don't move." I didn't take her advice. I licked the first two fingers on my right hand and reached down to lubricate and separate her labia. I didn't need to, she was already wet and open.

"Hush now. Don't move." She slid exquisitely into place. Caroline used her muscles to squeeze and release me, squeeze and release me. Again. Again. I could barely stand it. I took my fingers again and began to massage her clitoris. This time she didn't object.

After we finished dinner, we snuggled back into my bed. She was so slight I hardly knew she was there until I awoke to that soft mouth and those long fingers working their magic again.

The next morning I started using some of the things I had picked up from the format guide. I swept :00, :15, :30 and :45. I also clustered my

spots and used the jingles coming out of stop sets. I did my bits between the last tune I played and the first spot in a stop set. I taped an hour of the show so I could critique it. The station was already sounding one hell of a lot better.

## CHAPTER 5

# WITH YOU OR WITHOUT YOU

Just before noon Caroline knocked on my door. She cracked the door a bit and asked if she could come in. You bet. “Please do,” I said. Caroline slipped in, closing the door behind her. “How are you feeling this morning?” I asked, probing a little. A guy never knows.

“Ummm...sore.”

“Oh Jeez, I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be,” she said and sat in my lap, her legs over the arm of my chair and her thin arms around me. She planted small kisses on my face. I’m uncomfortable with this and remind her that the door is unlocked.

“How about my place tonight? Have you ever listened to Sergeant Pepper all the way through?”

“Amazingly, I have not. A ridiculous admission I know, but true.”

“Tonight, then?”

“Sure.”

“Oh. And you’ve got a visitor. Somebody looking for a job I think.”

“Does this somebody have a name?”

“Well, he said to tell you it was ‘I.P.’ and that you guys had been to school together.”

When I saw him I did remember this man from Elkins Institute. I remembered that he was more than a bit secretive. It shows in his face and body language. I.P. has small green eyes, set wide apart in a broad face. The eyes are always wary and sly. Black kinky hair, with a smile that never shows his teeth adds to that sly look and it’s obvious that he has more than

a little larceny in his heart. He also looks like a man that you don't want to irritate, with those thick arms and legs like tree trunks.

I motioned I.P. into my office. "Dude!" he smiled.

"Hello, I.P. It's good to see you. What's up?"

"Lookin' for a gig. Want to show me around?"

We shook hands and it was like handling a brick; big, hard and thick fingered. I showed him around. It was like an FCC inspection...and he talked. He showed me things I had never noticed. Stuff like AC bundled with audio cable. That little nuisance produced a 60 cycle hum in the audio. It didn't take long until I was sure I liked the guy. "Okay, I.P. What are you doing here?"

"Well, Geoffrey, it's a love affair."

"Go on."

"There are four 50k stations in the market and I do love high power AMs."

"And I take it you have been to the other three? And KLIF was the first place you went, right?"

"Yeah. It was the first place you went too, wasn't it?" Everybody wanted to get in at KLIF.

"Yeah."

"So here I am, Geoff. I can't go to WFAA or WBAP. I mean how could anyone stand a cow bell every 12 hours?"

"And I had no joy at KRLP, so Sean Grabowski said you were a good guy and that I should talk to you, but you didn't know dick about engineering."

"But you don't like cowboy music...?"

"No, Geoff. No, I don't, but it gets worse."

"How could that be?"

"Well, you have a 50K day and 5K nights in the glove compartment at 1540. This turkey is a 7 tower directional. Most of your signal blows west. You cover lots of cows and goats. You do cover Ft. Worth but only some of Dallas."

"Yeah, I know. But my Mother listens every morning. Damn, dude, she bugs everybody she knows to listen to her son, the radio star. It's a bitch!

“OK, I.P., tell me why you’re really here other than I’m programming a 50K?”

“Well, Geoff, it’s a question of mind over matter. If you don’t mind, it don’t matter!”

I laughed and then asked him about his track record. He started to tell me as we walked back to my small ass office. We sat and I.P. continued, “After Elkins, I got the overnight slot with an assistant tech job to boot. This was with Storz in Oklahoma City”. He loved riding that sky wave.

“There is an old story about Bud Armstrong, the guy that usually hired jocks for Storz,” I.P. said. “They say that Mr. Armstrong always asked you to lunch and if you used the salt before you tasted the food, you were automatically not hired. Of course, I knew this story and tasted each thing on the plate before using any salt. Or pepper.

“So, I got to be one of the many Bill Millers, the house name for the overnight dude.”

I.P. had been in Oklahoma less than a week when he was sent to the airport to pick up the Chief of The Chain; the head engineer, a man named Pearly Tribaut. I.P. and Mr. Tribaut hit it off right away. Pearly was full of stories and I.P. heard them all! One of the things about I.P. was that he was steeped in all of the rock ’n roll radio lore.

I.P. had barely gotten through the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. He was bored stiff with school, but the trig used to calculate directional stations was no problem for him. After all trig was part of being a radio engineer. If it had to do with engineering, he had it down cold.

I.P. continued, “I moved on to the Top 40 in Austin. They offered me Teeny Bop Drive and assistant engineer so I had to go. Then I ended up at KAYC in Beaumont. Same deal as Austin.”

“Wait a minute I.P., why did you leave Austin?”

“To answer your question, there was a little problem. You know those Western Union clocks everybody has?”

“Sure, I know. On KLIF, that big voice comes on and says ‘It’s midnight in Moscow, 7PM in Paris’ and in Dallas it’s whatever. Yeah, I remember.”

I.P. looks down at his feet. Every radio station in the country was equipped with a Western Union clock. I mean *every* station. Western

Union was the gold standard for time keeping. As I understand it, Western Union was geared to the Government atomic clock.

I.P. thought a time tone at the top of the hour sounded really cool. Unfortunately the station I.P. worked for did not have a time tone so he went to work on it.

"OK, here's what happened. I thought that would be a good format element for KNOW, so, I thought, how hard could it be? Wouldn't it be great if I could just rig it up overnight? So, rig it up I did."

I.P. couldn't wait to surprise the morning drive guy with this dandy new format element. He had the time tone ready to go by 5 AM. He explained the whole thing to the morning drive dude, who also thought it was a good idea. Neither I.P. nor the jock thought about asking or warning the Chief Engineer or P.D.

"At 5:59 AM, we're watching the second hand slowly tick up to 6 AM. When it hits the top of the hour, sure enough, the tone went off!

"Sparks flew, smoke began to fill up the control room, alarms went off, and phones began to ring. Not only did the station clock blow out. All of the clocks in the region went down, including the clocks at the Western White House where President Lyndon was in residence.

I.P. continued, "Within an hour, the station was full of Secret Service men. I was in handcuffs and the morning drive guy was on the beach."

I'm laughing my ass off! "So why did you go to Beaumont?"

"Because they had a job for me."

"So, why did you leave Beaumont?"

"I learned all they could teach me."

"OK, so why did you come back to the Metroplex?"

"KLHF."

I hired him on the spot. "Mr. Freelay, you are hired. I would like to put you in mid-days."

"If you don't mind, I'd rather have the 7 to midnight shift."

"Because?"

"Because I know your Chief is Morgan Watts and he doesn't know dick about engineering. The reason I want this gig is to make that 50K sing and the only way I can do that is with Morgan out of the way, so we need to be able to work after mid-night."

“We?”

“Yeah, you are going to have to help me.”

“I do mornings, fucker!”

“It’s a bitch ain’t it? Look, all you have to do is cover for me, OK?”

“I can do that. Now tell me what you know about Ken Camden.”

I.P. told me that the Camden Corp. was first and foremost a brokerage company. The consulting was a sideline. Ken also did appraisals and was an expert witness on communication cases. So the way it worked was this; stations were sold at 2 ½ times gross revenues or 7 to 10 times cash flow. Here’s where the consulting came in; if you upped the ratings, the sales and cash flow went up, thus the worth of the station increased.

“Ken not only gets the brokerage fee, but the consulting and the appraisal fees. He’s brilliant!”

“So, I.P., I expect you weren’t sent over here just for a gig. Tell me what’s really up.”

“I really don’t know. My guess is Ken is pairing us up. If it works out, so much the better.”

“Do you have a place to live?”

“Not yet.”

“I have a two bedroom apartment in Arlington. Want to move in?” I.P. just shook my hand and said he could move in tonight.

The guy that was currently doing 7 to midnight, Don Rogers whose real name was Eddie Gregg, was a complete fuck up. Not to mention an asshole. Eddie was a picker and was more interested in singing cowboy tunes than being a good jock. I fired his sorry ass and put I.P. in that shift. Eddie left in a huff.

Within three days I had the new KBYU format guide written. I sent the document to Ken in Middleburg. I now thought of him as The Boss. I waited for some feed back. What I got was a letter, “Thanks for sending me a copy. How is it working out?” I took his response as a recommendation to forge ahead.

I called a meeting of the jock staff and sales for the following Saturday to go over the format guide. I turned a copy of the guide over to Mike and it sounded good to him. Roy Lee threw a fit.

“You’re workin’ for this consultant guy now? There’s no way I’m

cuttin' the commercial load. You got it? Programming is bullshit. Do you know where your paychecks come from? You're a fuckin' idiot!" Roy Lee turned on his heel and stomped off.

"What a dip wad," I thought. My basic feeling toward Mr. Polyester, with his white patent leather loafers and matching belt, was one of contempt. But wait, there's more.

I called Ken and told him about Roy Lee. And so some how or other, Roy Lee changed his mind. By meeting time on Saturday, Roy Lee didn't just 'not like' me; he *hated* my ass!

We had our Saturday meeting. Now here's the clue; Johnny Campbell, first to speak up, says, "Sweeping four times an hour? I just can't see me with a broom in my hands." And that rather sums up the level of intelligence I was dealing with.



## CHAPTER 6

# KING OF THE ROAD

I was all moved in to the apartment now. The place was stocked with my favorite foods. I'll admit to being a burgeoning gourmet. Thanks to my Mom I had access to all kinds of food stuffs. Jean-Claude, her chef, helped with the pantry and stole all of the wines and liquors that I would need. Actually, what *we* would need. I.P. had moved in.

My God, talk about the odd couple. There are some people you just look at and know you will like them. I.P. was one of those people; even with that air of larceny and sly mystery about him, people liked him.

I'm just the opposite. I played the part of Felix Unger. People, males mostly, take one look at me and decide I'm an asshole. I don't know what it is, the way I dress maybe or what I think of as my 'confidence' may come across to others as something else. I.P. explains it as my 'low crimes and high ass-holery'.

I've thought maybe it was my military training; however, this dislike happens even before they realize that my suggestions sound like orders and I expect to have them executed immediately. The other thing is my father's mantra that is always in my head, 'If it's not exactly right, then it's wrong'.

Women, on the other hand, think I'm charming. When I've mentioned this problem with men to women I've felt close to, it has been suggested by them that it might be my "strong personality."

Anyway, I.P. moved in. In every part of the apartment everything had a place and was neatly in its place, except in I.P.'s room. That area was a

complete disaster. The bed unmade, old jeans thrown into a corner, dirty t-shirts draped about. Then there was that car coat. At one time that car coat had been a good looking, expensive wool coat, but these days it was more than a bit haggard. I.P. called it his 'funky coat'.

The kitchen was stocked with foods that I.P. was not familiar with; foie gras, artichokes in olive oil, anchovies, etc. He didn't know what anchovies were, or what was in a Caesar salad. But he liked hamburger meat. Pork chops. Potato chips.

As I mentioned, we had a decent wine selection and some good brandies and single malts. I.P. didn't drink but he liked Pepsi with his marijuana. He would put his feet up and blue smoke would swirl around his head. It wasn't until the next year that I took my first toke. So, I shopped for foods that I.P. liked and was familiar with. It was sort of a welcoming present. See what I mean? The odd couple!

By mid February the new format was installed and some of the jocks even stayed on format. We were using pre-printed logs so there could be no confusion about what went where. Follow the format and you couldn't fuck up. Aye, there's the rub. Suffer me not the slings and arrows of outrageous butt-fucks like mid-day dudes and General Managers.

I usually got to work at 4:30AM. It gave me time to make fresh coffee, read the newspaper for silly articles and write my show. I know most jocks don't write their show, but I did. I also pre-pulled my spots and music. It drove I.P. nuts.

One morning, pulling into my usual parking place at the studios, I noticed an old beat up Chevy pickup parked next to me. As I got out of the Green Monster, I was accosted by a big guy in jeans and flannel shirt. It was cold, but it didn't seem to bother this youngster. My 'uh oh' alarm went off. It was 4:30 in the morning and I was sure it was a holdup or some other dastardly deed.

"Mr. Cliff, wait up, please," this guy said while holding his hand out. "Mr. Cliff, I've been listening, and the station sounds great." I shook his hand and waited for what was next. "My name is Billy Don Tucker and I want to work for you."

"Well, uh, good morning, Billy Don", I said. "Do you have an aircheck?"

“You bet. I’ve got a dub right here.”

It seems that Billy Don had come to the studios several times, but never got past Caroline. She told me later that she didn’t like the way he was dressed. Caroline was a bit protective.

The upshot was that I asked Billy Don to come back after ten and I would listen to his tape. He was pretty damn good, so I hired him and fired that asshole Charlie James in mid-days. I talked it over with I.P. My thought was to give “Danny London”, Billy Don’s new name, I.P.’s 7-midnight slot and move I.P. to mid-days.

I.P. still wasn’t up for it. The daypart he had allowed him to get out to the transmitter site when our engineer, Morgan Watts, wouldn’t be around. And I.P. still had things to do. You couldn’t keep him away from a 7-tower directional array and a 50K transmitter anyway.

So Danny London got mid-days and I.P. tried to do something with our 50,000 watter. We had crap for processing, but I.P. did the best he could. Our G.M. was not coming off any money for something as ‘useless’ as engineering. If that wasn’t enough, that goddamn Morgan changed everything I.P. did at night to make us sound better back to the way Morgan had it during the day. Then the son-of-a-bitch would throw a fit with Roy Lee and his orchestra.

I went to Mike, the station manager, and asked for help. Mike told me to hold my water and get us through the spring book as best I could. I.P. and I held a strategy session. I couldn’t fire Morgan, so what could we do? I.P.’s answer was deception. That’s not exactly the way he put it, but it amounted to the same thing.

Ken Camden came to Dallas a few times before our first ratings period. KBYU was not his only client. Earlier, he had brokered the sale of KRILP, another of the 50K facilities in the market, and of course had kept the consulting gig as well.

I.P. and I were invited to dinner with him when he was in town. I could never tell what Ken was thinking, but he would tell us stories about other stations. It wasn’t until we got home that I got it. He had told us our next moves and mentioned a few ways to accomplish those goals. The man was slick. I.P. never said much, just soaked it up. Ken seemed glad that I.P. and I were sharing an apartment and collaborating.

A few days later I.P. asked me to help unload his old Celica. It was the weekend and we were at the apartment. The Celica's trunk was full of almost-new gear.

"Is this legal?"

I.P. slid those half closed green eyes at me and said, "Never trouble trouble unless trouble troubles you."

I didn't ask anything more.

## CHAPTER 7

# UP ON A TIGHTROPE

The following Monday, the station sounded one hell of a lot better. I asked about it and all I got was another sly look from I.P.'s small green eyes. Amplifiers for the turntables appeared; other engineering goodies just materialized. The station began to sound competitive. I.P. slowly took me into his confidence and I began to help him install the new gear late at night.

The next morning I started the run to the book promotion. I did it using my on-air character, Jim Bob. I've already admitted that I stole Jim Bob from Irving Harrigan. I was a big fan as a kid of Charlie Brown (the real one) and Harrigan on KJLH. Later, I was a fan when Mac Hudson and Harrigan were on KILT. Billy Ed Young, KILT's Program Director was a great one. I.P. and I were the grandchildren of Gordon McLendon and Todd Storz. We were the children of Bill Stewart, Art Holt, George Wilson and Don Keyes.

It was amazing to me how many listeners didn't know that it was me doing Jim Bob's voice. If you're good at doing a voice, a character on the radio, then the character takes on its own personality. Sometimes you just don't know what he's going to say next.

I'm rolling out of a George Jones tune into the 7:06 stop set. I drop the calls, time, temp and my name and Jim Bob pops up, "You, Goff?"

"It's Geoff and you know it."

"Yeah, but you spell it funny. Anywho, you know my uncle died?" Jim Bob has a very west Texas accent.

I answer, "No, James Robert, I didn't know."

"Well, any way he passed, so I've been funeralizin".

"Please accept my condolences."

"Your what? Is that a car?"

"'Condolences' means I'm sorry about your uncle."

"Well, don't be. He left me a load of money. I already bought me a new pickup."

"Jim Bob, you are a mess."

"Yeah, a mess o' money."

I punched off the first spot. The die was cast. This would either work or they would fire my ass. Coming out of the last spot, I roll the jingle, '1540, KBYU'. The tune starts, the first note hits on the 'U'.

Over the talk up, Jim Bob yells, "I want to do the right thing!"

"Quiet, Bubba, here's Dolly." I hit the vocal exactly.

The next stop set is straight—no bits; then I sweep through 7:15 and come into the next stop set at 7:21. I'm coming out of one of the hitbounds and do the formatics before Jim Bob pops up.

"Now if y'all are listening, just send me a self addressed stamped envelope. I'll send you a bill for 100 dollars."

"You sure about this, Jim Bob?"

"Yes, a bill for 100 dollars!"

I punched off the first spot and waited for the shit to hit fan. For the rest of the show Jim Bob and I milk the shit out of this deal. In fact we hit this hard for two weeks. All a listener had to do was send us a self addressed stamped envelope and Jim Bob would send them a bill for one hundred dollars. I was very careful to always word this as 'a bill for one hundred dollars', not 'a hundred dollar bill'.

The first morning I started this, I was walking out of the control room and there's Roy Lee. "Are you fuckin' nuts? What the fuck do you think you're doing? A hundred dollars! I knew you would get us in the shit, you snotty little asshole!"

"Okay, are you through yet?" I asked. Mike Morton is standing behind Roy Lee, laughing his ass off. I don't know whether Mike got it or not or was just enjoying the show.

I explained the concept to Mike and Roy Lee and they just shook their

heads and wondered what to do. They really couldn't stop it without having to pay up, so they just let me rip. Jim Bob and I did our usual shtick, but continued to hit the "bill for a 100 dollars" hard.

The phones were burning up; letters came in by the thousands. I swiped KBYU invoices and started making out bills for '100 dollars'. We did them in crayola. The invoice said, 'You owe me 100 dollars so pay up!'

Caroline and Sharon helped me get the invoices out. We made sure that there were many spelling mistakes. We also finished each invoice with the words 'Please remit now'.

We thought Roy Lee was going to have a stroke! The promotion worked. The audience laughed and word of mouth was terrific. All the stunts that Jim Bob and I pulled were to raise the station's visibility in the market place. The problem is this; any promotion should do four things; raise visibility; i.e. build 'cumulative audience'; maintain quarter hour listening; be salable, and recycle the audience from one daypart to another. This promotion only helped our cume.

Word of what Jim Bob and I had pulled off filtered back to the Home Ranch.

KBYU was the anchor station for a small chain owned by a second generation oil man, named Billy Don Willins. 'Oil Man'! I use the term loosely. Billy Don was just not the sharpest knife in the drawer. This dude still lived with his mother and she was in charge of the money. Billy had an allowance.

His momma really did not approve of this radio hobby of his; therefore, not much *dinero* went into the broadcast holdings. Momma kept a tight grip on that \$300 million and she's the one that hired The Camden Corp. to keep watch and to sell the damn things as soon as possible. Mrs. Willins, being no fool, also hired Lord Kenneth to do the consulting. She did her home work and checked everything out.

One of the reasons she kept a close watch on her son was because of her late husband. The senior Mr. Willins was a small time rancher with some scrub acreage outside of Odessa and Midland. The late Mr. Willins had about as much on the ball as his son, but he owned 2,000 acres of the Permian basin.

While this mass mailing of bills was going on, I was chiding Jim Bob

for what he had done. On the air I was appalled at Jim Bob's antics. Jim Bob made it plain that now that he was rich, he was obligated to increase that wealth and only a fool would give away that kind of money and by the by did I mind that he used those billing things that KBYU sent out every month? And I was astonished that he would use KBYU invoices for his own purposes.

It worked like a fucking charm. I could get no money for TV, but I did have the market talking. So I started thinking, "If you divide your quarter hour into your come you get an efficiency factor. KBYU's EF was 16 in the last Arbitron book. I didn't program it then, thank God. The 16 wouldn't be too bad for a Top 40, but a country station, even a badly programmed one, should be between a 10 to 12 EF. We had raised the visibility of the station; now we had to hold that audience for as long as possible." I had my work cut out for me.

"G.C. what are we going to do for the book?" I.P. had started calling me by my initials.

"I don't fuckin' know, I.P. Have you looked in the prize closet lately?"

"Yeah, nothing. Early on I figured out how to jimmy that lock. Let me guess. That twerp Roy Lee ain't comin' up off of nothin'."

"Correcto mundo, big guy. Por nada."

"What does Lord Kenneth say?"

"Do the best you can' the man said. Look, I poked my head in there yesterday and found two KBYU t-shirts, a half dozen albums and a case of Bic pens."

"And we have to do a book promotion with that?"

"That's right. I.P. I have an idea, if we can get away with it."

"Uh huh, I'm listening."

So I told I.P. my idea. He gave me that almost-grin that showed no teeth. Earning that grin was high praise indeed.

I.P. and I were in the production room getting ready to cut promos for the book promotion. We had no money, but we had a bucket full of sneaky. The book promotion was called 'A Dream Come True'. Here's how it worked: on one cart there was a list of wonderful prizes. A big voice would say, 'A 50' Yacht; a \$100,000 Dream Home' and like that. The second cart only had one prize, 'A Bic Pen'.



If you haven't figured it out yet, this is how it went. We ran a recorded promo/I.D at :02; at the :06 stop set, we did a live promo after the end of the tune, before the first spot. We did live promos before and after the bottom of the hour. Then at the :51 stop set we asked for the audience to call in. The jock would take the 10<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> caller or whatever. After we got the contestant on the phone, we reminded them of the contest rules. When you heard a prize you really wanted, just say 'stop' and your prize would be the next thing that came up. Of course the next thing that came up was always 'A Bic Pen'.

We had another three days of running the apology promos for Jim Bob's stinginess. We were also running some 'phoner promos' where listeners called in and told us how funny Jim Bob is and that they had framed their crayon invoices or thumb tacked them to the bulletin board at work. We faked the 'phoners', but what the hey.

Once again we lost the overnight jock and had hired another guy, John B. Johns. Both I.P. and I knew this kid. He had worked for me at KCMO for about a month. His wife was one of the people I had taken to the Houston Free Clinic. I.P. knew him from Beaumont. This kid was barely 5 feet and was so blond his hair was almost white. He was apple cheeked and looked almost 12, but when he opened his mouth the walls shook.

I had written the promos for 'A Dream Come True'. I.P. did the blade work. He was a brilliant production man when you could get him in the production room. This new kid, John B. Johns, was voicing the promos. It was about 5PM and we had the production room to ourselves, but we were having trouble with the new kid.

"I'm not going to be Bubba!" John B. Johns announced. I patiently explained that 'Bubba' was a house name and I had already sent in the ARB info sheet.

"I don't give a damn. Do I look like a Bubba to you?" I gave up. The new overnight guy was John B. Johns.

The 'Dream Come True' promos would run for two weeks before the contest began. Then we had another set of promos set to go after the contest started. Jim Bob and I talked it up as did Tom Ford, afternoon drive guy. To my surprise Ford stayed with us. I was sure we would lose him as soon as a better offer came along, but he hung in.

I cut the playlist down to 11As, 21Bs and 5Cs. The As were the biggest hits, the Bs were the next hits, going both up and down. The Cs were hitbounds, the new tunes we thought would be hits. I did the same cutting down with the Recurrents—100 resurrected, recently burned out hits—as well as the oldies. There were no more album cuts. As I.P. put it, “For a country station, this playlist is tighter than a nun’s business!”

I.P. and I had been getting letters almost every day from Kenneth. Mostly they seemed to be chit chat, but they always mentioned some article from *The Economist* or some other publication that one would not normally peruse.

## CHAPTER 8

# BORN TO BE WILD

The Willins' Chain also included a station in El Paso. One of their idiot salesmen sold the Honda dealership a package that included The Great Race. One guy would start from El Paso, the other would start from Ft. Worth; both of the riders would be on a Honda 350.

I called Tommy Thompson, the P.D. at KEPL. He was going to ride east and would I ride west. What we agreed to do was to get out of town, load the bikes into the station vans and then just outside of the destination town, we would unload the bikes and ride in triumphantly. The rest of the story was that we had to call in four times a day.

Johnny Campbell was to be my van driver. He had the Honda account in Ft. Worth.

The day of The Great Race, I had a scooter escort out of town. The other bikers peeled away about half a mile after the start of the promotion. Johnny Campbell had my billfold and everything else I needed to get to El Paso. I looked around. No Campbell. I needed to fill the bike up! No Campbell. I had just enough gas to get back to the apartment. I called the Highway Patrol and turned the station van in as a stolen vehicle.

I waited until the next afternoon to call Mike Morton. When he finished laughing, he admitted that Campbell was not the smartest bunny in the woods, but wasn't it nice that I had let Johnny spend the night in the Ranger, Texas jail. After he finished laughing, he said he would straighten all this out. I, on the other hand, hoped it would take at least another day so that Johnny could spend two nights in the Ranger, Texas jail. That dumb son of a bitch.

*J. BLACKBURN*

I knew I would take a great deal of heat from Roy Lee. I had one of his salesmen locked up and there wasn't a goddamn thing he could do about it except be mean in little ways. For example, he kept me from firing Morgan Watts, the Chief Engineer.

## CHAPTER 9

# SGT. PEPPER TAUGHT THE BAND TO PLAY

Ken knew that we were going to do well in the book and he wanted to be sure that I got my bonus. Willins and Roy Lee also knew that we were going to get a good report card but they were reluctant to pay up. Willins' mother was the problem; she wouldn't let Roy Lee have any money.

So they traded out flying lessons for me. I was a natural but I found it boring. I flew a Cherokee 140 and I could land and take off after only a couple of lessons. I took the pilot's ground test, passed it; I did my cross country, passed that, and got my pilot's license.

Summer passed. The Spring book results turned out OK. The Fall book was good too.

Finally, a phone call came from Ken. He was in town and said he would like to see me and I.P. He gave us directions to Ojeda's, an obscure Mexican restaurant somewhere off Lemon Avenue in Dallas. The indomitable Jane Anne Cliff had dragged her husband and all of us kids to damn near every eatery that ever opened in town, so I already knew of the place. Great food.

We saddled up and started out to Ojeda's. I.P. thought we were probably caught on the book contest. We hadn't checked with anybody; we were just going to do it. Fuck 'em, they gave us no money and all we had were those Bic pens.

"G.C., running that Jim Bob deal ran us closer than a red cunt hair to getting us fired."

"I.P., what kind of fucking language is that? I am so goddamned ashamed of you."

Both of us were afraid we were about to be fired, but neither of us mentioned the possibility. We just bantered and decided that we would use 'R-C-H' as a compromise for red cunt hair.

Finally, I.P. reminded me that 6 months was a rock and roll lifetime. I knew what he meant. We arrived at the restaurant, went inside and looked around for Ken Camden. He was seated at a back table. He had taken the chair that was positioned so that his back was against the wall. I looked for the next best chair.

After our dinner, Ken handed each of us an envelope. Then, out of the blue, Ken asked me where I got my clothes. That evening I had on a brown herring bone tweed jacket and matching vest with tan slacks. My shoes were cordovan and made by Arden's of New England.

"Uh, I get them at Satel's in San Antonio. They're Hickey Freeman."

"Well, we don't have that much time. I.P. you don't have a suit, do you?" I.P. just shook his head no.

"Cliff, take him over to Neiman's and buy him some clothes. Two suits, not double breasted—I think that would make him look too big. And two sport coats and some slacks and shirts."

Ken looked at I.P.'s crepe soled shoes. He looked right in I.P.'s eyes. I.P. stared right back. Then Ken shook his head and looked at me and said, "Do the best you can."

"In your envelopes you'll find your itineraries and an American Express Gold card each. Put the clothes on I.P.'s card." I.P. and I were stunned.

"Do you both have your Passports? A boy never knows when he'll need to leave the country in a hurry."

"Yes, sir, I have my Passport."

"I.P. do you have a Passport?" Ken asked. I.P. just shook his head no.

"Okay, Geoff, deal with that as well. Caroline can help you with that." Now how the hell did he know about Caroline?

Ken continued, "Cliff, you always wear that Rolex Submariner?"

"Yes, sir."

"Buy yourself a gold day date with the president's band and buy I.P. a

gold GMT. Call this guy in San Diego. His name is Leo Hamel. He will fix you up with the watches. Here's his card. Put the Rolexes on the card as well, but you'll have to pay Camden Corp. back for the watches. The clothes are on the company."

"Jesus fucking Christ, what's up?" I'm thinking. I.P. looks like a puppy run over by a Harley.

Ken was not through. "Look at your itineraries. First, you will notice you're booked this Thursday into National. A car is reserved at Hertz. Also, there's a map to my house in Middleburg, Maryland. You will be our guests for the night. Then you are booked into the Mayflower for three nights.

"You're going to the NAB. Have either of you ever been to the National Association of Broadcasters convention?"

"No, sir, it'd be the first one for me," I said. I.P. nodded.

"It might be a good thing to look around a bit and you might even drop in on Claude Hall. If I were you, I would take a case of Wild Turkey. Claude, being a good Texas boy, would enjoy that."

We were in the green monster, heading back to the apartment. "What the hell do you think of that?"

"God knows, I.P. I just don't fucking have a clue. Except I think we've been hired. And we're off to the NAB."

"Well, whatever it is, it ain't gonna be in Ft. Worth. When he told you to find a new morning man and somebody to take my shift, I nearly shit. And he wants you to fire that asshole of a Chief."

"Yeah, you have anybody in mind for Chief?"

Mostly we don't drink; a glass of wine occasionally or a cognac or Armagnac after dinner. I.P. smoked pot certainly, but that night we had a drink or four. The answer is no, I did not smoke dope at this time. Later I learned better. I.P. smoked a breakfast joint every morning, but I rarely saw it. I was already on the air.

We gave Danny London mornings and the P.D. gig. John B. Johns took mid-days. I told Danny it was his job to find the new 7-midnight guy and an overnighiter. Danny had them there that night.

"I.P. let's go pack. Did you take a look at that schedule?"

“Uh huh, I did. We’re going to drive?”

“Yup, Sun Tzu will love it. We’ll just turn in the airline tickets and leave tonight. That way we don’t have to fuck around with rent-a-cars and the Mustang is comfortable.

“We’ve got to go to Neiman’s right now! So just suck it up. If some thing doesn’t fit exactly we’ll have it fixed in Washington.”

“Okay! Let’s go to the NAB!”

“I’ll call Ken and let him know we’re driving up.”

When I got off the phone, I put my suit bag on the bed. Sun Tzu looked at me with those big blue eyes and he began to pack. He lined up his leather mouse, his cloth mouse, his ball of yarn and his stuffed lion cub, which was bigger than he was. As soon as all of his stuff was lined up in front of his carrying case, he jumped on the bed and sat on my luggage.

On the way out of town we stopped at ‘Needless Mark Up’ and bought I.P. a wardrobe and we stopped at a liquor store and bought a case of Wild Turkey whiskey. We were on our way to Middleburg, Maryland.

“Did you call that guy in San Diego?” I asked I.P.

“Yeah. He’s going to ship the watches. Yours is a day date with the president’s band and mine is a GMT, same band.”

“We have to pay for those...eventually. At least you get the clothes free.”

“I suspect I’ll pay for them too eventually!” I.P. laughed.

It was almost Spring and things were beautiful. We were on a small asphalt road outside of Middleburg. Sun Tzu was asleep on my right leg. I.P. was barely awake. It was then that I saw it—a red brick entrance with a wrought iron gate. On one of the brick pillars was a modest bronze plaque that read “Camden House”. I.P. used the intercom to get the gate opened. I turned in and drove about a quarter mile down a tree lined road the same size as the road we’d been driving on. We came around a small turn in the drive way and saw the Main House.

“Holy shit,” was I.P.’s response.

We drove up to the Main House and spotted what we later found out was the “guest cottage” a couple of hundred yards away. The whole place was surrounded by a white wooden horse fence. Behind the Main House were what looked like stables but we knew Ken hated horses. Turns out



it was a garage. We were confused because there was also a 4-car garage attached to the big house.

As we pulled in, Ken and another man came out the front door. Ken greeted us, but the other guy stood behind Ken and didn't say anything.

"Hello, guys. I'll bet you're tired, driving all night. We thought we would have you fellows stay in the guest cottage. Harlan will take your bags over. That must be Sun Tzu?"

"Yes, sir."

"How did he get his name, Geoff?"

I told Ken the story about finding the 3 week old kitten in the bushes at our trade-out apartment and how he had jumped about a foot in the air, hissing and spitting and batting at me with his miniature paws. When I finally picked him up, he settled down immediately. He was smaller than my hand and I have small hands.

"So, Ken, I thought he probably understood 'The Art of War'.

Our evening at the Camden household was enlightening. We found out that Ken was a Texan, but really did not like living there. Ken's Father had owned the Lincoln-Mercury dealerships in Houston. Ken had spent plenty of time in Texas; as a young man he had worked for Lee Glasgow, then for McLendon. Working for the McLendon chain he had spent time in Buffalo, Chicago and LA.

When Ken started the brokerage firm he bought this 200 year old home on 40 acres. His neighbors were people that you have heard of, but they wouldn't appreciate your knowing! The stables/garage housed Ken's Classic car collection.

The Camden Corp. had a small office two blocks from the FCC. It was a short commute; however, with all of the traffic it's not such an easy drive.

I took Tzu over to the guest cottage followed by Harlan. Sun Tzu was thrilled, a whole four thousand square foot house to explore with five bathrooms!

After dinner, Mrs. Camden showed us into Ken's library and gestured to two leather wing chairs. Momentarily, Ken came in and poured me a double Oban. I.P. and Ken had a Dos XX. Then Ken started to lay it out for us.

"You do not work for Camden Corp. You work for yourselves. I will set up your jobs and you already know how you are to be paid. You are probably wondering about the clothes and the watches. Not all clients are the same. They all have a different idea of what a Consultant should look like. Some clients want a rock & roll look; some want a Harvard graduate. When I call or write, I'll tell you how to dress and act.

"For instance, Geoffrey, I would like for you to let your hair and mustache grow out a bit. You are not a British Officer. I want both of you to buy aluminum brief cases, and I.P., also buy a leather briefcase like Geoff's. Some of what we do is theatre.

"We are selling the Willins chain. Your next job is to clean up the rest of Willins' stations."

One of the other things Ken hinted at was that it might be better if we lived closer to his office and, by the way, he knew of a sublet at the Watergate in the District. We took the apartment at the Watergate sight unseen. It would be ready for occupation in six weeks. That suited Ken fine. He didn't think it would take any longer than that to shine up the rest of the Willens' stations and make them ready to be sold.

## CHAPTER 10

# DRIVING WHILE BLIND AND WILD TURKEY WHISKEY

The next day we checked into the Mayfair and took a taxi over to the NAB convention. It was our first. We were all dressed up in our finery. Even in Armani I.P. looked like an unmade bed. At least he wasn't wearing one of those t-shirts that didn't quite make it to his jeans.

We walked the floor looking at all of the new gear. We were all but drooling. At 6PM we taxied back to the hotel and picked up the case of Wild Turkey.

That evening we walked into the Billboard hospitality suite, I.P. in his Armani, carrying a case of Wild Turkey. I wore a blazer with a turtle neck. The only person in the suite was Claude. I guess we were a bit early, so we introduced ourselves and began to chat.

Claude had been the radio and television editor of Billboard magazine since 1964 and he wrote a column called Vox Jox. He was the king of radio journalism. Getting your name in Vox Jox for radio people was like getting your name in the New York Times. Claude knew Ken and now he knew us. Claude was a Texas Hill Country boy just like me so it was easy to talk with him.

I.P. is very quiet as a rule, but sometimes, if you wind him up, he's a great story teller. I.P. started telling Claude stories; people began to stroll in and fill up the suite. Claude was the only person from Billboard in the suite so I appointed myself bartender. I began to pour the Wild Turkey for everyone except Claude. Claude doesn't drink.

Just as I.P. swung in to his story about visiting XELO, a 150 thousand watt border blaster built in Juarez in the '30s, the whole management team from the Willins chain walked in, including Roy Lee Orange and Mike Morton.

I.P. continued, "The station was off the air at the time, but in Mexico, with the Unions, the Engineers always manned the station no matter if it was on or off the air.

"Before I made this visit to XELO a rumor was going around that some gringos were going to buy the station. The engineers were not happy about some Americans coming to take over their station; after all, they were union, and weren't going to start being bossed around by some gringos.

"Now, here was this Gringo wandering around oohing and aahing over the mercury vapor tubes as high as my chest. The next thing I know, I'm surrounded by Federales, equipped with automatic weapons. I was loaded on a truck, convinced I am about to be executed. Instead, they dumped me at the border."

While I.P. was telling these stories, other people came in as well; Tom Campbell from San Francisco and George Wilson of Bartel fame. Then there were some fellows from Metroradio. We didn't know at the time that Metroradio was in our near future. Ken is a sly man.

I.P. had Claude's suite in stitches. Four or five bottles of Wild Turkey probably didn't hurt. By the time I.P. wound down, Claude's suite was full and hilarity reigned. That night, even Roy Lee liked us.

From that time on, Claude Hall took us under his wing and became another of our mentors and a very good friend. But one thing you could never forget was that he was a journalist and everything was on the record!

After two days at the NAB, Ken gave us our new itinerary and sent us packing to El Paso, the first Willins station on the list. Before we left for El Paso, Ken had set up our 3-bedroom sublet apartment at the Watergate.

## CHAPTER 11

# ON THE ROAD AGAIN

Off to El Paso! *Que Paso? I thought you were my only Vato!*

There wasn't much wrong with Tommy Thompson's station. Of all the stations in the Willens' chain, KLPN needed us the least. Tommy Thompson knew his stuff; there was very little we could teach him.

His Father had worked for McLendon as a news man; he had even worked at Radio Caroline, the pirate station in the Irish Sea. Tommy had gone with him and worked as a jock. They lived in London and cut their pieces at a studio; their stuff was then run out to the ship.

I.P. explained to me about AMs on ships. Drop the copper radials into the water and you triple your coverage area. The problem was that you and everything else on the ship was rolling and yawing out the ass and every place else!

I.P. tuned up Tommy's audio and I cleaned up his format a little. Tommy's G.M. wasn't happy about cutting down his commercial load, especially in terms of units instead of minutes, but he was a good guy and treated us well.

We found out later that KLPN's manager thought I.P. and I might be a bit odd; I mean, here are two guys that live together. One is a big hulking fellow; the other one dresses a bit prissy and has a cat. Tommy got a big kick out of that, knowing what our after hours recreational activities actually were like.

Next came Albuquerque. KDMP was exactly that—a dump. It was a 500 watt daytimer that covered very little and we could do very little with

it. I.P., Sun Tzu and I were staying at a hotel that didn't mind pets. Sun Tzu, as always, was having a great time. It was a whole new place to smell and explore. I remembered to put up the Do Not Disturb sign. Tzu enjoyed scaring unsuspecting maids too much. By now, he was ten months old but very intimidating for his size! He could jump six feet and be batting with both front paws. It was something to see! I could get him to do that with just one word—"athleticism"—and up he would go.

No matter what we could think of for KDMP, it would not work. I called Lord Kenneth. "Boss, we don't have a clue as to what to do with KDMP."

"I'm not surprised. I just wanted you to see it." Turns out he knew we couldn't sell it. We couldn't even give the thing away. The University of New Mexico wouldn't take it. We ended up giving it to a church so the tax write-off counted as part of the sale price of the Willins' chain.

Next, we were off to Tucson and The Unusual 58. No shit, that was their identifier. The actual call letters were KTKT and it was a 5K regional. When we arrived in Tucson, I.P. tuned in to 580. Unbelievably, they were running a Pepper-Tanner promotion called Think Mink. I.P. said, "Think Mink? It's the fucking desert!" We just looked at each other and shrugged.

"That's what everybody needs in the desert—a mink coat!" I laughed.

"Well, hell. It's Pepper-Tanner. What do you expect?"

"I wonder if they traded out the promotion by playing Harvest Time."

"Yeah, nothing like Holy Rollers on an Adult Contempt!"

This station had the most potential of all of the Willins' stations. I.P. and I started calling in those rock jocks we had been holding in reserve, but first things first. I.P. and I sat down in the living room of our apartment of the moment to try and figure out how much money we had and more importantly, how much money we were making. I.P. never had a checking account before we became partners and, as much as I hated it, I had been balancing both checkbooks. Between us we had a little over \$12,000—all the money in the world to us; we were astounded.

I know this sounds strange to most folks, but we didn't know how much money we were making. We hadn't asked. With us, it was always about the work, not the money. We were as happy as peach orchard shoats just working for Ken.

Then we tried to remember what Ken's assistant in The District had told us about our remuneration packages. This was all written down somewhere in the apartment; I put those papers somewhere safe—I just couldn't remember where at that exact moment. I.P. gave me a ration of shit. "Uh huh, you're the organized one; you'll just take care of things, uh huh!" He said as he rolled up a fat boy.

I finally found the papers under some stuff in my sock drawer. Here's how it worked: when we were working as consultants, we were paid \$250 dollars a day plus expenses. Working as line executives, we were paid \$400 to \$500 a week plus expenses. There was also a bonus. For any station we worked on that Camden Corp. eventually sold, we got 1% of Camden's take. It seemed like all of the money in the world!

We only just then realized that we were being paid to drive around looking at Billy Don Willins' turkeys. I opened a bottle of wine and commenced the 'Joy Song'. Imagine two almost mature men, one stoned and the other buzzed on a fairly good red Rhone, hooking arms, dancing in a circle and singing 'How much joy can one boy have? Doo Dah, Motherfuckin' Doo Dah; All the motherfuckin' Doo Dah Day.'

The Joy Song story is also sung when things weren't going well. Pure sarcasm.

We called Danny London in Ft. Worth to tell him we were going to steal his mid-day guy, John B. Johns, and we would give him two weeks to find a replacement. Johns was going to do Teeny Bob Drive, 7P—12 midnight.

Next we called an old boy we had been watching for sometime. I called him in Madison, Wisconsin and told him his new name was M.F. Johnson. M.F. didn't tell his bossy wife what a Johnson was, much less what M.F. stood for. M.F. was AM Drive, 6—10 AM. After that, we called Right-On Richards for PM Drive, 3—7 PM.

We called Tommy Thompson in El Paso and got permission to hire his midday jock for Assistant PD and middays. His name was Spider Marks. Why did they call him Spider? You should have seen this guy! He was about our height, and my weight, but this dude was covered with coarse black hair—not unlike a tarantula. Spider was not bad looking in an arachnophobic sort of way.

Then I.P. and I had a discussion about the overnight jock. We came to a compromise. Napoleon Stone was pegged for overnights. The deal was Nap had to swear he would not embarrass us by wagging his weenie in front of 13 year old girls. I.P. had to guarantee this would not happen again. We tried to get Heavy Earth for overnights but he couldn't get out of his gig in Maryland for a month, so we let him know we would keep him in mind for another time.

We had Tommy come over from El Paso to train-up M.F. in how to P.D. the place. It was at Tucson that I got the reputation of being 'Ken's Killer'. To be completely frank, I did fire all of the jocks except for the weekend guys. I left that up to M.F. to deal with.

We knew the Tucson station was going to be sold so all these guys were hired just to have them in one holding place. We knew we were likely going to need them later on, somewhere.

I.P. spent a lot of time with the Chief. He liked the guy and Tucson had some good gear, but it needed a few things. As with all of the Willins' stations, there just wasn't any money floating around. Especially since everyone in the Camden crew knew the damn things were for sale. I.P. and Curly Randall, one of I.P.'s running mates, found some new, needed gear. I.P. and I had decided some time ago on a "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

The GM and Sales manager at The Unusual 58 were good guys. Ken marked those fellows as keepers. We only spent four weeks in Tucson. I spent three days holed up in the station apartment, writing the format guide. Then I just hung around with Spider and the other jocks, laying out a promotional plan and getting the new formatics together. I.P. and Curly Randall rebuilt Production and Control as best they could.

The strategy was to gut the old timey Top 40 competition of their 12-24 year olds, a strategy we would use many times.

The Fall ARB for Dallas/Ft. Worth was finally out and KBYU had done well; #1 Country in Fort Worth, and #2 overall. In Dallas, it came in #2 Country and #5 overall and that was without any promotion. Not even "and a Bic pen".

Tucson started to sound good and Ken started to reel in the two mullets he had hooked at the NAB to buy the Willins chain. Ken felt a



need to hurry. The rumor had been floating around for months about WFAA and WBAP. Not everybody knew it, but there had been negotiations between WFAA and WBAP. At some point back in the dark ages, the FCC had cut the baby in half. WFAA and WBAP shared 820 AM, a 50K clear channel and 570 AM, a 5K regional. Every twelve hours a cowbell would ring and they would switch frequencies. No kidding! The rumor was that WBAP was finally buying WFAA's rights to the clear channel boomer and WBAP was going to throw down the Conway Twitty gauntlet. KBYU's Fall book would be its last good one. At least that was my guess.

We talked to Lord Kenneth on the twisted pair. "You guys go on up to Monterrey." We gave a shine of professionalism to Monterrey and we ate well—one of the great joys of "all expenses paid".

The turkey in Long Beach was in about as good a shape as could be expected. The AM was playing the big records with the small holes and simulcasting the FM. Amarillo did well; we'd been told to leave it alone.

## CHAPTER 12

# PUT ANOTHER NICKEL IN

When I.P. and I finally got done with the road trip and drove back to our apartment in Arlington, we were all happy to be home. We were finally going to move to our new apartment in the District.

The next day, I.P. needed to make a quick trip to Temple, promising to be back in time to load up and make the drive north with me. Before he left, he told me the story of the old Gates Vanguard 1000 watter back-up transmitter. It looked like an old fashioned soft drink dispenser, the kind with the glass lift top and the rows of soft drinks inside.

"I rolled out to the transmitter site earlier to brief the new Chief engineer I just hired. There's a lot to know about the 50K and the seven tower directional array.

"When I got there, the owner, Mr. Willins himself, is having a chat with the new Chief."

Billy Don Willins was a tall lanky guy with light brown hair in a bush except for the bald spot on the top of his head. With as much money as he had, he dressed abominably. Even I.P. noticed how badly he was dressed. I.P. told me, "Good God, Mr. Willins' mother really keeps a close hold on that \$300 million that they're worth. She could let her son dress better!" Coming from I.P., that's saying something!

I.P. continued, "So I said 'Good day, Mr. Willins' and then I said hi to the new guy. And then Billy Don says, 'It's always hot in here with all this equipment running. I'd like a cold drink. I'll get you one too as soon as I figure out where to put this quarter in.'

## THE RADIO GYPSIES

“The new chief is looking around for a soft drink dispenser, real eager to help out, and then he notices Willins eyeing the old 1K green Gates Vanguard stand-by transmitter.

“He says, ‘Er, ah, Mr. Willins, that’s our stand-by transmitter, but, yes sir, it sure looks like a coke machine dispenser.’ That new guy was dancing as fast as he could, Geoff. He didn’t want to piss off the paycheck man.”

Technically we were still in charge at KBYU and Roy Lee was still up in the air. He had shaken Danny up and screwed up the formatics and had run the commercial load back up. I threw a fit.

I called Roy Lee and told him how the cow ate the cabbage. He told us to get out of our trade out apartment as soon as possible. Since we were leaving anyway, it was a futile shot.

It was while I was overseeing the movers loading up our furniture that Norton Horton called to tell us to be in Waco-fucking-Texas in two days.

And so that’s how we got to Waco. Our furniture was on its way to the District. We were in the tacky ass Hilton in Waco. And I had just killed the Chief Engineer. Good Luck, Duck!

## CHAPTER 13

# SINGER OF SAD SONGS, I NEED YOUR SERVICES TODAY

We hadn't been back in Waco a full day before Lord Kenneth called.

"Geoff, you and I.P. meet me Monday in L.A. at the Metroradio stations. Bring your Format Guide for KBYU. Be there by 10AM. Wear your blazer and have I.P. wear one of the sport coats you bought him. Carry the aluminum briefcases. Got it?"

"Yes, Boss. We'll be there!"

I.P. and I decided to fly first class. Fuck it. We deserved it. I called Caroline to take care of Sun Tzu and she said she would. He was getting bigger and more protective. Tzu did not approve of some women that passed through our apartment, but he did approve of Caroline.

We showed up on time toting the KBYU format guide. Both I.P. and I wanted to get our hands on Metroradio's Los Angeles FM. They were experimenting with 'progressive rock'. Ken had hinted that progressive rock might have a better future if it was formatted instead of the jocks just playing what they want. "Jocks aren't all that smart," he believed.

IP and I had been talking through how to format it. Ken had said the music rotation should be such that no one could extrapolate it. We came up with a way to format and rotate in seven different manners throughout the day. We had an idea of how to do better than just selling to head shops. But it was not to be.

Ken had already hired a P.D. for the AM. Ken was taking it from a talker to country. Ken had hired one of those dudes that had been

hanging around L.A. radio for years. The guy's name was Don Martin. He was one of those handsome guys that was clueless about radio. L.A. was full of them. All of these guys were used to working with engineers; it was a union market. That's why L.A. radio sounded so sloppy. The exception was 93 KHJ; that station was tighter than a nun's business.

We were shown to a conference room and I gave a little chat on how to smooth out a country station. Then Ken passed out KBYU format guides and explained that country stations weren't different from other well programmed stations. Ken repeated everything, exactly as I had said. Apparently I looked too young to have credibility.

Ken, I.P. and I excused ourselves and walked down the hall to a smaller conference room. Don Martin wanted to come with us, but Ken told him we would only be a moment.

"Alright gentlemen, what are we going to call this turkey?"

I.P. suggested immediately, "How about KNTY."

"CUNTY?" I repeated.

"Well, it fits," I.P. defended his joke.

"Get real, guys," Ken said. "How about 'KTRY—Los Angeles Country?'"

We sat there and wrote the lyrics for the jingle package. Back in the big conference room, Ken made the case for cutting the package at PAMS in Dallas, a non-union market. After Ken explained the advantages, management bought into it.

When I.P. and I finally got loose from Metroradio, we took a taxi to have a look at the legendary KHJ. Goddamn, what a station. We sat in a booth across the street and had a drinkeepoo. Oh, yeah, we knew the story of Phillip Yarbrough, or 'Bill Drake'. We actually knew who was responsible for KHJ's success. We always wondered why no one said so, but we found out that the people that were the brains didn't always get the credit. Whodaguy!

We also tried to get in to see Chuck Blore, but no joy.

## CHAPTER 14

# CELEBRATE GOOD TIMES

On the following Monday, we all flew back to Texas—Ken, me, I.P., and Don Martin and his motherfucking orchestra. Do you really need an entourage to cut a jingle package? Don was introduced to real Mexican food. It was a joy to see him down those Dos Equis and really enjoy them.

Going back to PAMS was like going home. We had cut many jingles there and knew everybody. Bill Meeks owned the place. A jolly, smart man named Toby Arnold was the Sales Manager. The top salesman was an old friend of ours named Franklin Montgomery Litton III, but he called himself Frank Jr. He was from an old family with its main house in Montgomery, Alabama. The winter home was in Panama City, Florida. Frank Jr. always drove a brand new Lincoln Town Car and dressed like a salesman. Who else do you know that would wear red dress shirts?

Another guy, a bit younger than we were, was the dub boy. His name was Alan Box. Alan's father was the genius that wrote the music for most of the jingles you have ever heard. Alan knew that the stations I.P. and I consulted had very little money, so he would slip us stuff we could use. PAMS was a great place.

The next day when we showed up at PAMS to cut the jingles, Toby met us and showed us into the conference room. Brother Meeks was there and Frank Jr., too. Toby served coffee all around.

I.P. was wearing his usual; a pair of jeans with a hole in the knee and an XXL Columbia Records t-shirt that didn't quite reach to his jeans. I was wearing jeans as well, but with a black t-shirt and a grey silk sport coat.

Ken also arrived casual, but casual to him meant a tropical weight camel colored blazer, white shirt with his trademark black knit tie, black slacks and hand made Italian loafers that were so soft they looked like they were made of glove leather. He would never tell me where he had them made. I even called Satel's and described the shoes, but no help.

Ken decided to use the same music as he used for the Dallas AM. Ken handed over the lyrics we had already written and Ken told Bill Meeks that we're going to use the KRLP music.

"But make it slick. It's LA," Ken explained.

Bill went to talk with the singers, "No twangs, no slides. Country-politan, ok?"

No one was paying attention to me so I pulled a sneak and drove to downtown Dallas. Carroll Shelby only had one showroom for his Cobras and there was only one car on the showroom floor, a red 427 with white stripes, and I wanted it. I paid cash. It almost wiped me out, but I knew that a payday was coming as soon as the Willins deal closed.

A red 427 Cobra makes a statement. I loved it. It was the most uncomfortable car I have ever owned, but goddamn it was fast!

I left the Cobra at Shelby's and went back to PAMS; no one had missed me. I thought I would get I.P. to help me pick up the car the next day. When he saw it, he was so jealous that he took his Celica over to Precision Motors and bought a beautiful red XKE Coupe. Used, of course.

Our part of KTRY was over. We paid one more visit to KBYU before we moved to the District. We still had to finish cleaning out the Arlington apartment. All that was left was our wines and spirits plus I.P.'s electronic gear. As soon as we got back home, I relieved Caroline of Sun Tzu. He was happy to be with us; indeed, he was almost always a happy kitten, as long as no one crossed him!

## CHAPTER 15

# THICK AS A BRICK

I called Danny London and told him not to freak, but Norton Horton had sent us to Waco-fucking-Texas. I explained the deal and I also told him about the Class A FM that we were going to rock in Waco. I knew that Ken was about to close the sale on the Willins chain, so I could raid KBYU of my jocks. I explained all of this to Danny and told him that he could give his two weeks' notice.

"Then have each of our jocks give their notice every other day," I instructed him. I also told him we had four furnished apartments to use as crash pads, but only for two months. Worse, we were being paid less.

"The good news is we only have to take the AM through one book and get the FM on the air," I said. Then I told him the Nina story about not keeping books because the FM didn't make money, so they just turned it off. I also told him about the unfortunate death of the Chief Engineer and the flowers I.P. purchased. Good Luck Duck! Danny could not stop laughing. He told me he would have the country crew in place within a month.

The night before I.P. was bitching about the XKE being in the garage for something. I told him about a pal of mine down in Houston that specialized in dropping small block Corvette engines into those garage whores. I explained that my pal would put in the engine, the 'Vette 4 speed and a posi-track rear end.

"How much would that cost?" Have I mentioned that I.P. was as cheap as Norton? I told him about \$2,500. Then I had to explain how



much that would save him and furthermore he would have 350 horses under the bonnet and the XKE would look exactly the same. Also he would save all that money back in a year. I then asked him what his last garage bill cost him. That got him. The Jag chick magnet would be shipped to Houston this week.

Mr. Freclay had the Cobra shipped to Washington; he also rented us a U-Haul trailer—*An Adventure in Moving*. I.P. would not fly his equipment. He had a bad experience once; his old oscilloscope had been thrown around, so we loaded his test gear and our wines and spirits into the trailer.

“I notice that your oscilloscope looks new,” I said.

“Yes sir, Stickman. It was a gift you might say. By the by, I saw your old friend Morgan Watts the other day. He’s got a job with a new chain of stations.”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah, Texaco!”

“So mote it motherfucking be.” Watts deserved to be out of the business.

Now I.P. and I had a country team and a Top 40 team. We called our outfit Brother Camden’s Traveling Salvation Show. This was in honor of George Wilson. George had a large group of jocks that he used in all of the Bartel radio stations and he called it the Circus.

Before we hooked up the U-Haul, I made one more trip over to KBYU. I wanted the guys to see me in person so they wouldn’t feel abandoned. I also wanted to say goodbye to Caroline.

She had found a handsome young man that had just gotten his Law Degree. I got a hug and a big kiss from the lovely Caroline. I wished her well; then she told me that her new husband-to-be would be working for Baker and Baker in Houston if I was ever in the area. It made me wonder if I would ever find *my* right life mate.

After I reassured everyone and said goodbye, I was accosted by the Proud Bird with the Golden Tail, aka Sharon.

“Geoff,” she whispered, “come in to my office for a moment. I just want to say goodbye.” As Sharon closed her office door, she gently took my hand as if to shake it. Instead she put it down the front of her jeans.

"Let's take a ride out to the transmitter site and say goodbye properly."

I thought, "Okay. The Proud Bird probably knows how to say goodbye." As we were walking out to the Mustang, we met up with Sharon's sister, Linda. You could hardly tell them apart.

"I'm going with you." Sharon and Linda piled in to the Green Monster; Sharon in front and Linda in the back.

Before I got out of the parking lot, Sharon had my penis in her mouth. Linda leaned forward and put her hand around my saliva slick dick and started jacking me off. It was all I could do not to cum, at least not yet!

We finally made it to the transmitter site. There's an old two room house on the property. In the front room was an old stained mattress. Sharon was quickly naked with her legs in the air. I didn't have to aim, I just slid in. Linda had shucked her jeans and was doing herself. I came almost instantly. Sharon sat straight up and bitch slapped me.

"You bastard, I didn't even cum."

Linda went right down on her sister's golden muff, still using her fingers on herself. Watching this and listening to those slurping sounds coming from between those long legs I was hard again and took Linda from behind.

There's nothing like those Baptist girls! Linda was so wet, fluid was running down her legs. I had my finger on her clitoris, messaging gently. I started to remove myself and she said, "No, No. Not yet."

I felt her come again and she said, "Now, now. Stop." Her pussy was so tight that when I pulled out there was a small pop not unlike a wine cork being pulled. As Linda lay back, Sharon pulled me back down on her. Again, I didn't have to guide myself in. Those long legs did all of the work. I think you could say it was an excellent goodbye send-off!

I.P. and I were finally on our way to Washington dragging a goddamn U-Haul trailer behind the Green Monster. Now wouldn't that look classy pulling up to the Watergate?

"You're bankrolling this move, aren't you, G.C.?"

"Wrong, Oh Cheap One. You have been using the furniture and living free for six months or so. You're paying half!"

I knew that I.P., for lack of a better term, was a skinflint. I knew he had more money than I did because I kept his checkbook and opened his

savings account. I.P. did his usual I.P. thing. He folded his arms and sulked.

As they say down on the border, we had *arree-ved*. The apartment was great. I found an Interior Decorator who also owned an upscale furniture rental company. There was a need for that sort of thing in Washington with all of the politicians coming and going. I bought a king-sized round water bed. OK, it was the '70s.

One of the things I rented was a Jasper Johns knock off. It was a huge canvas. Every time I.P. walked by that painting, he said, "Who threw the paint on the wall?" We were moved in, books and all. It was the books that pissed I.P. off. That's why he didn't want to pay for half the move. But pay he did... finally.

We had mail waiting already. Other than the junk mail, we had a missive from the Camden Corp. announcing that a dude named Norton Horton was the new manager of the southwest. Good for Norton Horton! Also in the mail was an invitation to a reception at Ken's Middleburg home for Norton Horton whom we'd already met.

As it turned out Norton was an interesting man to get to know. He had taken his PhD from George Washington University in Economics. Norton met his beautiful and gracious wife when they were both congressional aides on the hill. Norton also worked for the McLendon organization. He GM'd at KTSA, San Antonio in the Golden Triangle days. Norton set up his brokerage firm in Austin. He and Ken had known each other for years. It seemed like a good fit.

The first Sunday in Washington, I.P. took the Mustang out for a spin and ended up at Rock Creek Park. He was just strolling one of the paths when he heard this little "meow". Then he heard it again.

I.P. always said he just didn't like cats or pets of any kind. Nonetheless, when I got home that afternoon, I found him feeding this little female tabby.

"I.P.! Where'd you find this little girl?" I asked.

"I looked under one of the wooden bridges and there was this little gray tabby cat and I just picked it up," I.P. explained.

"OK. What's her name?"

"*Pinche*," he said.

“You need to take her to the vet, I.P. She looks to be about four weeks old and she needs to be checked and get her shots.”

“Geoff, it’s just a *pinché* cat ”

The next day, I loaned I.P. Sun Tzu’s carrier and he took *Pinché* to the vet. He was loathe to put one of his t-shirts into the carrier but I told him that was the way to do it—so she would have his smell and would be much calmer.

They confirmed that she was indeed a female. The vet sold I.P. everything they thought he needed including food, a flea comb, cat sand and box. They also told him that she was infested with fleas and he needed to take care of that immediately.

I.P. had no idea how to de-flea a kitten so I helped him. Amazingly, Sun Tzu helped take care of *Pinché*. I was surprised; cats don’t usually like other cats invading their territory. But Sun Tzu was not any usual cat.

We spent a couple of weeks sorting out our apartment before it was back to Waco-fucking-Texas.

## CHAPTER 16

# SATURDAY NIGHT'S ALL RIGHT FOR FIGHTIN'

Back in Waco, we were unpacking and settling into one of the tacky trade out apartments. Christmas and New Years came and went and then...Jane Anne Cliff, my Mom, sticks her oar in.

Mom's head baker for the Italian restaurants was a nice African American woman named Mamie. Mamie was a great baker and Mom really wanted to hold on to her. The problem was, Mamie had a big family and she stole food. Mamie would wrap up frozen steaks and so forth, and then hide the packages out by the dumpster. When Mamie got busy, Mom would sneak out to the dumpster and retrieve the expensive food and replace it with cheaper cuts. Both women knew they were playing this game, but not a word was said. On Holidays Mamie would find all of the ingredients for a Holiday meal hidden out by the dumpster.

Expenses were rising at the restaurants and Jane Anne decided on some cut backs, some of which affected the bakery. Mom asked Mamie for her ideas on cutting back a bit. Mamie said she thought she could do something with the pecan pies. Now don't ask me why pecan pie was sold at an Italian restaurant, but hey...it was Texas.

My beautiful sister, Farris, visited Mom at one of the restaurants and ate a piece of pecan pie in the kitchen. I should say Farris tried to eat a piece of pecan pie.

"Mom, this pie just isn't right," Farris said.

"Let me taste it. Oh, my God, she used peanuts! Honey, I'll talk to Mamie."

Mamie also wanted to talk to Ms. Jane Anne.

It was the first week of January. I.P. and I had celebrated his birthday on New Year's Day. On the 3<sup>rd</sup>, we'd called it a day and were back at the nasty furnished apartment. Sun Tzu was playing with his yarn ball and his leather mouse.

"Let's leave John B. in Tucson for a while. He would hate this set up. The gear sucks and there's that small problem with his anger management. What do you say, I.P.?"

"We can use that big voice from there. Let's leave him in place. Here's the good news, all the country jocks want an F.M. shift."

"Speaking of that, what about Heavy Earth and Marcus Hook?"

"Which Marcus Hook?" We'd always used it as a house name.

"You know, that last Marcus Hook."

"Maybe, maybe. Have you thought about Solomon Fox?"

"Well, let's think about it."

Ever since I.P. and I had become partners we had used a management tool called the secondary area of responsibility. A jock would do their shift and then take care of their other responsibility like being Music Director or Promotions or P.D. and like that. We fully intended to let the cowboy jocks roll some of those big records with the little holes on the F.M.

We were mulling all of this over when the phone rang.

"Hello, Honey. We haven't heard from you in such a long while, are you okay?"

"I'm fine, Mom."

"Are you eating well and why are you up so late? You're not sick?"

"I'm fine, Mom."

I.P. poked me in the ribs and whispered, "Jane Anne isn't asking any questions, is she?"

"Of course, Ivan would love to say hello too, Mom. Hold just a moment." I caught I.P. just before he could lock the bathroom door.

"I'll kill your cat, you sleaze."

"It's your turn in the barrel," I told him, and I handed him the phone.

My family had considered I.P. as part of the family since I first met him.

“Yes, M’am, I’m taking good care of him...Yes, M’am, Sun Tzu as well...Well, we’ll certainly try. Here’s your son back... Yes M’am, I know I’m your son as well.

“Take this damn phone back, you creep.” I.P. had his big hand over the receiver.

“Honey, Honey? Is that you?

“Yes, Mom.”

“Geoffrey, I have a small favor to ask...”

When I finally got off the phone, I.P. gave me one of those hard looks with those small green eyes. The gist of the deal was Mamie’s youngest son wanted to be in radio and would I give him a job. One of the biggest mistakes you could make was turning Jane Anne Cliff down. And so, we had a black country jock. What the hell. I mean, what about Charlie Pride?

In late February, 1971, things were falling into place. Our checks had come in from the Willins’ deal. We found a good tax man, but not an investment counselor yet.

I.P. and I were working on the strategy and tactics for Waco. When I say we were working on the strategy for Waco what I really mean is that Ken had dropped hints as to what we needed to do. If we caught the hints, we were smart little programmers. If we didn’t get it right, we got the cold shoulder for a month or two. I should say *I* got the cold shoulder.

Anyway, here was the plan. We targeted the AM at 35+. We broke the playlist down to 30% new hits and 70% oldies. It wasn’t as bad as it sounds because we counted the recurrents as oldies, but we did play some old oldies like Hank Thompson, Lefty Frizzel, Faron Young and even Hank Williams. We rolled 12 commercial units an hour, and the jocks were well trained and had mostly worked with us before.

I.P. did as much as he could with the sound. We found appalling processing gear. There was a Level Devil and a Symetripeak. A Symetripeak, for Christ’s sake! The FCC only cared about limiting the negative peaks—the bottom of the amplitude wave. The way you made an AM louder was to enhance the positive peaks. A Symetripeak kept both the negative and the positive peaks the same so you couldn’t make the signal louder. It was a sin. The Symetripeak was first to go.

I.P. went into his bag of goodies and we installed an Orban EQ, a

Marti 740 and another little tricky piece of gear. I.P. made the AM sound as good as he could but that wasn't saying much. There were not replacements in I.P.'s bag for the rest of the audio chain—the preamps on the turntables and an ancient board that needed to be rebuilt.

The new troops began straggling in. Now it was time to rebuild the FM. The jocks on the AM country all had a shot on the FM. They liked what we were going to do with it. It was going to be the first formatted “progressive” station that we knew of.

With everyone pitching in, I.P. got the FM studio built in seven days. We still only had the one production studio and it was not stereo. That made it a bit more difficult, but with I.P.'s production magic, the format elements sounded good. The FM was highly formatted, but we called it a progressive rocker. We didn't know what else to call it. As far as we knew, no one else had ever done this before. We only day-parted mornings and mid-days. All that meant was we slipped in some Bread and Judy Collins from 6AM until 2PM; otherwise we were playing Hendrix, The Doors and a load of The Beatles and Stones. The commercial load on the FM was 8 units per hour. The stop sets were at :06, :21, :36 and :51. The I.D./promo floated at :02. That little Class A smoked.

One night we were tooling around Waco listening to the FM when it suddenly went off the air. The FM's transmitter site was not at the AM site; it was right in downtown Waco. Only the FM's studios were out in the boonies. In the wise words of I.P., “This makes no fucking sense.”

We drove over to the FM's site. We could see the top of the stick from about four blocks away. It was an old self supporter, but it was freshly painted and looked okay. As we drove up, a Volkswagen bug sputtered out of the small parking area. The door to the transmitter building was open. Very odd. Worse, somebody had taken a hammer to the exciter.

“Fuck me with a goddamn motherfucking bilge pump.”

“What clever repartee, Mr. Freelay.”

“That bastard!”

“You know who did it?”

“Oh yeah. That was Ben Swillerby's Bug.”

“Swillerby?”

I.P. told me the story. He had actually gone to the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade with this Swillerby. Also, this guy had been the assistant engineer that had



stood screaming over Westin's dead body holding two Big Reds. I.P. opined that Swillerby might resent us. Hi Ho! That made it almost unanimous.

A new exciter was ordered.

There are parts of Waco that are beautiful. The Brazos River runs through it. The Texas Rangers Museum is located there and so is *Thee University*. Baylor University is a Southern Baptist institution and brooks no naughtiness.

In Texas, the University of Texas is known as The University. But Baylor was *Thee University* and Baylor did us a huge favor. They put out a notice that said any student caught listening to that 'devil music' station could be expelled. That, boys and girls, was hot shit. It gave us a big boost! We heard our little rocker everywhere!

I.P. and I flew home to the District the last week of February. We left Sun Tzu with Danny London. I didn't like to fly Sun Tzu, just like I.P. didn't like to fly his test gear. Waco was an intellectually stifling environment. We needed to kick back a bit and come up with a contest/promotion. It was good to be back in the Watergate apartment but it seemed a little empty without Tzu around.

"Your Jag is ready," I informed I.P.

"Oh, Christ. How much is that going to cost?"

"Nothing. It's your birthday present."

I.P. was wowed. Now he not only had a beautiful car; it was fast and reliable. It was out of that conversation that we came up with the AM book promotion—The Covered Wagon.

Here's how it worked: we traded a new pickup with one of those cover things on the bed of the truck; you know, little windows on both sides and a small door in the rear. We would hide the damn thing somewhere in the Waco Metro, and then broadcast clues every hour as to its location. 'Find it and it's yours.'

We also put together a sales package. We printed diaries with a picture of the truck, the rules and a place to write down the clues. The sales package included "free" client mentions about where to pick up your diary. The more locations a client had, the more spots they bought to be eligible for more mentions to all their locations.

Before we flew back to that nasty town on the Brazos, we were invited to Ken's office for a visit. We filled the Boss in on our thinking and apparently we were good little programmers. The AM 35+; the FM 18—34. That just about covered it. KWAA and KWAA-FM could deliver for any buy in the market.

Ken wanted the meeting because he wanted to tell us to take a weekend and fly out to San Diego and take a look at the Kinney brothers' AM/FM. He really didn't tell us more than that, but with Lord Kenneth that wasn't unusual. We really didn't know the Kinney brothers, but we had heard of them, and we knew the Program Director. Ken Camden orders; we obey!

We had intended to bring Heavy Earth down for the Waco FM, but he hit a snag with his current employer. They wanted a month's notice, so he gave it to them, but that month was now up and Heavy was prepared to drive his MG Midget named Fletcher to Texas. In the mean time he was staying with us in DC.

I had found a friend that worked at the Aussie Embassy. I thought I might spend some time with her before I left. I packed a change of clothes and drove the Mustang over to Georgetown. When I arrived I wished I had taxied. Parking was a bitch.

Back at the apartment, I.P. and Heavy Earth had rolled up a few joints and were really stoned. The boys had the Munchies big time.

"Geoff has lots of stuff. Check this out," I.P. said, opening the pantry.

"You ever had artichokes, Heavy Earth?"

"Nope. What are they like?"

"I don't know" answered I.P. "Let's try 'em."

"What about these, I.P.?"

"Hmm, anchovies. Don't know. Let's try those too." Systematically, I.P. and Heavy Earth went through all of my goodies, including foie gras and several cheeses. Then they had a gourmet idea. They began trying my wines.

Heavy Earth found a 1966 Margaux and showed it to I.P. "Here's one."

"Hmmm. Looks old. Why don't you see if you can find one that's fresher," I.P. advised.

“OK. How about this one? It’s a 1970 St. Julien. That’s only a year old.”

If all of that wasn’t enough, they decided to dine while sitting cross-legged on my round waterbed. And to wrap things up nicely, they topped off their meal with a bottle of Armagnac XO.

When I got home, I found Heavy Earth and I.P. passed out on the water bed, cracker crumbs, open cans and empty jars scattered everywhere. Olive oil stains on my very hard to find, round, high thread count Egyptian sheets. Vomit on the bed and on my Persian rug. Those fuckers!

I went to the kitchen and there I found another disaster. The pantry was open and the door to the fridge was standing half open too and things were beginning to smell. There was lots of stuff on the floor; every step I took made a crunch. I was truly pissed.

I set about making coffee. I found two clean glasses and poured two fingers of scotch in each, then looked for any left over Bass Ale. I finally spotted a couple of bottles in the back of the fridge.

My personal hangover recipe seemed to work. When the assholes could talk again and I was through raging, I gave a few orders. Heavy was going to stay behind at the apartment until the maids had cleaned the joint up. I gave him a list of food and drink items to replace. Further, if the Persian couldn’t be cleaned, the boys would buy a new rug. I never found replacement round waterbed sheets. I used three regular flat sheets just to cover the bottom.

I helped I.P. pack for both the trip to San Diego and then the stay back in Waco. Just as we were about to leave for National, the red phone rang. I answered. It was Ken and he had an order.

“Take a copy of the Waco FM format guide with you to San Diego.” Then he said, “Good Luck, Duck!” and hung up.

San Diego was not a new place for me. I had spent some time stationed there with the Navy in the ’60s. The P.D. of the AM, KICR, was also P.D. of the FM, KOCN, and he was a friend of ours. We knew this guy through our pal in El Paso, Tommy Thompson. His name was Buck Dourghty.

Buck had grown up in Las Cruces and he did show us a good time. He put us up in The Coronado. We got a briefing on the market and began

to get a clue as to why we were there. KOCN, the FM, was automated. I.P. and I hated automated stations. The fuckers had no soul. Charlie Van Dyke was the PD at KGB; Buzzy Bennet was the PD at the Bartel station, KCBQ. Those were the two Top40's and they were slugging it out.

We spent our two days with Buck and then flew back to Dallas. There were no commercial flights into Waco. Tommy Ford was going to pick us up and drive us back to Waco.

When we walked in to the sales office, we were surprised to see Sean Grabowski there. He motioned us into Goodman's office. Sitting around were Ken, Norton and Mel Eckert. Sean found his seat. Ken told us that the stations sounded good and inquired if San Diego was interesting? We answered in the affirmative and started to leave when Ken spoke again.

"We are having some trouble with the AM. It's going off the air every 3 hours or so. In an hour or so you can fire it back up. I.P., you want to look in to that?"

As we turned to leave, Sean said, "Good Luck, Duck!" I.P. turned shades of red, hung his head and slunk out of there with me on his heels. Behind us we heard laughter.

We jumped into the very comfortable, air-conditioned and 8-tracked Green Mustang and sped toward the studio/transmitter site. Sure as shit, the AM went down just as I.P. turned on the radio.

We slid into the gravel parking lot, covering the Green Monster and ourselves with dust. I.P. went straight to the AM, checked the readings, and then shut the power off to the 10K. Off came the rear doors to the transmitter. Everything looked fine at first, but then I.P. spotted the problem.

"Look at this, Geoff."

"What am I looking at, Bubba?"

"See those thin strips of metal that run from one coil to the other? You see that?"

"Got it. It's cut in two."

"Clever. It's a thermal effect. Somebody cut some of these strips. When they heat up, the connection breaks and shuts down the AM. When the strips cool, they go back together and they reconnect and you can fire this big boy back up."

"How long to fix it, I.P.?"

"Don't know. I'm calling Ken. Then we'll take a close look."

Within 20 minutes Ken had his tie tucked into his shirt; his sleeves rolled up and he was wrist deep in the offending coils.

"Geoff, you have a passport, right?" Ken asked.

"Yes, sir. I do."

"Is it up to date?"

"Yeah, Boss. It always is."

"Good. How about you, I.P. Have you gotten yours yet?"

"No, Ken. I just never got around to it."

"Well, fellows, you always need to have a passport. A young man never knows when he'll need to leave the country in a hurry."

"I'm driving I.P. to Houston next weekend to pick up his Jag. We'll handle it then."

"Nice birthday present. Put a Detroit engine into a perfectly good XKE." Sometimes you just couldn't tell whether you were getting a compliment or getting a whipping. That's the way it was, working for Lord Kenneth.

Three days later the AM was fixed and back on the air. The locks had been changed on the AM and FM buildings. The rebuilt exciter for the FM had arrived and the FM was back on the air. Hopefully everything was cool.

That weekend we drove to Houston, picked up the Jag and stayed over to get I.P.'s passport. We stayed at the old and beautiful Rice hotel. I'd had my 26<sup>th</sup> birthday and the Spring '71 ARB rating period was about to start.

The weather was still cold for Texas. I.P. was snug in his coupe and wanted to race my Mustang back to Waco. I did not want to race. In those days I.P. had two speeds, on and off. "On" was how fast it would go. "Off" was dead stop. He received two speeding tickets on the trip back to Waco.

When we hit the Waco city limits late in the evening, neither of us could pick up the FM. It was about 10PM and we should be rocking! I.P. blinked his lights. I blinked back and a green Mustang and an over powered XKE coupe blew through town on I-35 as fast as we could go. The Mustang topped out at 160. The XKE stayed right on my butt. As we

pulled into the FM's parking lot, a Volkswagen bug was parked right in front of our stick. The Jag and the Mustang are not quiet automobiles, so the villains heard us coming and were scrambling down the self supporter, one of them holding a baseball bat.

I.P. caught the taller one and sent him sprawling. The fat one with the bat was mine. I.P. finally had to pull me off him. I occasionally would lose my temper and not realize exactly what I was doing.

The culprits were Swillerby again, and his Hershey Road pal, a dude named Talbot. Swillerby was bleeding from his banged up head. Talbot was sufficiently dealt with.

I.P. turned the Bug over on its side. I had never seen anything like it. He just reached down and grabbed an edge and over it went. We had a nice talk with the fellows before we let them go. A tow truck was called and the Volkswagen was hauled off. We kept the bat and sent those two creeps on their way. No charges were filed.

When the adrenaline had slowed down, I.P. raised his eyebrows and asked, "How're you doing, dude?"

"Hanging in like Gunga Din."

We learned later that Talbot had three broken ribs and his left shoulder was out of place. Swillerby lost some teeth and required 12 stitches.

## CHAPTER 17

# A FOOL AND HIS MONEY

The Covered Wagon promotion was going nicely. The hourly clues sounded better than I had hoped. Unfortunately, the sales staff really couldn't grasp the sales package, so few clients were handing out the diaries and a lot less money was being generated by the promotion than should be, but programming-wise, things seemed to be going well.

I.P.'s Father, Guy Paul, or "Guy" as he preferred, thought as Ken did; we needed someone to look after our money. Between us we had something like \$75,000 in the bank and Guy thought that he was just the fellow for the job. Guy had invited us to dinner to talk over his plan for our money. With all of those good Christians in Waco, why would they sell a devil's drink like beer? But, as Guy says, "A man needs a beer with his ribs." So he picked out a Bar-B-Q joint just over the county line where we could have a beer.

Guy was to meet up with us at the sales office. He knew that Goodman McKay McKee did not like to be touched and hated shaking hands. So, of course, when we introduced Guy to Goodman, he grabbed Goodman's hand with both of his. Guy was as strong as his son and there was no way Goodman could get loose. Guy just kept on talking and pumping Goodman's hand. Sweat broke out on Goodman's forehead. After a few more minutes, sweat was pouring off Goodman as he was trying to jerk his hand away. For almost ten minutes Guy tortured that dumb ass. It was worth it just to see Goodman squirm. We laughed all the way to the Smoke House restaurant.

I knew that Guy Paul grew up in Lebanon but I didn't know the whole story because I.P. plays his cards so close to his vest and didn't talk much about himself or his family. So over ribs, I asked Guy Paul how he came to America.

Guy Paul told about how, when he was 18, his father, a French banker who ran the Beirut branch, knew in 1938 that a war was coming and Lebanon was probably not a good place for an 18-year-old. The question was where to send Guy Paul? France was a logical place, but it was sure to be invaded. Guy Paul's mother and father also decided that England would not work. The Brits were sure to be involved. The only place to send him was to the United States. After much tearing of hair and gnashing of teeth, it was decided to put him on a ship to the US.

"Upon arrival," Guy Paul told us, "my papers were in order; however, the immigration fellow was just not that astute." Guy Paul always spoke like W.C. Fields. He said, "My original name was 'Phrielet' and my first two languages were French and Arabic with just a smattering of English. As it turned out, my Americanized surname became 'Freelay'.

"After a month or so in New York, I fell in love with my new country. I joined the Navy to show America that I was here to stay and to become a naturalized citizen," Guy explained. "Then I fell in love with a beautiful girl named Ruth Goldberg, I.P.'s mother."

Guy went on to say that after the war, he was a Chief Petty Officer and he loved the Navy. But all was not well. Ruth didn't like the long separations and pleaded with Guy to go to work with her father. They struggled on for awhile. Then on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1951, Ivan Paul Freelay was born. Guy stayed in the Navy and Ruth sued for divorce.

"Ivan Paul and Ruth were struggling just to have enough to eat. Her parents never approved of me—and here's a little advice, Geoffrey." Guy Paul took the cigar out of his mouth and leaned over toward me, "Never pay for something you're not getting."

Then Guy Paul told me about I.P. running away at 13. Guy had already married again and I.P. was living with Ruth in Louisville. I.P. went in search of his father. Neither Guy nor I.P. liked this new red-headed wife, and they both called her Zazu Pitts. Zazu kept making the mistake of cleaning Ivan's room. Most of the cleaning consisted of throwing out



Ivan's electronic equipment. After the third or fourth time this had occurred, and after I.P. had painstakingly explained the importance of the radio gear, Guy told me that I.P. "acted out".

Guy said, "One morning before school, I.P. wired all his gear together with 120 Volt house current. We found Zazu still out cold that afternoon!" Guy took his cigar out of his mouth again and told me in that W. C. Fields voice of his, "That whole episode was shocking; indeed, an electrifying experience." Zazu didn't stick around long after that.

Later in the evening, Guy began to lay out his investment strategy for I.P.'s and my money. I told Guy that it sounded like it might be a good idea until I.P. kicked me under the table. I.P. told his dad to give us a week or so to think it over. Guy then excused himself to the *Caballeros'* room.

Now that the book was open, I.P. told me that when he was ten he'd had a bout with spinal meningitis and it left him on his back for two years. His mother was waitressing in Louisville, Kentucky. Ivan couldn't even sit up to read so he lay in bed and listened to the radio. Mostly he listened to WAKY. Ivan could name every jock, PD, GM and engineer that passed through WAKY. He listened incessantly and he DX'd every station he could pick up on his bedside receiver. He remembered every promotion on WAKY and every other station he could get and he never forgot a detail.

We waited for Guy Paul to return from the Caballeros room, but he never did. He'd stuck us with the check! I.P. said, "And this is the man you were thinking about letting handle our money?"

## CHAPTER 18

# WON'T GET FOOLED AGAIN

When I.P. and I made it back to our latest temporary apartment, he told me he had a surprise for me and to just come along with him—no questions. We walked across the small lawn area, past the pool.

I.P. knocked on an apartment door. In a moment it opened revealing a not bad looking red head.

“Meet Kathy Peters. Kathy, this is Geoffrey Cliff. Now Geoff, Kathy is an old friend. We were in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade together. Take good care of him, Kathy. He’s my best friend.”

“Hello, Kathy. It’s very nice to meet you.” I looked over my shoulder at I.P. who was grinning. I was clueless as to what was going on. I noticed that I.P. had moved off to a large chair in the corner of the living room. The odd thing was the double bed in the living room. What was that all about? Then another voice came lilting in from another room.

“Is he here, Kathy?”

“Yes, he is!”

“I’ll be there in a minute.”

Kathy Peters was dressed in some sort of terry cloth pink body suit. It was cut low and left her arms and legs bare. There was a zipper that ran from the top of her outfit to her crotch. She knelt between my legs and unzipped my jeans. My penis was out and in her mouth in an instant.

“Jeez, look at this,” she said as she worked with her lips and hands.

The owner of the disembodied, lilting voice then came gliding in from another room. She was a lanky, sharp featured blond. I found out later that both girls were students at Baylor.

"Oh, my," said the blond. "My boyfriend is on his way over, but save me some of that." The blond stroked my hair.

Kathy interrupted her activities and began to look through a night table next to the bed. The blond took over stroking my member. Kathy found what she was looking for, a measuring tape.

"That's no dick, that's a telephone pole."

"Yeah. That's why we are going to measure it." The blond informed me that they measured all of the dicks they came across and that they kept a log of the sizes. I.P. is still in the chair and giggling.

"Happy Birthday, G.C." I.P. struggled out of the low stuffed chair and left me in the hands of those two young Christian women from Baylor.

During the next month or so many of our troopers discovered Kathy and her pal. Kathy was referred to as 'the home entertainment unit'.

The next morning I.P. and I arrived at KWAA. I went back to the sales office and was chatting with the youngest sales person, the 50 year old Dot. Our top sales person, the 67 year old Mr. Stein, came limping in with a big grin on his face.

"Well, you look happy this morning, Mr. Stein. Do you have good news?" I asked.

"Would you like some coffee?" Dot offered. "And I brought in some donuts," she said, handing Mr. Stein the box of pastries.

"Why, thank you, Dot. I do have great news. I closed a 52 weeker this morning," Mr. Stein declared, taking a donut.

"Oh, Harvey, that's a wonderful way to start the day!" Dot smiled, her jowls jiggling a bit with that big grin. I was hoping it was the package for the Covered Wagon.

"So who's the client? Is it the book promotion?" I asked.

"No, no. That was just too complicated for my clients to understand; all those mentions, promos and spots. You can't sell things like that."

"All right," I was steaming already, "what did you sell?"

"The John Deere dealer, for 52 weeks! I just told them where the truck was and they signed right up. That man is such a mench," the smile still on Stein's face. He was waving the contract around oblivious to what he had done.

"Wait, wait. What truck, exactly?"

"Geoffrey! That truck you keep talking about on the air. You know those cute little rhyming clue things?"

"Let me get this straight. You told a client where the Covered Wagon was located so you could close one tractor dealer. Do I have this right?"

"Yes, yes. They are thrilled. They're on the way over right now to pick up the truck. Wonderful, huh?" I couldn't hold back any longer.

"You dumb son of a bitch! That's just fucking unbelievable. You idiot cocksucker!" I was getting loud now. Doors were opening. People were coming into the hall. Dot had a shocked look on that face of hers that was losing the battle with gravity.

"You have no fucking idea what you've done. You must be the dumbest motherfucker in radio!"

"You can't talk to him like that." Nina threw her two cents in.

"Shut up, you stupid bitch, and you too, Ms. Phone cunt." The receptionist started to say something, but I had cut her off before she could get anything out of her aging mouth.

I.P. had heard this exchange and came hurrying to cool me down. "G.C., G.C., what the hell? Easy, Dude!"

"Easy, my ass! Do you know what this gimpy fuck head did? He blew the book promotion and has put all six of Eckert's licenses in jeopardy!" I'm really yelling now. I turn back to Stein. "Have you ever heard of the FCC, asshole?" I.P. has my arm and is trying to lead me away. I turn and scream at Nina, "Get Sean Grabowski on the phone NOW, you old biddy! And transfer it to that dumb butt of a manager's office." I stormed into McKay's office, slamming Goodman's door into the cheap wood paneling leaving a good 5 inch split. "Your top salesman may have just lost the licenses for these stations! You are the most incompetent goddamn GM I have ever run into!"

The phone rang at that moment. A shaken Goodman slowly handed me the phone. He stayed an arm's length from me. It was Sean. Sean was a communications lawyer, but he preferred to run stations rather than giving out legal advice from the District. He was also a friend. I told him the story.

"Oh, shit," was about all I got from Sean. He did say that he would call me back in a few minutes. He wanted to talk to the Washington lawyer that handled all of Camden Corps' business.

I told McKay the shit he was in and we waited for the phone call. I was pissed. Then I started to laugh. I.P. began to giggle. What a cluster fuck!

The only solution was to declare the client a winner, then run the contest again. Then I told Goodman McKee McKay to suck my dick and that I.P. and I were taking the day off!

Before all this brouhaha, I.P. had been about to make his rounds. He had to watch over the FM studio with that stereo Gates Yard console and the two Collins twin spin cart machines. I had no information as to the origin of this gear. I just knew it was high maintenance gear and he had built the studio in a week, but this day I.P. had to handle his high maintenance partner.

We moved out of the trade apartments and all of the troops found their own lodgings. Tyrone, our African American jock, Mamie's son, split before the trade ran out. He decided that radio may not be for him. What really happened was that he did not want to pay his dues. Everybody was good to him and he made a few friends, but the long hours and the music he had to play discouraged him. Another thing was the air checks. Tyrone did not like being critiqued. But even if he wanted to stay, there were no apartments available for blacks in Waco-fucking-Texas.

## CHAPTER 19

# DIRTY DEEDS DONE DIRT CHEAP

Late in April Norton Horton called and wanted to see me the next day. The meeting place was to be Goodman's office. I showed up at the appointed time. Norton was already there and sitting in Goodman's chair. Neither I.P. nor I had been told about the negotiations going on between Mel Eckert and Ken, Norton and Sean. I.P. speculated that the AM might get fulltime authority, but we never considered that we were Camden Corps.' stalking horses.

"Well, what do you think, Geoff?"

"About what, Norton?"

"About the whole operation. You know, both stations, staff, management..."

"Oh God, Norton. Well, the FM works. The AM, I don't know how it's going to do. I.P. has the engineering in as good shape as you could expect. Christ man, you should have seen this piece of shit before I.P. laid hands on it. Norton, they had an old Gates Level Devil and a Symetripeak! Everything was still in tubes.

"We used a lot of our own gear just to get it this far. You wouldn't believe what we found when I.P. put the bridge on this sucker. The transmitter wasn't talking to the antenna! Ken was right when he said Mel Eckert was the only guy he knew that took \$4 million dollars worth of radio stations and ran the price all the way down to \$2.5 million."

Norton was wiping his forehead and shaking his head. "Okay. What about Goodman?"

“Norton, he’s the dumbest bastard I’ve ever met. Good God, I mean, really. Constantly clearing his throat so that his voice would sound deeper? He’s a cluster fuck. And the sales staff...”

I didn’t have time to finish the sentence because the door crashed open and Eckert and Goodman strode in. Norton stood up, coming almost to Mel’s shoulder.

“So that’s what you think, is it? I don’t believe we will require your services any longer, Mr. Cliff,” Mel said.

“Okay by me. We didn’t want to do this dog anyway. We are only here because Ken and Norton asked us.”

“Your final checks will be ready in a few minutes.”

“Thank you, Mr. Eckert. Give us four hours and we’ll be gone.”

Four hours later the U-Haul was packed up and KWAA was back to the way we found it. Exactly. The old playlist, Level Devil, Symetripeak and all. Oh yeah, the FM was off the air, since most of the FM gear was ours.

While I.P. was complying with Mr. Eckert’s demands, I was on the phone placing as many of our guys as I could. Norton stopped by the apartment, laughing his ass off. He asked if we had any pot and was that nice Kathy at home? He also told us to drive out to San Diego and put our rock format on the Kinney brothers’ automated FM.

## CHAPTER 20

# SMOKE ON THE WATER

Crossing the desert in my Green Monster pulling a U-Haul didn't sound like a bunch of fun. Thank God it was May and not July. I.P. followed in the XKH with *Pinché*. We made it without getting killed or caught. We were stopped a couple of times by the *pinche migras*, but we were clean.

Sun Tzu was a good traveler. I always put one of my dirty t-shirts in his carrying case so that my smell was always with him. On the trip to San Diego we had no trouble finding motels that welcomed him.

Tzu was convinced that he was a very good driver. An excellent driver. He would put his rear feet on my thighs and his front paws on the steering wheel. He also liked Dairy Queens. Our order was always steak fingers with cream gravy. Sun Tzu loved the gravy. He was definitely a traveling guy.

I should have had Tzu fixed when he was six month's old, but being a typical guy, I could barely bring myself to do it even knowing it was the right thing to do.

Buck was good to us and found us housing almost on the beach. Changing the San Diego FM to formatted progressive rock was easy. The Kinney brothers paid us well, \$500 a week each plus expenses. We listened to KGB and KCBQ. I.P. knew Charlie Van Dyke from Dallas when Charlie was at KLIF. I didn't know George Wilson, but he was a hero of mine. We learned a lot just listening to these amazing stations.

We made a trip or two down to Ensenada on weekends and ate



abalone sandwiches at Rosarita Beach. It was a straight drive through Tijuana where we'd buy some wine to have with our fried abalone and we'd get back across the border before nightfall. It wasn't a good thing going through Tijuana after dark. I knew. I'd been arrested there once and it cost me 100 pesos—\$8—to get out.

We made a few trips in to L.A. also to see Claude Hall. We always learned things from Claude; a good man to know.

Sun Tzu had a sweet purr, but a scary growl. He was easy to get along with unless he didn't know you; then he would follow you around growling with every step. Sun Tzu and I had a ritual. Every day, if we were in the same place, he would come grab my trousers with his teeth and urge me to follow him. It didn't matter what time zone we were in; at 6PM local time Sun Tzu was brushed and combed. He was also given his fish cookies, a treat I had found in a pet store. They were shaped like fish and salmon flavored. After *Pinché* came to live with us, she would patiently wait for her turn to be brushed and cooked.

There is something else I should mention about the cat that owned me. We both paid attention to our grooming. I.P. and I were occasionally misunderstood. I mean, here were two guys that lived together, both with cats. One of them was very well dressed and the other, not so much. One handsome, the other not as handsome. I.P. was a big burley manly fellow. You get my drift? The people who did know us thought this misunderstanding was hilarious; others weren't sure.

We had just finished with The Ocean. That's what we named the FM we were working on, KOCN. For an automated station it didn't sound too bad and we thought that maybe The Ocean might be a small monkey wrench in the KGB/KCBQ fight. Then Norton Horton called again.

"Cliff, you and I.P. come straight back to Texas! Now!"

"What's up, Norton?"

"Come to the office in Austin!"

"Norton, we have to go back to Washington first. We need clothes and other stuff."

"I would have thought that you would have plenty of clothes." Norton snickered.

"We'll be there in three weeks."

"Fine. Call Dick Riney at KNER in Houston and tell him you would like the morning drive shift he has open."

"What?"

"I have a tape of your KBYU show and I'm sending it today. Call him."

"Ah, shit. What about I.P.?"

"Ask him how good his Spanish is." And Norton hung up.

I called Riney and explained that I'd been helping Buck out, but that was over and I needed a gig. He bought my act. I.P. was all over me about this Spanish thing. He called Norton five or six times; all he found out was some strange story about Raytheon and the border. What was obvious was that they were breaking up the team, at least for awhile.

I finally decided to get Tzu fixed and brought Peaches—our new name for *Pinche*—to be spayed. I drove them over the vet's office in their carriers and checked them in. I had no sooner walked back in to our makeshift apartment than the phone rang. "Hello?"

"Mr. Cliff?"

"Yes?"

"We have a problem. Your cat is loose and has attacked one of our employees and a small dog." It was the vet office calling. I didn't have to ask which cat.

"I'll be right over. Please leave Sun Tzu alone. I will handle it. Don't touch my cat."

Sun Tzu was holding the vet office hostage. I got him back in his carrying case and took him out to the car where he was as happy as he could be. The vet's staff was watching unbelievably as I gave Tzu the tranquilizer they had given me. I carried him back in his case and told them to wait an hour before they took him out for the procedure. They told me to pick him up that night before he woke up from the anesthetic.

They had given Peaches a tranquilizer as well just to be safe. God forbid they should have another ferocious kitten on their hands. Fuck heads!

Finally, we were underway, on our way back to the District, me in the Mustang, I.P. in the Jag. There's not much leg room in an XKE Coupe but I.P. and Peaches made the best of it. I.P. tried to DX with the radio he'd had installed, but Peaches was not a good traveler. The first 500 miles she

## *THE RADIO GYPSIES*

screamed and panicked all over I.P.'s leather interior. I.P. had scratch marks; the leather seats had scratch marks; Jesus, there were even scratch marks on the headliner!

Over in the Mustang, Sun Tzu slept peacefully through the ride. When we stopped for lunch, Peaches went to sleep under the pedals on the driver's side.

## CHAPTER 21

# RED NECK MOTHERS

On the second day out, we were rolling down the Interstate, making fair time. It was about 2AM and we were both hungry. I and I.P. get cranky when we are hungry and I could tell by the way he was driving that he was cranky.

We spotted a sign that read 'Stop at the Bucksnot Truck Stop.' What the hell, we were a few miles west of Nashville, so we pulled in to the truck stop, big rigs parked every where. I.P. found a parking place close to the restaurant part of the truck stop and pulled the Jag in so he wouldn't have to backup with that damn trailer. I parked the Mustang next to him.

We walked in to the eatery and every eye seemed to be on us. I.P. was wearing an old Atlantic Records t-shirt that didn't reach his jeans and those terrible lace-up shoes with the thick crepe soles. God knows where he got those things. He even had a pair of wingtips with those thick soles. He also was wearing his gold Rolex GMT.

I had on jeans and a silk shirt, soft loafers and my Submariner. We both had on our \$300 leather jackets. We found a table and sat down. All eyes kept going from the Jag with the small U-Haul trailer then back to us.

We ordered burgers and then a big man with short hair and tattoos walked up to our table and asked, "Ya'll in thet Jag-u-war? 'Spensive ain't it?"

"Yes," I.P. answered.

"What's with thet U-Haul? Fancy watches too."

"Which one of those rigs is yours? Expensive ain't it?" I.P. asked, none too politely.

## *THE RADIO GYPSIES*

"Look here, Fancy boy," the tattooed man said. "You with the red car. Are ya'll queer or somethin'?"

I am now holding my breath. I.P. is cranky and although he's a big strong guy, there are a bunch of truck drivers. Several of the waitresses had turned to watch.

I.P. slowly unfolded from his chair, stood up and tapped the trucker in the chest with two of those thick fingers. "Yes, we are queer. We run rock radio stations and you have to be damned odd to do that." I.P. sat back down and ate his burger.

Noting I.P.'s size, the tattooed trucker backed slowly down, amidst a ripple of laughter, and finished his food. I left a big tip.

## CHAPTER 22

# THE STREETS OF LAREDO

We made it back to the Watergate without further incident. I called Norton. Neither I.P. nor I had a good handle on what was going on. All we knew was that Norton wanted me to go to Houston and I.P. to go to Laredo as P.D. of KLDD.

I knew about KNER. It had been built while I was still at KCMO. The damn thing was an 11 tower directional and originally, a daytimer. However, their fulltime authority had come through and KNER now threw one hell of a 10 thousand watt signal over Houston; however, you couldn't pick it up north of the sticks. The sticks, all 11 of them, were just north of the Houston city limits.

KNER was owned by some guys from Michigan. These yahoos, as Ken called them, made their money doing something or other with navy beans. They put some of their bean money in an AM and a TV in a small market in upstate Michigan. They had hired a brilliant engineer who found a hole in the Houston market and filed on it. This engineer was one of those guys that watched radio on an oscilloscope; he didn't listen. In other words, he was all theory.

Ken had flown to Houston to pitch these bean moguls on consulting and some how or another the pitch turned in to a scream fight. I could not imagine my calm, ruthless boss, with the perfect clothes, graying blond hair and cold grey eyes, in a scream fight! Well, that was the story I got from Norton. I was also told to never mention it to Ken. My job was to maneuver from morning drive jock to Dick Riney's P.D. gig and then bring in the Camden Corp.

KNER paid me shit and no expenses. Sun Tzu and I were on our own, making \$300 a week. I was better off than I.P., that poor bastard. He was making \$175 a week and was given an old farm house to live in, but there was a sweet spot. I.P. had a trade at Papa Guajo's, a bar and whore house in the red light district in Nuevo Laredo.

I went to Laredo about every other weekend. I.P. brought Heavy Earth and John B. to Laredo and they loved it. As short as John B. Johns was you would think he wouldn't do all that well with the ladies. Well, you would be wrong. His height let him fit right in, and that blond hair made him very exotic. Unfortunately, John B. began to refer to our Mexican American brothers and sisters as 'Brown and Serves'. Worse, he let it be known that he preferred the Mayan women because of their flat heads.

John B. would tell one and all, "See? You can rest your drink on their heads while getting a blow job. Wonderful, eh?"

What I.P. did with the station was nothing short of incredible. First of all, the damn thing was a former chicken ranch; it was a studio/transmitter location and smack on the Rio Grande. The production room was the old slaughter house and still smelled of dead chicken. Raytheon had purchased some damned company and ended up with some stations; Ken sold all of them except this one.

As for me, I was in country pussy heaven. And I liked Dick Riney, a smart and good guy. The owners were also good people. I was not about to fuck them over. I worked my ass off for Dick; up at 3:30AM, at the station by 4:30, my show written and on the air at 6AM.

My competition was an old dude that had been in the market forever, the morning driver on KIKR. I knew I could beat him. I couldn't use my old character Jim Bob because Hudson and Harrigan were still on the air at KILT, so I changed the name to Cousin Emil from Goose Creek. Goose Creek was Baytown's name for years until the city council decided to change the name to something more appropriate for a 'growing city'.

The character worked like a champ. Cousin Emil was so popular that he had a contract to do all of the spots for a small chain of cowboy clothing stores. I also did my share of voiceovers for money. It kept Tzu in cat food.

When I got off the air, I usually hung around for an hour or two, had lunch and then got laid. There's a good reason I write a lot about sex.

Anybody on the air, the PD and the consultant were offered more pussy than people can imagine! At country stations, we called them Honky Tonk Angels. At rock stations, we called them Hitline Honeys. It all amounted to the same thing. And each format attracted a different demographic. The country female listeners were more often than not 25+, married with kids and unhappy. They also tended to be exceedingly horny. I guess their husbands neglected them or at least they felt neglected.

Here's a for instance; one young woman called me on the request line and said she would like to meet me at my apartment. I told her I would like to meet her first. The station was located in Greenway Plaza. She said she was upstairs in the snack bar. When I got off the air, I went up to the snack bar and, sure enough, there she was, giving me a small wave with her fingers.

She had a pretty face, but was a bit overweight. I took her to the apartment; as soon as we walked in she started to cry. "I've never done this before", she said, "but I'm so lonely. Will you just hold me?" So I did. One thing led to another and she didn't feel so unloved.

No matter what I did in the afternoon, I was almost always home by 6PM so that Sun Tzu would get his grooming and fish cookies. Often we had company. If Tzu liked the girl he would purr; if he didn't like them he would follow them around growling that mean growl from deep in his throat. Then he would block the bedroom door, showing his teeth and batting the air. Those women never came back.

In early November it was obvious that we were going to beat KIKR overall, including during morning drive. I still had not heard from Ken, but Norton called once a week asking how it was going. I was running out of excuses but I just wasn't going to try to get Dick Riney's gig.

Coming out of the control room one morning in mid November, Riney motioned me into his office. "Geoff, are you going to stay through this book?"

"Yes sir, I'll be here. The book is over a week from Wednesday. I'll be here."

"I would give you a raise but Nixon has frozen pay increases. I know \$300 a week jocks don't wear cashmere jackets or hand made Italian



loafers to work. I also know you worked with Camden and you spend weekends with your old partner in Laredo. So what's going on?"

Because I liked Dick and KNER's ownership, I told him. "Look, Dick, I like it here. The only problem, other than my pay, is with the engineer. I know this dude has been with your ownership from the get go, but jeez, Collins twin spins in a major market and we're an all-cart operation?"

"Geoff..."

"Yeah, he found the hole in Houston, but he watches radio on his 'scope. My God, he's running an 8KC phone line from here to the transmitter!"

"There's nothing that is going to happen with the engineering so drop it. We want you to stay. Would you mind talking to the G.M.?"

Our G.M., a man named Farley Kroger, owned a third of the company but Dick really ran the station. I talked to Farley. He offered me another \$50 a week when Nixon would allow it. Furthermore, if they bought an FM I would get a chance to program it. I did not laugh at him for the offer.

## CHAPTER 23

# RUNNING THROUGH THE JUNGLE

As I was walking through the front door of my apartment, the phone rang. It was I.P. He always had the G2 first. "Pack up, dude. We're escaping."

"What's up?"

"This turkey is finally closing and we are going somewhere else."

"And this intel comes from where?"

"Ken's secretary."

I.P. was correct as usual. We were going home and we were supposed to give our notice as soon as the book was over. We didn't know where we were headed next, but, as ordered, we gave notice. I thanked everyone and had one last talk with Dick.

"Thanks, man. You've been good to me and you knew all along what I was supposed to do."

I had brought Tom Ford in as afternoon drive jock, and Tom told Dick that I was a straight up guy. "So you knew Tommy was part of the Traveling Salvation Show?"

"Yes, Geoff, I knew. So did Farley."

"Ok, I'll never try to hire him away. Pay him more money and get some decent equipment. You only have one good cart machine and that's the Harris record/playback in production. There's AC run with the audio..."

"You quit, Geoff. You don't have to worry about it any longer."

"Well, there's one other thing, Dick. Danny London would be a good replacement for me."

I invited Dick, Tom and the other guys and ladies over for a goodbye drink and a smoke. I.P.'s red XKE was parked in front of my apartment. It flipped them out. They were more interested in I.P.'s car than the available refreshments. On the other hand, the women from the station were whispering about two guys with cats that they now knew lived together in a Washington apartment.

One of the rules that Riney laid down was 'no dipping your wick in company ink'. I had always lived up to that, but other women were around all of the time. Nonetheless, they were suspicious.

The women did think the kittens were cute. Sun Tzu behaved himself and Peaches didn't pee on very many of the throw rugs. The guys were full of questions about the XKE. I.P. had mentioned my Cobra several times and there were questions about it as well. I had told some of the other jocks about it, but they just thought it was another of my big stories. The U-Haul was another topic of conversation. There it was, hooked up on the back of the XKE.

"OK," we thought, "back to the District and some down time!" Visions of St. Bart's ran through my head. Mexico obsessed I.P. I didn't understand it yet, but I.P. had discovered he was a Mexican at heart while he was in Laredo. He picked up the language in weeks, made friends all over northeastern Mexico and, perhaps for the first time in his life, he was comfortable in his skin.

As usual, walking in through our front door at the Watergate, I.P. looked over at the Jasper Johns canvas and for the hundredth time said, "Who threw the paint on the wall?" An invitation to Ken's Middleburg home was waiting for us. We got unloaded and began to settle in at the apartment. I went down to the garage, hoping the Cobra would fire up. I really didn't have much hope, but she cranked on the first try. I was glad to see the little beast.

As always, we had three phone lines coming into the apartment; my line, I.P.'s line and the Camden line. We had a partner's desk in the master bed room that we used as the office. There were two red phones, one on each side of the desk, both with three active buttons.

We rolled one up and opened a California cab. I.P. had begun to appreciate wine a little and I had begun to appreciate pot a lot. Our feet

were up; Tzu was asleep on my waterbed and Peaches was running around sniffing everything. She had only been in the apartment once and then for only two weeks. She was getting comfortable with her new home. Then, the red phone rang. I.P. and I hustled in to the office and we both picked up.

"Hidey, Buddy."

"Uh oh," I thought. "Ken is doing that Texas bubba thing he does when something was up."

"Good evening, Ken." I answered.

"Me too, Boss," I.P. chimed in.

"Good, good. Did you fellows get your invitations for this weekend?"

"Yes sir, we'll be there."

"Great. I want you to come a bit early. I have some things for you and, uh, come together in that Mustang. You'll need the room. Dress. You too, I.P."

"Okay, Boss. How early?"

"A couple of hours or so. In the mean time put your feet up, kick back and I'll see you Saturday." Click, and he was gone.

"What the hell do you make of that, Geoffrey Graehme?"

"Roll another one and this time don't Bogart the joint."

Saturday, at exactly 5PM, we parked the car in the circular driveway not far from the garage. I had been hoping the garage doors would be open so I could see the car collection. Ken's family automobile was a '59 Silver Cloud, two toned black and grey. He also had a '62 Ferrari GT, a '37 Packard and was looking for an Auburn boat tail.

We rang the door bell on time and it was immediately opened.

"Good afternoon, young gentlemen."

"Good afternoon, Harlan." Harlan wasn't really a butler. He was more of a cross between a Gentleman's man and a body guard.

"Mr. Camden is in the sunroom. If you will, come this way?" We followed Harlan and found Ken drinking a beer.

"You want a beer, I.P?"

"Sure boss. What are we drinking today?"

"Harlan will surprise you. Geoff, you snob. An Oban straight up?"

"Thank you, Boss." A snob? Talk about calling the kettle black! All the while I was wishing I could afford a Jeeves.

"Ever been to Africa, Geoff?"

"No sir, but I've seen it several times, passing through the Gates of Heracles and twice through the Suez."

"And you, Ivan Paul?"

"No, sir."

"Well, get ready, we're going. It will take us 3 or 4 weeks for visas and inoculations. Harlan is loading some books into your car. Read them. We're going to Swaziland. One more thing; you can't be dragging those cats along, so if it's alright with you Elsa will house sit."

Of course it was alright with us. Elsa was Mr. and Mrs. Camden's upstairs maid. An upstairs maid! I wanted that kind of life, but I would never be able to afford it and I don't really think that I could stand someone who wasn't family living in my home. I.P., Sun Tzu and Peaches were family.

A typed list of things we needed to do was in with the books that Harlan put into the Mustang, including the name of a doctor and a list of clothes and other stuff that we would need. I.P. glanced over the list and his eyebrows shot up.

"A tuxedo? What the fuck do we need a zoot suit for?"

"We dress for dinner in South Africa, I.P. In Johannesburg."

"What's a pith helmet?"

"It's when you pee in your hat."

The doctor started with the inoculations; we started with the books.

Ken called. I.P. and I both got on the red phone. "You know, gentlemen, I told you it would be three or four weeks. For two of those weeks you are going to do a little training."

"What kind of training?" I.P. asked.

"Oh, it's not much really," said Ken. "A couple of fellows are going to come pick you up tomorrow and take you out to a place they call 'the farm'.

"Don't worry. It's not really very difficult. It's only two weeks. The formal name of this place is Camp Terry and they're going to teach you boys a little trade craft. Since you're going in to Africa, I want to watch out for you. I thought it would be best if you were prepared."

The next day, sure enough, two fellows in a black unmarked car took

me and I.P. just west of Quantico to 'the farm'. For two weeks, I.P. and I were taught how to do things that we never thought we would need to know.

When it was time, we all boarded the plane at Dulles and flew non-stop to Miami; then we immediately boarded the flight to Buenos Aires. Thank God there was a two day lay over there. We were wrecked even though we were flying First Class. Ken always did things right. Our boss seemed as fresh as always. The next flight was to Cape Town. It was summer down there—seersucker and all. God, that stuff's ugly.

We set down in Cape Town to change planes for the flight to Johannesburg and that's where we saw all the seersucker and yes, it was ugly as were the panama hats.

The view of Table Mountain was magnificent coming in to Cape Town. I'd never seen anything like it. It even wowed I.P. and he doesn't wow easily. Ken, of course, acted like he'd seen it a thousand times. When we took off from Cape Town there were miles and miles of vineyards. I hadn't expected that. I knew about French vineyards and California wines, but not African vineyards.

The sights were breath taking, but we hadn't seen anything yet. We flew up to Johannesburg over the veldt and it was incredible. You could see zebra and giraffes and gnus and we spotted a couple of lion prides. There aren't many trees so from above I could easily spot the moving herds in the high yellow grass. It reminded me of what the American prairie must have been like.

When we landed in Johannesburg, we met the man who had hired us, one Albert Lundgren of Immediate Media. We also met our new best friend, Norman Cliff. His job was to never let me or I.P. out of his sight. He also advised us on things we would need, what was important and how to deal with the native population. The thing that confused us the most was his advice to take plenty of toilet paper.

We learned that Norman worked for BOSS, Bureau of State Security. Norman was also a distant cousin of mine. He was 10 years older, a handsome man, and he gave me a good idea of what I would look like in my mid to late 30s.

There are three body types in the Cliff family. One is the tall slim

brown headed guys like Norman and me. The difference between us was that he let those bushy eyebrows just grow. That was a Cliff trademark—bushy eyebrows.

Another body type in the family is the short, wide shouldered, barrel-chested guys with wavy black hair. And then there are the blond giants. The thing about them was that they tended to lose their hair early. The rest of us didn't. What we all had in common were large, wide-set blue eyes. And the bushy eyebrows.

Ken went with us to Mbabane, the capitol of the Kingdom of Swaziland. Ken was then going to go back to set up a Johannesburg sales office. Communication between Johannesburg and Mbabane was difficult to say the least; however, we did set up fax terminals for logs, commercial copy and memos at a small communications center in the same building as the studio. There were no telephone lines out to the transmitter site—only a teletype and a two-way radio. I.P. was going to rebuild Radio Swazi so that the signal would cover Johannesburg, the surrounding area and still cover Swaziland. My job was to program this 10K bugger.

We didn't have any trouble getting our gear into the country. Norman handled the baksheesh or however you spell 'bribe'. We drove to the Capitol in three Land Rovers, two full of gear and one full of us. The drivers were armed to the teeth.

The first order of business was diplomatic; we had to meet the King. Swaziland had been a British protectorate watched over by a Brit Governor until '68. The King now occupied the old Governor's mansion with several mud and straw additions.

The King loved electronic gadgets so we brought him a truck full of stuff; TVs, air conditioners, refrigerators and like that. The truck with all the presents got there in time for our audience with the King so there could be a formal presentation. We were introduced and then met the dozens of wives, sons, cousins, etc. The old boy had a large family and we didn't want to disappoint them by not having a present for each one.

The transmitter site was several kilometers west of town in the bush. After showing a leg to the Royals, we checked in to the best hotel in town—I would give it half a star—then we went out to the transmitter site

in the Land Rover, followed by three trucks. Two of those trucks were filled with locals and the other one was full of our gear.

I don't sweat, but I'm sweating today. I.P. and I both felt pretty silly in pith helmets. The night before when I looked over the budget for the project, I saw a budget line for 25 Mamba beaters for the first time. Banging along in the Land Rover, I.P. asked, "So Norman, what's a Mamba?"

"It's a snake, Mr. Freelay. A black snake that is very poisonous. The Kaffirs with us go through the compound making lots of noise beating on pans and what not to run the snakes off, we hope. Watch your step and where you put your hands. You too, Mr. Cliff."

"Holy shit. Well, let's take a look."

"Not yet, sir."

"Norman, please call us 'Geoff' and 'I.P.'"

The transmitter shack was exactly that. I.P. had to raise another stick, run radials and put the directional gear together. The transmitter was an old British Brown. We had never seen one before and the Brown had never seen the likes of us either. Even though it was old and it didn't do the job we wanted it to, there was redundancy built in everywhere. We found that a lot of British equipment we ran into was in fact over-engineered. And I.P. was about to give it a bunch of muscle.

We brought four new Ampex recorders and a new board for the site. We also had to build a new studio in town. We were going to tape 18 hours of programming at the studio each day and then play it back the next day from the transmitter site. Our programming was R&B, but we were also going to play the hits from the clubs in Soweto and the other black settlements around Jo'burg. We found out which hits to play by going to the clubs ourselves. It was really scary visiting those clubs, being the only white folks in sight. But we wanted to get it right and to make it sound authentic we had to soak up local culture in a short amount of time.

We cut the jingles at PAMS in English but we also found some singers in the local clubs with the help of a local radio groupie—Jonas Kimbali. We brought three guys and three women in to record some jingles in Swahili. They sang acapella with drums. Integrating these jingles into the format gave the station an authentic sound.



Before we arrived, Immediate Media had hired six natives to do the voice work. My job was to program the station and train the local jocks. A 'tight board' was not a well understood concept. That was my first job—to teach 'no dead air'. To do that, I had to teach them to use cart machines. I.P., being the better blade than I, taught production.

Immediate Media also hired a real tower rigger to help I.P. stack steel. I.P. also had some young gentlemen that helped him dig in the radials so that progressed well and quickly. Guards had to be stationed around the site because the locals were rolling up the radials as soon as they were laid. They got a good price for the copper.

The old Brown transmitter had to be almost completely rebuilt because it was old and neglected. Redundancy was built in throughout but it was hard to get parts for such an old piece of gear. I.P. had it sussed out soon enough; the one thing that slowed us down was getting the needed gear brought in to the transmitter site.

While we were waiting for parts for the old Brown transmitter and for the steel for the second tower to arrive, I.P. put the studios together in town.

After our first night in the ½ Star hotel, we went to Norman and told him he had to get us out of there. "We can't do this," I said.

"We can't stay here," I.P. said.

"We know there are some colonial houses that are unoccupied in the old British government compound and you need to move us in there."

"And a cook," I.P. added.

"And someone to keep the place clean."

"Not so easy, old boys," Norman answered.

"There's another thing, Norman," I said. "I.P. and I notice that the people out at the transmitter site, including you, are armed to the teeth. We didn't bring any weapons."

IP speaks up, "We feel a little naked out there. In fact, we feel a little naked in this hotel."

"Oh, I don't think there will be much of a problem with that," Norman said.

"And by the way, Norman, we know you work for BOSS and with just a little research we found out you did three years in a British jail on an

espionage charge. And I understand you'll date a girl or two, like the secretary of the head of MI6." Norman Cliff just chuckled.

"OK, Norman, here's what we'd like. We both want 357 Magnum revolvers. I.P. wants a 9mm HK and I want an AK47." Norman stepped back from us. He looked at us through narrowed eyes as if he was just seeing us for the first time.

"OK, gents. And I think I can swing the house and a caretaker who cooks."

"Fine," I.P. said. "When can we move in?"

There's a sharp pause. Norman nods his head.

"All right, chaps. Give me a day or two on the house. And I'll have your weapons tomorrow."

The next morning, Norman showed up in his Land Rover to escort us out to the transmitter site. He had the weapons and ammunition in the back. We took a look at the revolvers.

"Norman," I.P. said, "we note that the 357s are beautiful weapons. We also note that they are chrome. Now, Norman, that chrome glistens in the sunlight and gives your position away."

"So," I said, "what I.P. is trying to tell you, Norman, is that those revolvers need to be blued. And we want two additional snap-in cylinders apiece."

We started off down the red dusty road. "You guys can move in tonight," Norman said. "I've got some Kaffirs that will take your stuff over now."

The steel had started showing up for the tower and some other gear as well. We were met by 25 locals beating on pots and pans as they walked us to the transmitter compound. We had no sooner gotten out of the Land Rover when there were two short riiiiipppps.

"Hit the dirt, I.P.!" I yelled.

There was a line of bullet holes in the transmitter shack. The guys guarding the steel opened up on the bush where the shots came from. I didn't fire a shot because I didn't see where the hostile fire was coming from but I.P. let out several very disciplined three shot bursts.

He looked up and, mocking the too proper Norman said, "Not a minute too soon, eh, old boy?"

"The ANC?" I asked. Norman nodded.

Thankfully, that was the last time we were shot at. We carried the weapons everywhere.

That evening we went to our new sparkling clean abode. The floors were polished; the double beds had crisp sheets and mosquito netting. Our cook had made us a very savory stew. Later I.P. and I were sitting on the floor cleaning our weapons.

"I.P., how in the world do you know how to use an HK? That's the top of the line sub machine gun in the world!"

"Oh well, you know Geoffrey, when I was doing some work down in Monterrey, I met some old boys that liked to go out to the firing range and this was their weapon of choice."

"So you learned a three round discipline?"

"Well, they had a lot to teach me. Now, why are you dragging around an AK47?"

"Because you can drag it through the mud, you can pull it through water, it doesn't jam and you can't break the damn thing."

"Vietnam, Geoffrey?" I nodded.

"We had our choice of weapons and this one made the most sense. It sounded like the other guys' weapons and it didn't break and it didn't jam.

"You know, after my first experience with an M16, I lugged an M14 around for about a month. Even though it was 30 caliber, it was a pain in the ass in the bush."

Things went very smoothly from there. With I.P.'s magic, Radio Swazi sounded great. It was the loudest, best sounding station in Jo'burg and Swaziland. It was the first time that many of the locals had heard a station with no dead air, plus jingles!

I.P. and I had done our home work. We studied the culture. It was a quick study, I admit, but Burn Baby Burn Radio Swazi was an instant hit, playing Motown and the club hits. Our keeper, Norman Cliff, kept giving us 'PSAs' to run in every stop set. This surreptitious propaganda for the most part went unnoticed by the ANC.

Ken had printed up Burn Baby Burn t-shirts and sequentially numbered bumper stickers. There weren't all that many privately owned cars in our target audience but the stickers began to show up on the few

there were, as well as on taxis, bicycles, motorcycles, the backs of t-shirts, telephone poles—everywhere! People grabbed them because Radio Swazi aired a number every hour and if you had the number, you either won a record, a Burn Baby Burn t-shirt and, once in a while, a Krugerrand.

Within a month, Radio Swazi t-shirts were everywhere and the station was heard wherever you went. It surprised everyone that the station actually sold commercials and carried a fairly full load. I don't know who was more pleased, the King of Swaziland with his improved outlet or Herr Lundgren of Immediate Media.

I.P. and I had figured out the deal, almost from the get go. The ANC was a big problem for South Africa and BOSS. We gave them the perfect propaganda outlet. Not only was the Government happy; the damn thing made money from the beginning. And the advice we'd gotten about the toilet paper? That was correct.

I.P. and I were glad to leave. It was hot. It was summer in the southern hemisphere and I.P. got his first look at the Southern Cross.

## CHAPTER 24

# HOW DID HAROLD LEAVE YOU?

We'd just gotten home from Africa. Sun Tzu and Peaches were happy to see us.

I.P. had turned 21 in Africa and in a couple of weeks I would be 27. It was still cold in Washington, but it felt good to us. Ken wanted us to see a doctor to be checked for internal parasites and other nasty stuff you can pick up in the bush. I had been through this drill before. The last time was coming home from the 'Nam.

As raggedy as we felt and needing sleep, I had a scotch and I.P. rolled one up and we racked out. Sun Tzu was too big now to sleep across my neck like he did as a kitten. Now, he snuggled into my right arm pit. We spent the next two weeks eating steak and fried chicken, staying stoned and not doing much until 'the phone call'.

I.P. thought he'd better tell Ken. "Hello?" Ken answered the phone.

"Uh, boss, we just got a strange call."

"Un huh, un huh. What kind of call, I.P.?"

"Well, sir, a dude named Francisco Gonzalvo De La Montego called. He wants to meet with us and he invited us to dinner at the Philippine Embassy."

"Does your tux still fit?"

I.P. woke me up and told me about his call to Ken and the Gonzalvo dude. We showed up at said Embassy in black tie; Ken was already there. He introduced us to the Ambassador and his Lady and the young man who had phoned. The young man said to call him Pedro. Turned out his family owned San Miguel beer. They also owned two radio stations.

So we got some new stamps on our passports and another round of shots. We flew to LA, flew to Honolulu, did a one day lay over and then landed in Manila. When I asked Pedro how he found us, he told me Claude Hall had recommended us. We later found out it was more like the State Department.

Africa had more or less made our year. The Manila gig gave us a good start on '72. The Philippines was not a new place for me. I'd been there several times, mostly at Subic Bay and Olongapo. Although the ladies were pretty, I warned I.P. off. Even so, we both caught the crabs. You can always tell when your freckles start to jump. Thank God, the crabs are easier to get rid of than that virulent strain of the clap that's so prevalent in Asia.

One of the stations was a 5K regional in Manila; the other was a 50K boomer off in the jungle somewhere. The drill was much the same as in Africa except both of the transmitters were Harris. The 5K was an English speaker and they wanted us to rock it, as Pedro said, "like KHJ." The little fucker didn't want much, eh? The boomer spoke Tagalog. For that one they just wanted engineering and a seminar on how to program a radio station. We spent a month in the Philippines and that was long enough for me.

## CHAPTER 25

# CAT SCRATCH FEVER

Once again we were back in the District. All three cars still started. Tzu and Peaches were happy to see us and, damn, we were happy to see them. Being human, we let it show; being cats, they didn't. I had like a million calls from Jane Anne Cliff, "How are you? When are you coming home? Your Grandmother misses you. Please call. We just don't hear from you enough!" And so forth. Around my block, up my street, and up my butt.

I.P. and I loved our jobs. Ken worked our asses off for two years, but apparently we made it. We had seen people come and go at the Camden Corp. Even Norton Horton quit and started his own brokerage firm. Mrs. Camden treated us like her own boys; Ken was like a second father to me but I irritated him. Maybe it was all of the questions I asked or just my smartass snobbery. Ken was the same way but he was smoother around the edges. The truth was Ken just liked I.P. better.

I.P. handled people. I didn't. Another thing was both Ken and I.P. were smarter than me. I was smart enough, but not like those guys. Their I.Q.s were past 150, mine was only 134. In any case, I did consider Ken my second Father. I suppose I.P. felt the same way.

I.P. and I thought we would get a good long vacation. Visions of the Caribbean were back in my head. I.P. was most likely thinking of some super high power Border Blaster and pretty brown girls, but that was not to be. We had been home only a week when Ken called. This time it was the Rowland Balkin stations. At least they were all in the States.

So I put away thoughts of diving gear and we concentrated on the Balkin chain. As always, I.P. knew all about them.

There was an informal club of overnight guys and some engineers that had a conference call most nights and I.P. was often on those calls. The result was an average phone bill of \$700 dollars a month. I paid half because whenever I would bitch about the expense I.P. would remind me that I benefited as much as he from the G2 gleaned from these calls.

We're talking about CKLW, WABC, WCFL and like that. I.P. was one of those guys that stayed in touch with people and prided himself on being the first one with the intel, even though he kept many things to himself. I operated exactly opposite. My play was to seem like an open book, all the while hiding my thoughts.

Balkin owned two stations in Columbus, Ohio and the Ohio News Network. There were also two stations in Tidewater, two in Ft. Worth, two in Mobile and one in Corpus Christi. Just fucking swell; back to Texas. The bright spot was that this was a brokerage deal and that meant big money for us. Balkin wanted to sell every thing except Ohio. As usual, our job was to make the rounds and get the properties ready for the mullets. Ken already had his line in the water.

Ken met with Mr. Balkin at the NAB and learned that not only did he want some of the stations sold; he wanted all of his stations consulted. The money was good so off we went; I.P. driving that XKE and pulling a U-Haul; I followed in the Cobra. This time we took the felines with us. Sun Tzu was full grown. He weighed 14 pounds and still loved to travel. As soon as he saw my suit bag on the water bed, he neatly lined up his mice, yarn ball and his stuffed lion cub next to his carrier. Sun Tzu perched himself on my luggage. He was not going to be left behind this time.

Columbus is a nice town and the AM was the only one of the Ohio stations that needed any work. I.P. put in some new processing and rebuilt the power supply in the transmitter. I wrote a format guide and instituted an aircheck regimen. The format was Adult Contemp and that's what we felt about that format...contempt.

Next was WNFK AM/FM in Norfolk. Suffolk was also part of the market. Both of those towns are locally pronounced as 'Norfuck' and 'Suffuck', or, as I.P. called them, the sex cities. Both of us liked the Tidewater area. The food was good and we liked the people.



We had a little trouble checking in to the Sheraton. When we pulled up in front of the hotel, the XKE was in front and the Cobra was right behind. The bellman came out and without blinking an eye, asked "Checking in, gentlemen?"

"Yes, we are. I think we will need two luggage carts."

I knew the guy had seen Sun Tzu's carrier. I slipped him a twenty. Then I asked I.P. to check us in and said that I would handle the luggage. I threw my old Burberry trench coat over Tzu's case. The doorman also saw Sun Tzu. Another twenty. Peaches had learned to be a better traveler and I.P. had gotten her an old Dr.'s bag. He left it partially unzipped; when she was in her bag, she made herself comfortable and kept very quiet.

After the Valet drove the cars off to park, Sun Tzu and I started through the front doors. I had almost made it to the elevators, when a fussy little man headed my way.

"Sir, sir! This hotel does not allow pets." It was the assistant manager.

"I'm sorry that you have misunderstood. This is my son. Unfortunately, he is afflicted with Feline Syndrome. It's a rare, but terrible disease."

"That, Sir, is a cat and we don't allow them."

Sun Tzu did what he always did when he felt one of us was threatened. He was hissing and spitting and batting the air. His big paws were spread, showing his long claws. The fussy little man, startled, backed away from me. I saw I.P. making his way over to the elevators followed by the bellman.

"Geoffrey, are we having that problem again?" I.P. was carrying Peaches in her Dr.'s bag. I.P. continued, "Don't you have any idea what this poor man has gone through?" I.P. was getting loud now and the people in the lobby were turning to look. "Would you deny shelter to this poor afflicted child? You would turn away a boy with this terrible problem?"

The assistant manager was really backing off now. "Feline Syndrome? I guess, uh, that's okay." He turned and almost ran back toward his office, mumbling, "I know that's a damn cat."

"You know, considering that shabby treatment, he really should make some gesture," I.P. was almost shouting. Everyone in the lobby was looking first at us then at the little fussy man.

"I would be happy to comp your breakfasts." He made a half bow, turned and fled still mumbling about cats and Feline Syndrome.

The bellman showed us to our suite and began to hang our suit bags and unload the test gear. I.P. let Peaches out of her bag. The bellman began to laugh. "Do you guys do this a lot?" I handed the guy another twenty and told him, "Only in the best hotels."

With his long pure white coat, grey tail, legs and mask, and bright blue eyes Sun Tzu was not just beautiful, he was spectacular. He was almost as good a chick magnet as I.P.'s phallic XKE. The Cobra was too loud and uncomfortable for the ladies.

I remembered WNFK from the '60s when I was in the Navy. I picked up my ship there before we headed out to the 'Nam. While I was waiting for my ship, I did a few fill in overnights and ran the Jesus tapes on Sunday morning.

WNFK was a Class 4, 1K watts daytime and 250 at night. The freq was 1230 and they still used the old tag line, 'As easy as one-two-three'. They were also still using 'Carousel Radio'. They had literally built a carousel for the studios; a spiral staircase led down to an engineering space where the processing and microwave transmitter were located. A covered walk way led back to the offices and sales area.

WNFK was the number two Top40. The competition was WHG, a 5K regional. Gordon McLendon once said, "Every thing else being equal, the best signal wins." Although WHG sucked, it did have the best signal. We gave it our best shot anyway. Thanks to I.P. WNFK was the loudest class 4 and cleanest that I had heard to date, but we didn't have the coverage that WHG did.

On my side of things, I trimmed the budget and wrote the format guide. Both I.P. and I thought through the music policy and fixed it. We decided not to bring in any of our rock team; we might need them later and all of our guys were stashed in Tucson where we could lay hands on them when needed.

WHG had a broad, spread out playlist; we decided to target 12 to 24s and see if we couldn't collapse WHG's audience. If we could take out WHG's teens and even just a few of their 18 to 24s, maybe we could force them to make a format change. At the very least, maybe we could scare

them into fooling around with their format and give us some fuck up we could take advantage of. I.P. and I trained the WNFK guys as well as we could and crossed our fingers. We were in Norfolk for only four weeks. I think the management at the Sheraton was relieved.

Next came Ft. Worth. Our small caravan made it to the Dallas-Ft. Worth market in three days. The Balkin stations were in good shape; at least as good as they could be, considering their limited coverage. The AM, KFZJ, was a 'personality' Top40. The FM was a 100,000 watt Class C, full blown at 1500 feet and it simulcast the AM.

We knew these 'personality' jocks from our time at KBYU. Balkin's afternoon drive guy was a smartass but that translated over the air very well. He used to call KBYU the goat roper station. In fact he released a Spanish goat in our offices one morning.

There wasn't much we could do with the AM. The signal didn't cover Dallas and WBAP had eaten up the market rolling Tammy Wynette with that clear channel 50K. We did a couple of walk-throughs and then left them alone. Their engineering was okay and the production was excellent.

We drove over to Dallas and had lunch with Sean Grabowski. Sean wanted to take us down to Harry Hines to a strip club. I don't think any of us had ever been in one so we declined. I think Sean was relieved. In Dallas, Harry Hines was usually referred to as 'Hincey Hairs'.

Next, we had to go see my Mother. There was just no way out of it. Visiting Jane Anne Cliff was like being interrogated by the FBI. As I.P. always said, "She will ask a question or two. She uses every technique except the bright light in your eyes."

"Oh, hi Honey. Where have you been? Are you eating well? Why is your hair so long? Geoffrey Grachme, why are you wearing those tacky jeans? And Ivan Paul, you must call me Mother. 'Mrs. Cliff' just won't do."

Well, you get the picture. My father hid as much as possible all the time. Not that he didn't love Jane Anne, he did, more than anything. But Dad knew when to hold 'em and he knew when to fold 'em. We escaped, but not before dinner at Jean-Claude's. Mom sold the Italian Inn restaurants. Dad was ready to retire as well. When Jane Anne retired, she sold Jean-Claude the French restaurant. He kept the restaurant as his own place. It was magnificent.

At dinner Jean-Claude treated us like royalty. The food was incredible and I'll never forget my entrée that evening. It was creamed lamb prepared like meatloaf, but, trust me, it was not like any meatloaf you've ever tasted. Little black pieces of truffle, cream, ground lamb and the perfect balance of herbs and spices. Jean-Claude insisted I raid his wine cellar, so I did. The strange thing about that evening was that Dad confided in me that he wanted to grow wine grapes. It was weird enough that he would confide in me at all, but wine grapes?

Corpus Christi was Balkin's smallest market and the station was the most fucked up. Once again, we had a Class 4 on our hands. KYES was the only Top40 in the market and it was getting the shit beat out of it by the country and a soft rocker. What was wrong with this picture?

A quick look at last Fall's ARB told the story. KYES out-cumed the country and the soft rocker, but our quarter hours were for shit. We also had that little problem of only 250 watts nighttime. The audio was hideous and it was apparent that the sales department programmed the station.

It was one of those 'Aw, fuck' situations, except Corpus was beautiful; a jewel of a small city sitting right on the bay. We knew we were going to be here for a while so we rented an apartment only two blocks from the water. I.P. and I thought that San Diego must have looked like this at one time. Sun Tzu and Peaches approved of the apartment. They both liked to run about in the park next to the bay.

The station was located in an old supermarket building; it too was only a few blocks from the water. We met the G.M., Fred Stern; the P.D. and the News Director. A News Director in this Podunk outfit? I knew right away how to trim this budget.

The station had some good gear in production and the control room, but the lack of regular maintenance was obvious. We drove out to the transmitter site and met the engineer. It was another old guy, but he was happy to see us. You could just see it in his old brown eyes. "Less work for me," those eyes said. I.P. was delighted. This engineer would not get in the way. The processing was non existent and I knew I.P. was going to rebuild that Harris transmitter.

That evening Fred called a staff meeting of all hands, including sales. The upstairs of the building was converted into nice sales offices. We met

Fred downstairs before the meeting and we could tell something was wrong. We quickly discovered that the problem was Jim Beam after lunch. Fred was pretty wobbly so I set Sun Tzu down on the floor and got Fred upstairs with the help of I.P. Sun Tzu strutted up the stairs behind us. The staff was neatly seated around the sales bullpen. They did not seem surprised to see a cat with the consultants. Knowledge of our MO preceded us.

Fred made an attempt to introduce us. I took over and did my song and dance; of course, I told the Consultant's Lie.

"We are here to help you and do some training, if needed. People always get nervous when they hear the word 'consultant', but don't worry. You're not going to be fired."

I introduced I.P. and he did his tap dance. We shook hands all round and started downstairs to slip off into the night. I don't think any of the staff had seen either a Cobra or an XKI in person. They all filed out behind us to take a look.

"All right, cowboy, how we gonna act?" We were sitting in the dusty, frayed living room of our furnished two bedroom apartment. The cats were frolicking. Tzu had his stuffed lion cub, carrying it with his teeth, biting it just behind its neck.

"G.C., let's start with the easy stuff. The production guy is okay and so is the overnight dut." The word 'dude' had morphed to 'dut' while I.P. was in Laredo. He would get calls on the hotline like "Hey, dut, you put me Poopy Love?" This was a request for Donny Osmond's Puppy Love.

"Yeah, they're good. Want to think about bringing in some of the rock traveling salvation show guys?"

"The market's small..."

"We'll think about that later. The programming side is pretty straight up; 7As, 11Bs, 5Cs, recurrences and some oldies. Very little dayparting. I think we'll use a 60% new tunes, 40% oldies.

"G.C., I want to go all-cart on this one."

"In control we have 3 Harris cart machines. I don't think Rowland will pop for two more."

"He doesn't have to. Here's the deal. I'm going to need some new heads for all of the machines and we're going to reload all of the carts with

the same tape so we can bias every head the same. Same with the Ampexes in production.”

“All right, I.P. What about two more cart machines for the music?”

“I found two old Spotmasters at the transmitter shack.”

“Spotmasters?”

“Yeah. I’m going to rebuild ’em and I’m going to need some new amps and one of those new Panasonic Techniques turntables.”

“Keep talking.”

“Do you still have that pal in Houston with the machine shop?”

“Yes.”

“Geoff, the Spotmasters have two major problems. The amps suck and the top plate is too thin. When you punch off a cart, the top plate flexes and skews the tape across the heads. I need sturdier top plates and they have to be machined.”

“You got it, dut.”

“I have a little surprise. You remember putting *The Ocean* together?”

“Of course.”

“Well, the automation unit used these little tubes. Here, look. They’re called nixie tubes.” I.P. pulled out a small black box with four darkish tubes. If you looked closely you could see small wires that seemed to be laced through the tubes every which way.

“You know the problem we’ve always had was the timing in an all-cart format. Well, you know. Houston was a bitch for you to time out the talk-ups. This solves the problem. It’s a back timer.”

“Whoa! How does it work?”

“Easy, G.C. Every time a jock punches off an element, the timer automatically re-sets and starts counting down again.” I.P. was beaming and I was as happy as a dead pig in the sunshine.

“If we can come up with the processing, we can make this fucker smoke.”

I.P. pulled out a lid and started to roll another one. Before I could say anything I.P. was already on me.

“I know. It’s Texas and they can put us away forever. I also remember your Rule One: never jeopardize the license. And I’ve got the processing and two mic compressors.”

"Do I want to know?" I.P.'s small green eyes just looked at me half closed as he exhaled a good toke. I knew enough not to ask any more questions.

The next day Heavy Earth drove up in his MG, Fletcher. The day after that, Right-On walked in. Counting the cats, six of us were now in the apartment.

I blew out the afternoon guy and the teenybop drive dut. Right-On slipped easily into afternoons and Heavy took 7 to mid-night. The staff quickly accepted both of these fellows, but they were watchful of me.

I decided to cut the JS Solid Rock jingle package at PAMs and I.P. agreed. I called Franklin Jr. and got a recording date. Frank also gave me a price break. We got the package for \$1,500. We still needed jocks for mid-days and Mornings. M.F. called and wanted mornings. He had been in Tucson all of this time waiting for us to call.

"M.F., we haven't called because we haven't had the right gig for you."

"Geoff, are you blowing smoke?"

"Once again, old boy, you are the only one of us that's not single. We just didn't feel right bringing you in when we knew we were going to sell this damn thing."

"I'll be there in three weeks."

We had our killer morning man. That filled out the crew except for mid-days. Then Napoleon Stone just showed up at the apartment one night with his sleeping bag and his U-Haul. Napoleon Stone; just what we needed. Nap had a great voice, almost as good as John B. Johns' and he was about the same size—little. Nap was also rich. His U-Haul trailer was being pulled by a new Corvette. The problem with Nap was 13 year old girls. He liked them too much. Anyway, here he was and that was that. Now we had two U-Haul trailers in the parking lot. We had to find some apartments fast.

I smoked the old P.D. the next morning. Then I started to write the format guide at night. While I.P. was doing his dirty deeds done dirt cheap, I filled in mid-days using one of our old air names, Marcus Hook. I put Nap in mornings as we waited for M.F. Johnson.

As good as Jacky, our production guy, was, he didn't know about having to cue the carts past the splice before you used them again. He



caught on right away once it was explained to him. In accordance with our policy of everyone having a 'secondary area of responsibility', Heavy Earth was doing the music. All of the jocks had a production shift in addition to the other responsibility. Right-On was the promotions man. Nap voiced the promos. I was going to have Jacky be the newsman, but I ran into a small problem. I had to wait a bit for that.

I.P. was still working his magic so we had not converted to all-cart yet nor had we cut the new jingles. We were still playing the little records with the big holes, but Heavy was getting that fixed fairly quickly.

I had 'that' talk with the sales manager, Carter Browne. I was surprised, even taken aback. I had to explain pre-print logs and how they had to be loaded to keep the logs balanced. Also, I had to explain the difference between minutes and units. Further, we talked about sales packages that would come from programming. I'll be damned if he didn't get it. He was my age, a settled guy with a nice wife. I told Ken about him. I was impressed. I also called Ken to talk about the News debacle.

Our News Director, Dan Cutler, was a burly red head and I might say belligerent. This dumb fucker was running 15 minutes of news an hour; 10 minutes at the top of the hour and 5 minutes at :30. He couldn't read a book so he had no idea what he was doing to our TSI or quarter hour maintenance. In fact, he really believed that his news kept KYES afloat. He was not a reasonable man. If all of that wasn't enough, he had an AP machine *and* a UPI machine. Fuck stick! Ken told me to call Rowland so I did.

"Hello?"

"Mr. Balkin, it's Geoff Cliff."

"Hello there, Geoff. How's it going? And call me Rowland."

"Yes, sir. Well, it's mostly going fine, but we do have a problem."

"A problem?"

"Yes sir, it has to do with the news. I know you saw the Fall book and you can see our cume is in line, but in terms of holding audience, we're not very efficient and that's where we're being beaten."

"What do you mean, Geoff?"

"We're running 15 minutes of news an hour and it's blowing listeners off like crazy and it's easy to fix, but I can't seem to get through to Fred or Cutler."



"Who is Cutler?"

"The News Director. Fred will not let me deal with him. I just can't tell Fred what we are doing here, per instructions."

"Are you talking to Fred in the morning or the afternoon?"

"Always in the morning, sir."

"Yes, always in the morning. What do you suggest?"

"Mr. Balkin, our job is to raise the price of this facility and to do that we have to raise the cash flow. To do that, we trim fat and get the numbers up so that we can sell spots for more money. The problem is that we do not need two newsmen; we don't even need one. We certainly don't need an AP *and* a UPI machine."

"Well, young Geoff, what do you suggest?"

"We blow out both of the news guys. It's headcount we don't need. We use a system of secondary areas of responsibility. I have a man in house that can replace them both. I would also break both of the news wire contracts."

"You've done this before?"

"Absolutely. The wires throw a small fit and then they go away. They will not sue because they know they can't win so it won't hold up the station sale."

"You're a tough little bastard, aren't you? Hmmm. Call me tomorrow morning. Good work. You've checked our commitments?"

"Yes sir. I've read through the License Renewal and 5 minutes an hour is the commitment."

"OK, go ahead on. Call when everything's done." Click! And that was the end of the two news guys and the two news machines.

I.P. and I talked it over. We decided to leave the news alone until we had the rest of the pieces in place. M.F.'s wife had already made her mind up that she would not like this tacky Texas town. Tucson was in the desert, but the money was good and she had made a nice, livable nest. Why would she want to expose M.F. to that bunch of foul mouthed fornicators? Then she saw Corpus; it was beautiful...and inexpensive. Mrs. Johnson set up house. We were careful to show her the good restaurants and the apartments on Padre Island.

Right-On and Heavy found an apartment in the same complex as ours.

They took Nap with them. I had no idea how those two even tempered dudes were going to deal with a rich, perverted, deep voiced little twit like Nap, but they would work it out.

We called Franklin Jr. at PAMS and told him we were on our way. Frank said that since we would get into Dallas late, why not spend that first night with him and Miss Baby? We accepted with alacrity! Frank had just built and moved in to his new Town House. I.P. and I were anxious to see it. Eighty thousand bought a lot of house in '72.

We loaded up the Jag and headed out about 4PM. Mrs. Johnson had thoughtfully offered to watch after our cats. I.P. was rolling the Jag quickly up I-37 toward I-35. That would take us into Dallas.

"Guess what I brought for us?" my pal I.P. asked.

"Clueless, Pard."

"Well, look at this!" and I.P. waved a \$10 lid at me.

"You crazy bastard. We are in a very red, very loud, very expensive sports car. I'm wearing a silk shirt, hand made loafers. We're both wearing Rolexes. When we are stopped, and we will be stopped, do you think they might think we're drug dealers? This is fuckin' Texas! We will spend the rest of our lives in Huntsville. Throw it out! Now!"

"Aw, man. I paid 10 bucks."

"10 bucks or 10 years?"

"Damn, G.C. Okay. Alright," and he threw out the pot. Not 20 minutes later we were stopped by the Highway Patrol. As predicted, the two patrolmen shook us down and searched the XK12. They were not buying that we were radio consultants until we whipped out our Watergate I.D. cards. I guess they thought that dope dealers wouldn't live there, only thieves and political operatives. They finally let us go with a warning about I.P.'s loud pipes. Close call.

We hit Waco about 9PM. We had the idea that we should look up the home entertainment unit, Kathy Peters. Now that would make a good break in our arduous travels. It so happened that the young lady who had moved in next door before we left Waco knew Kathy's new address. Unfortunately, she did not have the phone number.

"It's okay, Geoffrey. I'll just run over and pick her up. No problem." Off he went.

I stayed behind with the new girl who was a smart, attractive senior at Baylor. It's now almost 11PM. The girl and I made small talk about her future. Her major was History, so we had lots to chat about.

I.P. was having a hard time locating Kathy's new address. Finally at midnight I.P. pulled up in front of Kathy's new residence. He wasted no time. He rang the doorbell, shouting, "Kathy, Kathy. It's I.P. and G.C. Come on out. I've got the Jag."

The door opened tentatively and Kathy, in a nightie, said, "I.P.?"

"Yeah, Kathy. I've come to pick you up. Geoff is waiting. Hey, you can wear that."

"Well, I don't know..."

"Come on, Kath. I know you want to see Geoff. We've missed you. You know what I mean?"

From somewhere in the house, a deep voice said, "Kathy, who is that?"

"Oh, Otto, it's just an old friend."

"I don't like your old friends. One of your old friends gave us those itchy bug things." Otto is now coming through the front door, buckling on his Sheriff Deputy's gun belt, complete with the stick that they beat you with.

"Hey," Otto yelled. "I know you. What are you saying to my wife?"

As big as I.P. is, Otto was bigger. A lot bigger. And he was armed. I.P. started running toward the Jag with Otto hard on his heels. Otto was banging the shit out of I.P. around the head and shoulders.

As I.P. got the XKE's door open, he yelled back at Otto, "Well, if you're going to be a shitty host, I'm leaving."

We made Dallas after 3AM and we were lost. Frank Jr. had built his new town house on the edge of North Dallas and we couldn't find it. Being guys, we were loath to ask for directions. We finally gave up, found an all night 7—11 and called for help.

Frank told us that we weren't that far, but the easiest way was for him to come get us and we could follow him home. Frank had already told us he had built this new place for \$80,000. This seemed out of character for a son of the Old South to even talk about money, but Frank had lived in Texas long enough for some of our ways to rub off on him.

Even before Texas became a State, we had this penchant for “bragging”, as people from other states called it. The truth behind our “bragging” was that it was so damned hard to make a living or just survive in this hard, but beautiful land, that when one of us made it, it was cause for celebration and everyone rejoiced.

It was dawn when we pulled under the portico. Franklin’s home was magnificent; red brick with white stone outlining the arched windows and entry doors; the outside columns were marble; the columns inside were mahogany. The home was three stories; the flying staircases to the second and third floors were made of the same gleaming mahogany. The kitchen, dining room and library were on the second floor. The third floor housed the three bedrooms and Miss Baby’s sewing room. From the third floor a fellow could look over the balcony that surrounded the second and third floors and look down into seating areas on the first floor.

I.P. and I liked Miss Baby; she always treated us with that Southern Belle hospitality. Frank Jr.’s family did not show her the same respect. Frank met Miss Baby in New Orleans. Her looks and background did not appeal to the family. She had an olive complexion, brown curly hair, large brown eyes and she was built like a woman, not like those stick figures thought of as “Body Ideal”. She also was Cajun, just not the thing at all.

When we walked in, I.P.’s bruises were beginning to show and there was swelling in various places. Miss Baby had coffee on and breakfast started, but she put all of that on hold until she performed her first aid on I.P. She found a lump or two when she ran her long fingers through I.P.’s kinky ’fro.

Full of breakfast and bandaged up, I.P. settled into the guest room. I got the daybed in the sewing room. She carefully closed the door to I.P.’s room and just as carefully left the sewing room door open. After she had seen Frank off to PAMS, Miss Baby laid down in the master bedroom across the hall from the sewing room. She left her door open. I watched as she slipped her hand under her open shorts and began to masturbate. She looked up a time or two to see if I was watching; then she put a hand on her breast and gently rubbed a nipple.

I was confused. Later I told I.P. what I had seen. I.P. gave me that half lidded look with those small green eyes and just shook his head. We made

it to PAMS later that day and started cutting Solid Rock. It only took two days and we were on our way back to Corpus.

All of the pieces for a competitive KYES were now in hand; all we needed was to put them together. I.P. had modified a Limpander for use as an AGC. He had bread-boarded the electronics so that the Limpander did not bring up the noise, just the music or voice. He came up with a CBS limiter that he modified somehow. Whatever it was he did, the station sounded great and was the loudest thing on the dial.

Heavy Earth and Right-On were busy getting the music to cart. As usual, we were speeding the tunes up just a little bit to make the other stations sound draggy. Using I.P.'s nixie tube back timer, we needed a new way to mark the music carts. To eliminate as much subliminal irritation as possible we needed not just timing, but tempo control. Here's how we did it: the intro, overall, and outro tempos were all marked. That way the jock could match the outro tempo of one tune to the intro tempo of the next tune. The overall tempo marking was used to keep the station as smooth as possible. The rule was to go from fast to medium to slow to medium to fast—like a wave. Even though it was a Top40, it was smooth as silk.

The tunes were also marked three ways as to timing. The first timing marking was from first note to vocal or sync point; next was from first note to last, and the third marking was to tell the jock when to punch off the next element. The jock would try to catch the ending tune on the beat and still not let the VU drop below 60DB.

I didn't know this but I.P. shared the new back timing clock, its electronics and how to put it together with the chief at WCFL in Chicago. The credit went to the Chief of WCFL; that's just the way I.P. works. He shares ideas; he doesn't care about taking the credit.

The same day that the boys were finishing up dubbing the tunes to cart, I.P. and I were sitting in my office trying to come up with a summer promotion. Fred Stern walked in. "A strange thing has happened, fellows."

"What's that, Mr. Stern?"

"Well, we had some CBS equipment that we purchased about a year ago. Then one night it disappeared. Apparently somebody just wired around it and took the gear. Now my engineer tells me it's back!"

“What a strange thing to have happened. What do you think happened, Mr. Stern?” I.P. was studying the crepe soles on those ugly ass shoes.

“I don’t know. I thought maybe you guys might tell me?”

“I’m clueless. You, I.P.?”

“I’ve never heard of such a thing. Would you like for me to look into it?”

“No, no. It’s back now. I guess that’s the important thing,” Stern wandered off.

I looked at my partner and asked, “Do I want to know, I.P.?” I.P. looked me in the eye and slowly shook his head.

## CHAPTER 26

# BRANDY (YOU'RE A FINE GIRL)

Heavy Earth and Right-On finished dubbing and were labeling the last of the music carts. I was filling in for Right-On using the old house name, Marcus Hook. In the summer of '72 the Mafia was a big cultural deal, so we called the jocks The Family. We always tried to make a friendly connection with the audience in some manner. We called the hotline The Family Phone. We were promoting it pretty hard as part of our music research. We used printed sheets to track tune requests, demos of the requesters, etc.

I.P. really loved the music we played; I liked hit tunes okay, but to me they were just tools we used to garner a large, demographically correct audience.

We were going to switch to all-cart at midnight. The overnight guy, Ron Lenox, a nice young man from a wealthy family, had held the overnight position for two years. That's very unusual considering that six months was a rock and roll lifetime. Ron was instructed to play only Gary Glitter's "Rock and Roll, Part Two" until we called him to hit the regular format. I.P. wanted to make sure the processing was set up exactly the way he wanted it. He felt some tweaking on the E.Q. might be necessary.

Earlier that day, I was on air, playing the little records with the big holes for the last time. I was following the format, setting a good example, I hoped, and answering The Family Phone.

"You're on The Family Phone. What do you want to hear?"

"You."

"I'm sorry?"

"I know you aren't Marcus Hook. You're Geoff Cliff, the radio consultant."

"Well, you've got me. What can I do for you?"

"It's what I can do for you. You can call me Cecelia or Sissy. When do you get off the air?"

"My shift is over at 7."

She said, "Oh, that's too late. What about tomorrow?"

"How about lunch?"

"Okay, the Jack-In-The-Box at noon."

"How will I know you?"

"I'll know you. Drive the Jag. It has a top and that other car is too loud."

"See you for lunch."

"Would you play 'Lean on Me?'" This was the first moment in Corpus that I had time for this sort of thing and I was ready.

Just before midnight that night I.P. drove us out onto one of the Tee Heads where the sailors tied up their yachts. I.P. parked us on the far side of the Tee Head Park. He rolled up a tuna. We had been calling pot 'tuna' since San Diego where the pot came in on the tuna boats. It was always humid in Corpus but this is summer and the air was thick. We were glad for the little breeze that came off the bay.

"You ready, G.C.?"

"Absolutely, dude."

When I.P. put the bridge between the transmitter and stick, the best he could do was 9K up and 9K down, so he rolled the bottom end off at 200 cycles and the high end at 9K. That way he kept the muddy bottom off and kept the high end from distorting or frying.

"Put on your headset, G.C."

Ron swept the top of the hour, punched off the promo/I.D. and the jingle rolled "Solid Rock—KYES—Corpus Christi". Next Ron punched off Rock and Roll Part Two exactly on the beat. Goddamn, it blew me away. I knew what to expect, still the audio was a motherfucker! What a rush!

My hearing has always been phenomenal; I could hear from 100 cycles



to past 19 KC. I could hear a birdie in the stereo generator when we were doing FM's. It drove engineers nuts when I told them I heard IM (midrange distortion).

That old canard about engineers who *watch* radio on their oscilloscopes and the good engineers that actually *listen* couldn't be more true; after all, it's what comes out of the box that matters; not what it looks like on the scope.

I.P. was not one of those engineers that "listened" to the radio on an oscilloscope but his hearing rolled off at 10KC, so most of his stations hit you in the chest with those midrange drums. We used JBL speakers and they would thump ya!

I.P. couldn't hear things in the signal that would cause subliminal irritation, but I could. I could also hear all of the instrumentation in the tunes—the bass to the triangle tinkle.

"What do you think, Geoffrey Grachme?"

"It's just killer; a real chest thumper!"

"I don't think we need to do anything more. It sounds good". I nodded. "Do you want to learn how to really listen?" I'm stoned; this was definitely good pot; all I could do was move my head up and down at I.P.

"G.C., think of the different frequencies as colors. The low end is in shades of blue. The lower the frequency, the darker the blue. You with me so far?" I was with him alright, but I just nodded yes.

"Now, as you get to the mid range, the lighter the color. The high end is shades of orange, then red and so forth. The top tinkling is silver. Got it Pard?" Oh yeah, I got it. This was one of the best lessons I.P. ever taught me about engineering.

When we got back to the apartment I saw that Sun Tzu had eaten the strawberries I left out from breakfast. He'd also gotten into my chocolate. He'd opened the foil of a Hershey's kiss, licked the insides and was now bouncing off the walls, running around non stop. Here's a new rule: Never let Tzu eat chocolate...ever! It was a long night for him, but that boy loved his strawberries and chocolate!

It was now time to send out the "Gotcha Letters". When we were doing Tucson, we thought it would be a good idea to try to freak out the competition. It worked there so we repeated it in every market. We sent

out our calling card; a mailing to the G.M.s and P.D.s. in town on the KYES letter head. It had one couplet: "On the way to ruin your day". I signed it, "Geoffrey Cliff".

KYES was absolutely together; it was rolling! Everybody stayed on format; everybody did their job exactly.

Napoleon had just hit the air when I.P. stuck his head around the corner and yelled from the production room, "G.C., you've got to hear this!"

"Be right there."

I.P. was rolling an I.P. It was the promotional record for Jack McCoy's Last Contest. It blew us away; a completely different production style and a contest that was amazing! We knew that Jack had taken over KCBQ from Buzzy and had just smoked San Diego. It took us a couple of hours to figure out that it truly was "The Last Contest."

We called Buck, the Kinney brothers' PD in San Diego, to get the skinny. Buck told us that with TV support and some newspaper, the contest was the perfect vehicle for high visibility, quarter hour maintenance, recycling audience and sales. We listened to the promo record for hours. A station could buy rights to The Last Contest for \$2,500.

KYES was not a candidate; there was no money for promotion. We were there to get the station ready for sale, not to operate it long term. But we could use the production style.

Buck told us that when KCBQ gave out the first secret number to call for one of the incredible prize packages, there was hardly any traffic on the streets. The beaches were almost deserted. The city was sitting by its phones. The contest smoked the phone lines from the border to L.A. It happened again when an even larger prize package was set up for give away.

After this success, McCoy was sent to Miami to rock an F.M. This was the first time that anybody ever rocked on an F.M with Top40 music and won. This was also the first indication that I.P. and I had that the AM dial was vulnerable. We knew that F.M could carry three times the number of bits of information per second. As a result, an F.M could hold an audience longer because there was so much less subliminal irritation, and Jack

McCoy was proving it in Miami. When you have a team like George Wilson and McCoy, magic happens on the radio.

As we were pondering how to use this Last Contest information, my phone buzzed. It was Lupe at the front desk, our intrepid receptionist.

"Another visitor, Geoff."

"Thank you, Lupe." I could tell from Lupe's tone that it was another girl. Lots of girls liked to visit the radio station.

"Send her in." And in she came.

"You must be Geoff," she said, pointing at me. "And you are I.P. Freelay," pointing at I.P. on the couch.

"And you are?" I asked.

"Melinda. Where's the cat?" I looked around the office and didn't see him. I knocked on the desk and said, "Sun Tzu, *athleticism*." From some cat place Tzu lightly leaped onto the desk.

"Don't touch him," I said. "He will let you know if he wants to be touched."

I.P. asked, "How do you know who we are anyway?"

"Girl magic. Everyone's talking about you two."

"And?"

"Fred is my uncle. Want to go for a walk in the park, Geoff?" I'm thinking, let this girl be eighteen. Melinda was a pretty girl, tall, suntanned, curly sun streaked hair and flirty green eyes.

"Sure." The park was only two blocks away with a long pier that reached out into the bay; a truly beautiful place. We walked out on the pier. She put my arm around her and began to work it under her blouse. No bra.

"You move fast!"

"I thought that was my line," she said.

Later that evening we took a ride in the Cobra and ended up at her apartment. The next day, Fred advised me that Melinda was his sister's daughter and only 18. "I would appreciate it if you picked another girl friend, Geoff". So I did, but that didn't stop Melinda from coming around. She was careful to always come after lunch; after Fred had spent some time with old friends like Jack Daniels or Jim Beam.

I.P. and I were still stuck for a summer promotion. We didn't really

have to do one because Corpus had no summer book, but how can you rock a station as good as this one and not promote it?

"Have you looked in the prize closet?" IP asked.

"Yeah, and I've talked to Carter. He's pretty clueless but he knows this sucker will be sold and he's looking for a new gig."

"Well," I.P. said, "I found an old storage room, but all that's in there are 4 boxes of those plastic lids you put on open cans of Crisco. You never know what you'll find in an old supermarket."

"How many albums do we have in that old record library? Has anybody checked?"

"G.C., I don't know what you have in mind yet, but I smell another *'and A Bic Pen'*."

"Maybe. Let's have Heavy Earth count the albums that more or less fit the format, OK?"

A note was on my desk the next morning. It said, "450 Top40 or rock. About 200 of them are still in shrink wrap." It was signed H.E.

I walked into production and asked our blade, Jacky, if he had listened to The Last Contest promo album. He said he'd listened to it six or seven times.

"Can you reproduce the style?"

"Yeah, Geoff, I can. Most of the music is from movie sound track albums and we have most of the sound effects."

"Can you do 'the voice'?"

"You don't want me or Nap to do the voice work. Our voices are too familiar."

I.P. wandered in to production, mainly just out of curiosity. He hated to be out of the loop. We filled I.P. in on our chat.

"Geoffrey Graehme, what are you up to?" I got that smile that says 'I don't trust you as far as I can throw you'.

"You guys remember all of those round KYES stickers I've printed up for some sales deal?"

"Yeah...and?"

"Well, they fit on those old Crisco lids you found. I.P., look, here's Heavy's note."

"G.C., this is a mistake. Remember making me throw out that perfectly good tuna on our way to Dallas? Free lids? This is irresponsible."

“Guys, we’re going to give away albums. We’re just going to give them away in an amusing manner. What do you think, Jacky?”

“Hey, you guys are the consultants.”

“Can I get you to cut the promos, I.P.?”

“Not a chance.”

“Fuck it. I’ll do it,” I claimed. “I practiced yesterday afternoon and last night. How’s this?” I breathed open mouthed several times to dry out my vocal chords to produce a lower voice. Then I did a line from one of McCoy’s promos.

“Sure there are sharks down there...but there’s also treasure. And when you bring the treasure up, keep the diving gear...and the sailboat’. What do you think, guys?”

“Oh God, Jacky, we’re going to give away free lids,” I.P. moaned. “Get McCoy’s album out and let Geoff practice.

“Fuck me with a bilge pump,” he muttered on his way to the engineer shop to hide out.

The promos for ‘free lids coming soon’ started running the next morning. M.J. rolled the first one in the 6:02 position and the next one as the last unit out of the 6:36 set. That’s where we ran them every hour, all day. The phones got hot about 8AM.

The last line in the promo was “Listen for the phone number for a free lid. There’s a winner an hour...and sometimes even more on (jingle) Solid Rock...KYES.”

The phones were swamped. School was out for summer and the word spread rapidly. The phones were so tied up that the sales people couldn’t get a call in or out. Lupe on the front desk just gave up trying to field the calls. Listeners of all shapes and sizes kept coming into reception in a solid stream. All day the staff had been putting KYES stickers on the Crisco lids and then taping the lids to Albums.

The jocks had live liners going into the :21 set and the :51 set. Fred was tearing his hair out and had started on his second bottle of Jack Daniels by lunch. Carter Browne spent the day laughing and peering down the stairs at the packed reception area.

At 3PM two large uniformed men shouldered their way to the reception desk. My intercom buzzed. It was Lupe. “Geoff, you have

visitors.” I.P. had come out of the engineering office and was sitting on my couch.

“Tell them they will have to wait or I’m not here or something.”

“Geoffrey, you have to meet with these men. They’re cops...uh, policemen.”

I.P. gave me the ‘I told you so’ look. Slowly, I.P. began easing his way out of the office, keeping his back to the wall.

“Okay. Send them in.” And in they came. The one in charge introduced himself as Lt. Denton and showed me his badge. Sun Tzu was in security mode and jumped growling onto my desk, positioning himself between me and the big detective.

The Lt. glanced at Tzu, then said,

“So you’re giving away free marijuana, are you?”

“No, sir. We are giving away albums with plastic Crisco lids attached. Would you wait just a moment?”

I buzzed Lupe to bring in one of the prizes.

“You! Wait a minute!” The other detective grabbed I.P.’s arm.

That’s all Sun Tzu needed. I.P. was in danger. Sun Tzu moved to the front of the desk growling his very best growl, raising up on his back legs and batting the air. The police detective in charge reached out toward Tzu.

“Please don’t touch the cat!” I yelled. It was too late. Tzu left four bloody stripes down the detective’s hand. I grabbed Tzu and held him in my lap.

“What the hell? That animal is dangerous. It’ll have to be put down!”

“You’re going to arrest a kitten? How would that look on TV?” I pointed out the window and Channel 3 was outside with their remote unit.

I was in a bad position and thinking hard. I looked like a drug dealer. I was wearing an expensive tie and blazer, a Rolex on my wrist. I’d been letting my hair grow for the last six months so now it was curling over my shoulders. And I had a killer cat in my lap.

Just then, Lupe pushed her way in holding one of the offending Crisco lids taped to a Janis Joplin album. “Here you are, sir,” Lupe exclaimed. “This is what we’re giving away. It’s an album with a Crisco lid and we’re giving them away free.”

Lupe handed the album to the detective. He looked it over carefully.

"You have a lot of these?"

"Yes, sir."

Detective Denton turned to his partner, "Bring the boys in and search this place."

Within minutes the boys in blue swarmed the place, even the control room with its big picture window. All of the people, including the TV cameras, could see the cops tearing the place up. Right-On didn't miss a beat. Around 7PM they finally gave it up. We weren't dope dealers after all. And we made the local news that night and the morning paper the next morning.

We cut new promos and changed the live liners to say we were starting the giveaway the next day at 10AM. We still called them Free Lids, but whispers were beginning in the crowd outside the station. The crowd was catching on to the joke. Occasionally someone would yell "What a rip!" but they didn't leave, just in case there really were going to be free lids.

I managed to get Sun Tzu back to the apartment. It was then that I.P. made his announcement, as if I didn't have enough on my plate. "Bubba, they asked me to install the new Continental 150K in Juarez. I've got to go oversee the construction of the transmitter at the Continental plant in two weeks."

"Jeez, that's super high-power! How could you turn it down? Okay. Shit, roll on, I.P."

By 8AM the next morning a large crowd had again formed in the street in front of the station. This time the crowd included some sort of motorcycle gang and the TV cameras were back and rolling. At the 9:51 set M.F. gave the number for the 10<sup>th</sup> caller to win the first free lid.

When I started this, the original promos ask for the winners to come to the station to pick up their prize. God, did I regret that line. The first winner was an 18 year old female and she was pissed. No pot!

The winner went out the front door screaming "Fake! What a gyp!" The TV cameras were rolling. The motorcycle guys were revving up their engines and a mass of young Mexican American kids looked very disappointed and angry.

That's when they found the station van. Thank God, the cops showed up en masse and stopped our dedicated listeners from rocking the van before they turned it over.

Later that night we put all of the rest of the albums with lids outside the station. We alerted the police and we hired some off duty cops to oversee the process. We handed the lids out on a first come, first served basis. I pulled every mention of the promotion off the air. I should have listened to I.P.

What's more, I should have learned more from the Great Turkey Bomb Contest back in '68 when I threw the turkeys out of the airplane. Like great feathered bombs, they exploded on the asphalt. But I'd gotten away with '...and a Bic pen' and I thought I could slide this one by. I should have known better.

Two weeks later I.P. was gone, lock, stock and XKE. I felt rather forlorn. I.P. was my pal and my partner, but it's hard to compete with a brand new 150K Continental. After all, I.P. only read 'Better Homes and Transmitters'—it was his passion. Melinda helped me through this period, but I was still bummed.

Sun Tzu and I were sitting in my office when the door opened and this stunner breezed in. "Geoff Cliff! I saw you on TV."

"Hello there, and who might you be?" Who ever she was, she was beautiful. Long honey blond hair, grey eyes, maybe 5'6", slim build and high cheek bones to die for. She was carrying a 7" tape box.

"My name is Jackie Grey. My husband is a jock and this is his aircheck."

"Un huh. Where's he working?"

"A small station outside of Denton—KBTI."

"KBTI? K-BUTT? K-Bitty?"

"Well, you don't have to be snotty about it. Everyone has to start some where."

"I'm sorry. It just struck me as funny. Let me listen to the tape and I'll give you a call, okay?"

"Why not listen to it now? Then maybe we could talk about it over dinner."

Her last sentence was not a question; it was more of a demand. I'm thinking, "Who the hell is this girl?"



"Why did you pick KYES?" I asked.

"Because Corpus is home and you're here. We've heard the station and I know you're a big time programmer. What better place to learn?"

"All right. Should I pick you up?"

"No, I'll be here at 5PM. That good for you?"

"That's fine, but we'll have to go by my apartment and drop off Sun Tzu."

"Oh, your famous killer cat," she said as she moved to the door. I opened the door for her and she kissed me on the cheek, "Melinda said you were an old fashioned gentleman...and a good lover." And with that, she was gone.

Right-On walked in, "So you've met Jackie Grey."

"Who is she, Right-On, and how would you know?"

"I was talking with Lupe and Cheryl, the sales secretary. When Jackie came in Lupe just gestured with her thumb at your office and both of the girls sniggered."

"Come on. What else?"

"Okay. Lupe was a senior when, and I quote, 'little Miss Rich Bitch' was a freshman. Seems her dad is a big deal lawyer and mom is one of those do goody women's club people."

"Like Junior League?"

"Yeah, that's it. Jackie married some guy named Honhocker or something like that. Told him and her parents that she was preggers. There was no baby, but there was a marriage. She won't use her married name, so it's still Grey. And, to quote Lupe and Cheryl, 'she fucks everyone in pants'."

I was getting letters every few days from Lord Kenneth. I.P. and I had always called this the Camden Corp. letter-a-day plan. It meant something was up but I didn't know what.

5 PM rolled up. I bundled Tzu into his rock and roll t-shirt and we made our way out to the Cobra. Jackie was there, in the right hand seat. Sun Tzu didn't growl; he just lay along my right leg and settled in for the ride.

Tzu wasn't happy about being taken to the apartment to be left alone, but I told him I would brush him and give him fish cookies now instead

of his regular 6PM. I speak a bit of Felineese, so I was surprised to hear that he took this well.

I took Jackie to a seafood restaurant out on the road to Padre Island. After dinner, I was straight up about the aircheck she'd given me. It really sucked. I used different words, but she understood. She just smiled and kissed me. Then she asked if we could take the Cobra for a ride. Sure, we could take a ride.

Jackie had told me about her sister and family over dinner, but not one word about Mr. Honhocker. Back in the car, she directed me over the Laguna Madre onto the island and showed me where all of the kids went to park. The parking place was on the sand not far from the water. There was no way I was taking the Cobra on the sand, so she showed me a small asphalt parking lot just across the road.

The cockpit of the Cobra was not designed for making out, but that did not stop Jackie. The kisses got deeper, the touching and feeling became more personal.

"Let's go back to your apartment. She was breathing heavily and I was hard and had sticky fingers. "Let's go now. You're going to fuck me and you're going to fuck me now. How fast does this thing go?"

I cranked up the Cobra and headed back toward the apartment. She reached over the gear shift and unzipped my jeans, but couldn't get my dick out. A frustrated Ms. Grey kept saying, "Faster." Her hand was in my jeans moving slowly, gently back and forth.

She was beautifully made. Small breasts that pointed up and her minor labia were longer and plainly visible when excited.

"Slowly now," she instructed me. I entered her.

"Now, faster. Oh yes. Umm. Unh. Now. Now. Don't stop...don't stop...oh god, yes. Oh...stop now..now!"

I pulled out with a small sucking sound, dripping.

"My, my," she said as she snuggled onto my shoulder. "No wonder the girls are talking about you. They told me you were hung like a young pony."

"My God, Jackie. Who is talking about me?"

"This is Corpus. It's not that big a town."

I lighted a smoke and balanced the ashtray on my chest. Sun Tzu

landed softly on the bed and he snuggled into my right armpit. He thought it was bedtime, but it wasn't. A small hum of contentment came from Jackie.

"Wait," she said, "I'll be right back."

I could hear the water running in my bathroom. A minute or two later Jackie came back to bed with a warm, damp wash cloth. Slowly, gently, she cleaned me. Then she took me in her mouth, letting her saliva lubricate, her hand sliding up and down until I was ready again. Jackie turned over with that cute tight butt in the air. With one hand she opened her pussy, wet as ever.

"Put it in, easy though. I'll tell you when to go faster. I want to feel you cum. Now, you feel this." Jackie began to tighten and loosen her vaginal muscles and I did as I was told. Sun Tzu was between our legs watching and occasionally taking a lick or two with that rough tongue.

"Talk to me in your radio voice," she was breathing heavy now.

Have I mentioned that all the women that I have ever known knew more about sex than I did? So in my very best radio voice I did my best imitation of Fox on KCBQ, "You've heard of the fox trot? Now listen to the Fox truck! KCBQ, San Diego!" It wasn't until a year later that I understood that was not what she meant. She wanted me to talk 'dirty words' to her in my 'radio voice'. I didn't know. I really didn't.

That's when the phone rang.

"Not now, damn it!" Jackie yelled.

"It's my Boss. I've got to answer it. Don't move." We always put the red phone in at any of the ratty old furnished apartments we occupied on the road.

"Hello, Boss."

"Good evening, Geoff. Am I interrupting anything?"

"Uh..." From the bedroom came an impatient female voice, "Hurry up!"

"Geoffrey Graehme, you will never change. Look Geoff, in the next couple of days you will get a package with two airchecks. One is WMYQ and the other is Y100. Listen to them both. I'll call in a day or two. I would like to know what you think."

"Yes sir." Laughing, Ken hung up. I was now out of the mood. I knew

something was up because of the “letter a day plan”, but what the fuck was it? Surely Ken wasn’t going to send me to Miami to take on McCoy or Buzzy. It had to be something else.

I sat down in the living room with a cigarette and an Armagnac. The lovely Jackie dressed and left in a huff. Then she remembered and came back into the apartment, hands on her hips. “Take me to my car, asshole.”

Ken called four days later at 3PM Central. Lupe put him right through.

“Hello, Ken.”

“You listened; what did you think?”

“It’s a hell of a rock fight, Boss. I heard MYQ was burned down. Now that’s being competitive.”

“Could you beat them?” Ken asked, presuming MYQ would quickly rebuild.

“Depends on what I’ve got to work with.”

“Geoff, Don Buckley is on the phone with me. He owns WIDE AM and FM in Norfolk.”

“Sure, ‘WIDE Top Gun’. Hello, Mr. Buckley. You probably won’t remember me, but I think you were in sales at WNFK back in the sixties. I was in the Navy, but I filled in from time to time for Mike I. Harvey and ran the Jesus tapes on Sunday mornings.”

“I don’t remember right off, but I’ll think about it. It will come back to me.

“Now, Geoff, the reason we called is that we want you to build out the FM and rock it. Since you know both country and rock, we think you are the guy. What do you think?”

“Boss?” I stalled.

“Geoff, it’s a class B on 104.5, licensed to Newport News. The studios will be in Virginia Beach at a Koger Executive Center. The studios don’t exist yet. Don was speaking literally; it has to be built out.”

“God knows, I do know the market. What’s the deal? Are we getting it ready for sale?”

“No, not this time. You would be working as a line exec for Don.”

“Geoff?” It was Buckley’s booming voice. “You will be Station Manager and will have a free hand. You and I will work together. \$500 a week and an apartment. Do we have a deal?”

"I'll need a car. A 240Z I think." I needed to get rid of the Cobra. It was the most uncomfortable car I'd ever been in. You fried from the waist down and froze from the waist up.

"Done! When can you be here?"

"I will have to give notice; then I'll need a week or two in the District to get my stuff."

"I will move anything you need," Don said.

Ken jumped in, "Geoff, I'll call Balkin and deal with the notice thing, so you can start out when you're ready. I just got Balkins' stations sold. We are running a Mediastat on Corpus now and we should have that back in a week or so. We expect it will look great."

"Thanks, Ken. Thank you, Mr. Buckley. I'll call as soon as I know exactly when I'll be in Norfolk."

## CHAPTER 27

# I HEARD IT ON THE X

The next day I called a jock meeting and told everybody what was up. I wanted to keep working with the whole staff, but they had to hang until I got that FM sucker built out in Norfolk. Only Jacky, the production man, turned me down. Jacky's whole family lived in Corpus and he didn't feel he could leave.

Once again, I packed up and made all the arrangements. Two days later Sun Tzu and I pulled up in front of my grandmother's house in the Hill Country. She fed me, hugged me and Tzu and, like my Mother, asked a million questions—one of which was 'how much money are they going to pay you?' I knew she wouldn't believe how much I really made, so I just told her the weekly pay from Norfolk, not the other benefits.

"Oh honey, you don't have to tell stories like that. Your uncle is a real teacher and that's more than he makes. Now, Honey, you take these two dollars so that you can have a hamburger on the way to your mother's." What are you going to do? I took the two dollars. It never dawned on my grandmother that my cat and I were in a \$7,000 car.

I'd been back in Washington for two days, trying to decide what to take to Norfolk. I made arrangements for the Cobra to be shipped so I could sell it. I packed as much as would fit into the Mustang. Tzu and I went to bed early; we would leave early the next morning.

In the middle of the night, the phone rang. "Geoff, it's I.P."

"Jesus God, I.P. What time is it?"

"2AM my time. I'm in trouble and I need some help."

“What’s up?”

“They’ve run me out of Mexico at gun point again.”

“Again? Okay, okay. No prob. I have a new gig in Norfolk and I need an engineer. Just drive up.”

“Geoff, they impounded my car. I have no passport, no credit cards and no money. The *federales* took everything.”

“I’m sure the Embassy can work all that out for you in a day or two.”

“Geoffrey, Geoffrey. It’s worse. I got married.”

“What?”

“Yeah. I married the only daughter of the Mayor of Juarez. Her three brothers did not approve.”

“And her father?”

“We eloped.”

“Oh shit! Are they looking for you?”

“Does the Pope shit in the woods?”

“Dude. Is the bride with you?”

“No, no! I left her in Mexico!”

“Keep your head down, stay out of sight and get to the El Paso airport at 10AM your time tomorrow. Go to the Southwest counter and they will have a ticket for you. I’ll get you routed into National somehow. We’ll figure out the rest of this mess later.”

I.P. got to the District, and so it came to pass that he rode to Norfolk with Tzu and me in the old Mustang. Peaches was still in El Paso. I.P. had a special friend there. Her brother was the Chief Engineer at ‘CFL and this special friend was keeping Peaches. I finally found out it was this friend that caused the outrage in Mexico. The new wife found out all and went to Daddy weeping and wailing.

We were to meet Ken and Mr. Buckley that night at the Norfolk Sheraton for dinner. I had already made reservations for a two bedroom suite.

We pulled up in front of the hotel and we were greeted by the bellman, “Mr. Cliff. it’s so good to have you back. And Mr. Freelay. Welcome.” I slipped the bellman another twenty. I knew I was over tipping, but there was Sun Tzu.

We received the same treatment from the doorman. He got his twenty as well. I checked us in and there was the assistant manager.

“Oh no, don’t tell me. Feline Syndrome!” He turned on his heel and scurried back to his office.

Ken told us how to dress; I.P. in his Armani, the gold GMT and those offensive wingtips with the crepe soles. I wore a charcoal Hicky Freeman with a very soft chalk stripe, my gold day date and soft leather loafers. My hair was down on my shoulders. I.P. still had a ’fro.

Ken and Mr. Buckley were already seated when we walked in. They had been there for a while, judging from the drinks on the table. There were introductions all around. I was seated with a scotch in front of me.

“I took the liberty of ordering a Glenlivet for you, Geoff,” Ken nodded toward the drink. “And a beer for you, I.P.”

Ken arranged it so that I was seated next to Don Buckley. He was very lean and tall—maybe two or three inches taller than I was. I could see hearing aids on both sides of Don’s glasses. The only thing that was amiss was that there was a bandstand in the room. I.P. hated those little bands, especially if he was trying to eat and/or hold a conversation.

Don was most interested in three things; letting us know we could build to win; learning how long it would take us to get on the air; and what was our strategy. We were glad to know that for once we could do it right.

I told Don that one of the tactics would be to have music on the air at all times. He wanted to know what that meant. “I.P. and I talked about it and came up with the basic strategy; non stop music. All jock talk would be over music; the same with news and spots.”

I went on to tell him that we had also talked this over with Ken. “Ken asked me, ‘If you can have basics, why not inward basics?’ He was talking about the jingle package. It was another hint from Ken. If you didn’t get Ken’s hints, you probably would be punished,” I explained to Don.

“What’s an inward basic?” Don asked.

“A basic”, I said, “is the jingle identifier that comes out of the stop set. An inward basic, Don, has never been done before. It’s a piece of music that has the same musical ID but no vocal. It goes from the end of the record into the first spot. It’s what the jock talks over going into the stop set. That way there is always music. Even under the news. And all spots have music. If they come in with no music, we add it. There is never a time when there is not music on the air.”



I continued, “You take out the competition’s core audience, the 12—24s, and the Top40’s older audience would just cave. That’s the strategy, Don.

“Some of the tactics are you play all new music, no oldies; only the music that appeals to the 12—24s. When we finally burn out those hits and we have 100 of them, we start the ‘recurrents’”.

“What’s a recurrent?” Don asked.

“A tune that had been a hit prior and was put back into rotation very slowly, perhaps two an hour.”

“I get it.”

“Now, I.P., explain the engineering.”

I.P. talked about how long it would take us to build the facility. It was all based on how quickly we could get the gear we needed. This stuff was not off the shelf. It had to be built. Don was a bit confused. The tower was up, the antenna was mounted at 450 feet and the transmitter was working and in place.

I.P. began again to explain, “You see, sir, the exciter must be replaced and the new one has to be modified. We will use recording studio processing gear and all of it has to be modified for broadcast use. We’ll use Urei LA3A leveling amps, Electrodyne CA-700 compressor/limiters; a Fairchild 663 IVLS compressor—that’s the microphone compressor, and most important a Mosley microwave for the Studio-transmitter link.

“Oh, yeah, that exciter? It’s a Gates TE3. And as I said before, everything will have to be modified. So you see, sir, this stuff is not off the shelf.

“The most difficult part of the project is the microwave shot. It’s a twenty mile shot across water and that’s the hardest shot there is. We will have to put up something like a 40 foot stick at the studio site to make that shot.”

The band was playing all the while I.P. was trying to explain a very complicated process so he had to shout. And then the band went silent as I.P. was finishing the last part of his sentence. I.P. hated to be embarrassed and he was embarrassed, yelling “to make that shot.” Everyone in the dining room turned to look.

Slowly I.P. stood up and began to walk toward the bandstand. I looked to Ken and got a small nod. I excused myself and as was walking behind I.P., pulling one hundred dollar bills from my wallet. I.P. got to the bandstand and kicked in the bass drum. "Take a break, assholes!"

"Uh, thanks fellows," I quickly intervened, and handed over three bills. I.P. turned back to the table.

"Taking a break is a good idea, fellas. Maybe 30 minutes?" I suggested.

Back at the table, Don was laughing so hard he had tears in his eyes. "Are they always like that?" he asked Ken.

The next day Ken, I.P. and I drove the signal. "Ken, I don't have the research. What's the FM penetration?" I asked.

"70% total metro; 12 to 24s—over 100%. That means they have more than one FM radio. The 25 to 34s—about 90%."

"That old dog ought to hunt," I thought.

Driving the signal took most of the day. We talked strategy. It was much the same as we used in Corpus. The exception was to have no oldies and to build our recurrents as we burned the hits. The idea was the same as ever; take out the competition's core audience and watch the rest of their audience collapse.

Ken flew out the next day. Don gave the remote truck to I.P. to use for transportation. It was a pickup truck with an unfortunate wooden structure in the back that looked like a little house in need of paint. The remote gear was inside the little house. This accommodation was only until I.P. could get his Jag back from Mexico. I.P. took the truck out to look over the transmitter site.

I went to see the apartment. It wasn't much, but it would do. It was only a one bedroom, because they had not been expecting I.P. But I was fine with that. People did not understand why I.P. and I bunked together. The fact is we never stopped working. We stayed in constant communication when the ideas were flying and they were always flying. I was supposed to be the programmer and administrative guy and I.P. was supposed to be the engineer but in truth every aspect of every project was a collaboration.

Next Don took me over to our offices and studio area at the Koger Executive Center. WIDE had its admin and sales office at the end of the

hall on the second floor. Our new space was on the same hall, just a few doors away.

I knew Don hired some office people and already had them on staff, but I hadn't met any of them. I also found out that Ken had picked our new call letters, WQRC, Q-Rock. Not bad. Not bad at all.

Don introduced me to the country station's office staff. His sales manager was a 30ish blond woman named Susan. She was obviously smart and not bad looking in a square jawed sort of way. When I met her I could tell she was reserving judgment on me, unlike Don. Don was absolutely ebullient that I was aboard. Indeed, he had given me a nickname. I was now "G", pronounced as a soft "g". He nicknamed me as a sign of trust and friendship.

Then I was introduced to his longtime bookkeeper and secretary; she made no bones about disliking me on sight. This woman was also blond, but older than the sales manager. I guessed she was hitting 50. I found out she was the one that had hired my office staff.

Then we walked down the hall to the FM's space. Walking through the glass double doors into the reception area, we spotted two desks. The larger desk was occupied by a pudgy young woman, apparently the receptionist and also a blond. A smaller desk held an even younger woman, a girl really, and a blond. She was to be my assistant. Her name was Susie. She was referred to as little Susie, and the sales manager I had met earlier was referred to as big Susie. Little Susie was taller and younger than big Susie. I learned later that big Susie was Don's paramour. Go figure.

Behind little Susie's desk was a door that led to traffic, a rather good sized space with all of the usual equipment and a very small young blond woman. Her name was Christina and she looked seriously competent. This whole time, I'm wondering, "Where the hell are all of these blonds coming from?" I did find out later that it was pure coincidence.

Don then led me down a short hallway. On the right was a perfect space for the control room. Across the hall was a small space that was perfect for my office—no windows.

Don had picked out a much larger room with windows for my office. It opened off reception opposite of the front door. I thanked Don and

explained I needed an area where distraction was unlikely and the nice office with windows would be a good place for the FM sales manager.

The rest of the space had been arranged by somebody that knew what they were doing. There was a great sound proofed production room; a small transmitter room for the microwave, an office for sales and one for I.P.

Don and I were standing in reception when I.P. lumbered in with a legal pad.

"Here's what we need for openers. Is there an office where we can talk?"

We adjourned to I.P.'s office. He gave us a run down on what we would need for the FM, expecting every moment for Don to object. No objections, so I.P. went on to what we needed for the AM. Still no objections.

Don did say, "Let's get all of this ordered. I think the offices have all of the supplies you'll need. If not just let me know. Come on G., let's go talk about what you need and let I.P. get on with it."

Once again, I ran Don through the strategy and tactics. "And Don, we'll need a good ad agency; preferably, one that can throw some business our way."

"I'll get Susan on that right away. What are we going to need other than the logo and the collateral?"

"Let's start with 1000 t-shirts. We'll be giving something away every hour, 24/7 and t-shirts will make up the bulk of that. Of course, we can't do much until we get that agency. Let me sketch something out for you. Don, I'm no artist, but Ken gave us great calls."

I drew a stylized 'O' with the word 'rock' forming the tail of the Q. "Something like this—Q-Rock."

"I like it. There's nothing in the market like it. We'll fuckin' smoke 'em!"

Don was picking up the lingo; my and I.P.'s specialized language. This was part of our team building strategy. I don't mean the cursing, but rather the words and phrases that we all used. Both our country and rock Traveling Salvation Show used this language and it glued the team together.

"I'm going to bring in a new P.D. for the country. His name is Danny London and he is G.C. and I.P. trained. He may want to bring in some other jocks. I have the rock crew on ice. They are just waiting for the FM to be built."

"Should we bring them in now so we don't lose any of them?" I assured Don that they would be there when we needed them.

It was now mid-October. I.P. thought that with good luck we could be up and rolling by his birthday, January 1<sup>st</sup>. It all depended on the equipment arriving in a timely manner. Good Luck Duck! It never works out that way.

"Don, there's a guy, about my age that I would like you to interview for sales manager. His name is Carter Browne. We worked with him in Corpus. I would rather have someone from Tidewater, but this dude is good."

After Don left I interviewed each of my three staff members. Rita, the receptionist, was dumber than a post. Little Susie was crackerjack. Christina had worked traffic in New Orleans for a beautiful music FM and she understood the concept of pre-print logs right away.

I pulled out an old friend, a legal pad, and went to work on the format guide. At 5PM Eastern, I called Danny London in Houston and told him what we were up to and for him to give notice. Welcome to Virginia Beach.

I asked I.P. if he was ready to call it quits for the day. With a phone growing out of his ear, he shook his head no and wrote on his legal pad 'west coast'. That meant Jack Williams and his motherfucking orchestra. The easiest way to get all of the studio equipment was to go through Williams.

Then I asked I.P. if he knew how to get to the apartment. Again he wrote on the legal pad 'I'll find it'. So I called down the hall and asked Don if he would like to go to dinner. He agreed we would meet at one of my old favorites, The Copper Kettle, at 7PM. I mounted up on the old Mustang and drove to yet another furnished apartment. I'd left Sun Tzu in the apartment this first day, knowing I would be home in time for his brushing and fish cookies.

The new apartment Don had for us was built on the site where my '60s

apartment had been, one block from the beach. I pulled into the parking lot and was making my way to the building foyer when this strange vision floated out the front door.

The vision was quite beautiful, if unusual. She had very black hair with a wide white stripe dyed right down the middle. Her head looked like a skunk. She was wearing a black top and a black mini skirt. Around her neck was a long, orange feathered boa. Her most striking feature was her blue, blue eyes—the same dark blue as mine. The boa was so long both ends almost dragged on the ground.

“Hello, there,” I greeted her. “Going to a Halloween party?”

“No, I dress like this all the time. I’m Cat.”

“Oh, excuse me. My name is Geoff.”

“Ah hah! So you’re the guy, the radio guru everybody’s been talking about.”

“Really? Why?”

“You haven’t met our Landlady, I take it?” Cat had a strange accent that I couldn’t place.

“No, I haven’t met anyone yet. Is our Landlady hard to deal with?”

“No, she’s a silly little 20 year-old and she’s been telling everybody about this celebrity moving in. Do you stay up late?”

“Not as a rule. Why?”

“I’m a dancer and I get off late, but I thought if you were up, we could get better acquainted?”

“Sure. What kind of dancer and how late?”

“Well, you could say I’m an exotic dancer, but I prefer ‘interpretive dancer’. And about 3AM.”

“Tell you what. I’ll leave the door unlocked and you just come in and wake me. How’s that, Cat? Uh, one more thing. My partner is staying with me until we can get a two bedroom place and I have a cat, but don’t try to pet him.”

“Which one, the cat or your partner? Are you and your partner...uh, you know.”

“Don’t pet the cat and we are definitely not ‘uh, you know.’”

“See you at 3.”

“Wait a second. What’s that accent?”

"I'm a New Zealander—half Scots and half Moari. 'Ta, my lad." With that, she was gone.

I met Don on time at The Copper Kettle. I loved this restaurant. It was right on Virginia Beach and the food was incredible. Don and I were shown to a window table. This time I didn't mind the window.

"Would you like a drink before we order?" Don asked. I ordered a double Oban and Don did the same.

"Ken told me a lot about you, G. Military School, two tours in Vietnam as EOD. Your Dad's a math whiz, but works for Texas Instruments as an efficiency expert. Is he the reason your Weltanschauung is 'If it's not exactly right, then it's wrong?'"

"Ken told you that?" I asked. Don nodded and continued, "Some people find you difficult to work with, is that right?"

"Some," I concurred, "but I.P. and I have put together two crews, one rock and the other country, that seem to like working with us. We give them more than a job. We give them job satisfaction and we win."

"G, are you ready to order?" The waiter was standing at my elbow. I ordered off the appetizer menu; a dozen oysters and a glass of Chablis; escargot and a glass of claret, followed by a small Caesar salad.

"Ken was right about that, too. You are a snob." We both laughed and Don ordered the same thing. He whispered, "So am I."

I sleep naked. I.P. sleeps in his briefs. With only one double bed we were sleeping together. Just after 2AM, I got a little shake. Then there was a scream. Cat had surprised Sun Tzu.

"Not only do you sleep nude with your pal, you sleep with a cat? The wrong Cat!"

I shuffled into jeans and, barefoot, followed Cat up the stairs to her apartment. We got to know each other better that morning.

Over the next few days we got to know our other neighbors too including the landlady and her husband. I gave that marriage about two months. The landlady had very blond hair and wore it in a pixie cut. She was beautiful, and had indescribable breasts—like I'd never seen before. They were huge, with nipples that stuck straight up, defying gravity. I'm not a breast man, I go more for the booty, but in this case the whole package was there.

How or why she married that wimpy kid, who knows? If she hadn't been married she would have been my bed partner. Actually, she was in my bed several times, but not at the same time I was. On my side of the bed from time to time dried watermelon seeds appeared. Fertility symbols.

I.P. would find knitted pentacles hung around the apartment. He thought it was Cat but I knew it was the witchy landlady from Tarrytown. Landladies have master keys.

Two days later, I went over to her apartment to pay the rent. She met me at the front door in panties and a t-shirt. I could see everything through her outfit. Her husband was there but she asked me to come in and follow her. She went in to her bedroom where she sat down on her bed next to her husband.

A day or two later I got the flu and she stayed a day or two with me, sitting on my bed when I wasn't sleeping. That's when I told her she was beautiful and I hoped she had a great marriage, but to me she was like a little sister.

The gear started to arrive the first week in November. Eight playback-only and one record/playback ATM Harris cart machines came in followed by two big Harris boards. An old friend of I.P.'s, an engineer type guy that lived in Mission Viejo, had given us a clue or two about some gear. Whenever we mentioned Jack William's name, this engineer would just hiss and shake his head. He sent us a list of pre-amps we should use to update the Harris Consoles and the cart machines. We sent him the exciter because he had a method of setting it so that it would never drift. I.P. did the modifications on the stereo generator and the processing gear we received from San Diego.

I.P. was a busy man. I helped him most nights, my head in the lap of little Susie. When I.P. called for a tool I would hand it to him. Little Susie hung right in there. She wanted to know everything and she understood my mantra: 'If it's not exactly right, it's wrong'. When I got the format guide back from Susie, it was perfect. Not a mistake in it.

Finally I.P. got the microwave frequencies back from the FCC, but he had not filed for the microwave construction permit. I didn't know this at the time. Worse, The Koger Executive Center did not allow a breach of their roofing. Uh oh!



## CHAPTER 28

# MAJOR TOM TO GROUND CONTROL

Rita knocked on my office door. "Enter."

"Geoff, there's a guy out here that wants to see you. And Geoff...uh, he's wearing an orange flight suit and he's carrying a flight helmet."

"Yes?"

"And he says he's Commander Bob."

"Okay. Show him in."

Rita showed in a really short man with very long hair. "Good afternoon, Geoffrey Cliff."

"Good afternoon, Commander Bob."

"All right, you can call me Joey Allsman. I've only been Commander Bob for about two hours. That's how long it took me to find the outfit. What can I say!"

"What's up, Commander?"

"I want a gig. It's all over town who you guys are and I want in."

"Then you must know we have our own troops."

"Yeah, yeah, but I'll do anything. Weekends, run the religious tapes on Sunday, whatever."

"Okay, Commander. I like your balls, walking in here in that ridiculous outfit. You mind doing remotes?"

"No, cowboy!"

"No, cowboy"? See I.P. He'll be back in a bit. Take a seat in reception. Okay?"

Don walked in while I was going over Raynor Schine's resume, Don's

pick for sales manager. Carter Brown had turned us down. His wife didn't know a thing about the Tidewater. She'd never been out of Texas and moving from Texas scared her.

When Don told me that he found us a Sales Manager named "Raynor Schine", I said, "Don? Rain or shine?" Don said, "Yes, G, Raynor Schine. He's from an old Jewish family here in the Tidewater and he's been in the outdoor business for years and he knows all the agency people."

I'm thinking, 'Rain or Shine'? This guy has no radio experience, only billboards? I.P. is gonna laugh his ass off. Fuck me with a bilge pump!" But I said, "Well, OK, Don. I really don't know what to say but we'll give him a shot."

Don left and I.P. walked in.

"Bubba, you get the word about Koger?"

"Un huh."

"Well, here's the deal. This weekend we're putting up a 40 foot stick on this building. You got a problem with that?"

"You've got a rigger?"

"Yep."

"Will he work at night?"

"Yep."

"Let's go for it. Did you drill a hole through that wall?"

"No. Fuck it. The wall is concrete block! I just broke the window, ran the coax through it and coiled it up on the roof."

"Rock and roll!"

"Also, I talked to Commander Bob and I hired him, Geoff. He'll climb the big stick and aim the microwave dish."

"You're shittin' me!"

"Un huh. He'll climb the motherfucker. All 450 feet of it. And he's invited us to a party at his house Friday. The stick goes up Saturday."

"Fuckin' A, dude. I.P., is it time to go sneakin' and peakin'?" I asked.

"I believe that we should take a friendly look. Old jeans, KYT'S t-shirts and Unusual 58 silk jackets?"

"Why, yes, Mr. Freelay!"

"Shall we visit WNFK first, Mr. Cliff?"

"We'll take the Mustang. I don't think they'll remember that."

We pulled up outside of The Carousal at 7PM. I.P. knocked on the door to the control room. Looking through the big windows, we could see the jock had just rolled a tune. He had time to open the door. He took a look at us and said, "Sorry, guys. No one is allowed in."

I.P. went into his 'Oh my, we are just bubbas and we want to see a real radio station'. No body does it better than I.P. The young jock needed a hair cut and something done with his complexion. He let us in.

I kept him busy while I.P. crept down the spiral staircase to the engineering space. My silly questions gave I.P. time enough to re-set the processing and mess with the microwave transmitter which was now a 'trash-mitter'.

I.P. eased back to the control room and started to ask his silly questions. I had already spotted the hotclock and the playlist and watched the jock do his basics. The hotclock and playlist were in my back pocket when we danced our way out of there. I made my notes on the jock's execution as I.P. drove us over to the shopping Mall where WHG's studios were located.

We did our visiting fireman's song and dance again and made off with what G2 we could lay hands on, plus I.P. helped out WHG's engineering staff as best he could. We felt it was only fair to do everything we could to win.

"WNFK has changed back everything we did last year to make it work," I said.

"Yeah, I know G.C., but that's good," I.P. commiserated. "Intel says the new P.D. is a real snot named Ron Wolf."

"Yeah, you remember him from that turkey in Saginaw."

"Uh huh. He'll be seriously confused when we are through with him. WHG is the same old same old. You are dead on with the Q-Rock strategy. Now we'll just have to play out the tactics."

"I.P., we're going to run The Last Contest!"

"G.C., do you know how much production is involved in that deal?"

"I do." I.P. just shook his head and gave me that look.

"Geoff, the production load is about all we can handle."

"I know, bubba, but we'll work something out. There's something else, I.P. We're going to have cold start tunes and sometimes they're not

going to roll out of a stop set. I still want the ID in there. We could splice a piece of the bridge to the front of the tune or just punch off a basic. What do you think?"

"Geoff, I'm going to say this again. You know the production load is going to be a bitch. Run the basic."

*"sta bueno."*

Once the equipment began arriving, we began the 16 to 18 hour days. Sun Tzu was accepted by the staff except for Don's bookkeeper/secretary. That woman, for whatever reason, just didn't like me or anything connected to me.

On those long cold nights of building the studios, I mostly handed I.P. whatever tools he called for or helped him run audio wire, always making sure that the AC was run separately. We used a lot of PVC. Little Susie continued to hang out with us at night while the studios were being built. She made herself as useful as possible, making coffee and cradling my head in her lap whenever I stretched out for a moment.

Susie overheard us talking about Commander Bob's party and volunteered to be our designated driver. She also knew where to find the place over in Portsmouth.

We had already been exposed to Tidewater's own pronunciation and it sounds a bit Canadian. For instance 'around and about' is pronounced 'roond 'n about'. Portsmouth is 'Porchmuth'. It sounded weird to us, but it wasn't as strange as the Swahili dialects we heard in Africa.

For Commander Bob's party, I dressed in a black cashmere blazer, grey trousers with a matching grey cashmere turtle neck that my grandmother had sent me for Christmas; soft loafers, my Rolex and my old Burberry trench coat. I.P. was in jeans, a t-shirt and a soft leather jacket. He also wore his gold GMT and those crepe sole, lace up shoes. Little Susie wore jeans and looked beautiful.

I.P. still hadn't untangled the Mexico mess so no XKE yet. The Cobra was out of the question so we decided to go in Susan's father's Cadillac. We parked in front of a 15 story apartment building and rang Joey Allsman's bell. Susan explained that Joey Marvin Allsman's father owned the outdoor company in Tidewater, the same company Raynor Schine had come from. He had something like 300 boards.

We took the elevator to Commander Bob/Joey Allsman's apartment. The Commander opened the door, invited us in, but no one was there. The Commander explained his guests had been partying for some time and they and the refreshments were down in the party room. He suggested we catch up and pulled out a fatty and fired it up. I.P. and I believed him and smoked the joint.

By the time we walked into the party room I could barely stand. Susan was holding me up. The stuff that was in that joint had the opposite effect on I.P. He was jumping around, looking everywhere. Seated around the room was every P.D. and their wives or girlfriends in the market. Maybe 20 people! Oh, just fucking swell!

From his chair Ron Wolf said, "Well, well, if it isn't the big time consultants. You fellows here to teach us how it's done?" I'm thinking, "What a snotty bastard", but I can't make my mouth work.

Susan maneuvered me over to an unoccupied couch. She sat very close to me so that I wouldn't fall over. Then, Susan poured me a beer. I don't drink beer, but that's all there was available and my mouth was very dry.

I.P. picked a chair as close to Ron Wolf as he could get. From the corner of my eye I could see Commander Bob trying not to laugh. I.P. was giving a lecture, but I couldn't make sense out of what he was saying. I could see I.P. using those two thick fingers, poking Wolf in the chest. Every so often I could make out a few words, "You dumb piece of shit. Geoff and I took that little Class 4 that you're programming now to second in the market last year. Your last book, Mr. Wolf, was a pitiful 4.2, I believe. Now, that's what? About 6<sup>th</sup>? Or 7<sup>th</sup>? Or 8<sup>th</sup>?

I.P. turned his head toward another guy, one I didn't know.

"And you, Mr. Soft Rock, how are you doing? With that regional signal, it seems you could do better. At least you could fix the processing. Oh wait. You don't know what processing is, do you Mr. Soft Rock?"

One by one, I.P. took them apart. The Commander was having a great time and I needed to pee. I leaned over to Susie and whispered in her ear, "Susie, can you get me to that restroom? I really need it." Susan got me on my feet and maneuvered me into the restroom.

"You've got to hold me up, Susie."

"Don't worry, Geoff, I'll handle it." And handle it she did. With my

arm around her, she unzipped me, pulled that needy fellow out and aimed it toward the commode.

When we finally made it back to the couch, I noticed the party room had mostly cleared out. The Commander and I.P. were laughing and slapping each other on the back. Susan got us home and parked between the Mustang and the Cobra which had made it down from Washington, but hadn't yet been sold.

## CHAPTER 29

# YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND

The next day was Saturday. I woke up to Sun Tzu's growling, chatter and clatter coming from the kitchen. I put on my terry cloth, wrap-around towel and looked into the kitchen. I saw Susie first. "Good morning, Geoff," she said. "The coffee's ready."

Then I saw Cat. I'd learned that her last name was 'Freshwater', a translation from her father's Moari name. Her mother was the Scot. Cat was with a woman I didn't know. Cat said, "Meet my friend from work, Geoff. Her name is Baby."

"Good morning, Geoff." Baby said.

"Where's I.P.?" our Landlady asked. We nicknamed her BA for Barbara Ann but it really stood for "Bad Ass". We had confirmed it was her that kept coming into our apartment doing witchy things. It scared I.P. to death. "Breakfast is almost ready," BA chirped. "Bacon and eggs?"

Holy shit, I thought. Four of them? "Uh, give me just a few minutes." I threw on an old dressing gown and gave I.P. a shake. That fucker could sleep through an earthquake. I took a quick look outside. Shit. It looked cold and a light rain was falling. A great day to put up a 40 foot stick on a building that didn't want a 40 foot stick on its roof.

We ate breakfast. Rita, the dumb ass receptionist, and one of her friends had shown up too by then and Tzu had Rita backed into a corner. He didn't like her at all. Six women in the apartment. I guess it could be worse. The thing was I only had a sometime relationship with only one of them and that was Cat. I don't think I.P. had anything going with any of

them. I knew he had a deal with a fireman's wife and she was a knock out. She was Miss Munich 1967 and a total beauty.

We politely thanked everyone for breakfast and showed them out. We dressed and went to work. The eight Harris cart machines, playback only, and one record/playback for a total of nine cart machines had to be rigged. Both of the boards were in, but not all of the high end pre-amps had arrived. It doesn't seem to make much sense to rebuild a brand new console, but if you want it as good as it can be you have to junk the pre-amps that come with and replace them. Remember that even Harris likes to make a profit.

I.P.'s old friend was still rebuilding the new exciter. I.P. was rebuilding the new AGCs, Limiters and the stereo generator. This FM was gonna be in your face. No one would have ever heard anything like it. I.P. also had to rebuild the power supply in the transmitter.

I.P. had been on the phone constantly trying to get everything in. Don was putting pressure on us to get this fucker up and cooking by January 1<sup>st</sup>, '73.

The Ad Agency had done a great job on the logo and designed very sexy collateral. The t-shirts were not ready yet, but we didn't need them quite yet.

That Saturday I.P. and the riggers stacked steel and got the 40 foot tower up. The microwave dish was mounted just after dark. It was still drizzling and it was getting colder.

On Sunday it was still cold, still raining and the wind was up. The rain began to freeze on both of the towers. They were slick with ice, but that maniac, Commander Bob, climbed that 450 foot stick at the transmitter site! We had to have that micro-wave receiving dish mounted above the FM antenna and he wasn't going to fail us. We had run the coax up to the dish earlier.

I was on the roof; I.P. was on top of the stick at the Koger Center and Commander Bob was at the top of the 450 foot stick at the transmitter site. Among the three of us, using some jury rigged phones, the microwave was finally aligned and working. There was only one problem. We had the freqs from the FCC, but we didn't have a C.P.

Monday morning Don sauntered into my office with, as I.P. would say, a big shit-cater on his face.



"Let's take a ride, G."

"Okay, Don. I need to talk with you anyway." We loaded into Don's red Cadillac.

"Don, I talked this over with I.P. and I like working for you. So, we want to give up the Watergate apartment and move to Tidewater. What do you think?"

"I think that's great. What does Ken say?"

"Don't know; didn't ask."

"How much stuff do you need to move?"

"Not much; books, shelves, some furniture and a painting or two. We can move in next month. I found a 3 bedroom in that new 10 story place near the station."

"I'll pay for the move. Here we are." Don pulled in to the Jaguar and Lotus dealership.

"Look, G, I couldn't find a 240Z, but will this do?" As we walked into the showroom, Don pointed to a new Lotus Élan 2 plus 2. It was beautiful. Lotus yellow, burlled walnut dash, dual overhead cam 4 cylinder with two Weber side draft carburetors.

"God, Don, it's beautiful." I ran my hand over the leather interior. "When will it be ready?"

"Now. There are only 17 in the States. So, you like it?"

"Ab-so-fucking-lutely!"

I.P. hated it. He had a hard time getting those wide shoulders into the bucket seats and he was still driving the damn remote unit. Jealousy raised its ugly head. I just didn't notice it...yet.

It was just before Christmas and it was time to start gathering the troops. M.F. was in; so was Right-On and Heavy Earth. We didn't really want to do it, but we hired Nap Stone for mid-days. We needed that wall-shaking voice. He had to swear he would do no weenie wagging, because this time we would not bail him out. He swore on it, the lying little bastard.

We'd been looking at another guy for a year or so; we hadn't hired him because I thought he might be doing some form of speed. I.P. assured me that he was just enthusiastic on the air, so I hired China Boy Davis for teeny bop drive. I really needed a good blade, but there wasn't one on the horizon—at least for the moment.

The execution of this format was different from anything anyone had done to date. We needed a week of practice before we let the Beast loose.

We also needed to cut the jingle package and we needed to do it before Christmas. I called Frank Jr. and asked him to set it up. We had two weeks before the Holidays. I needed I.P. to go with me to PAMS. He knew more about music than I did and he understood what I wanted to accomplish.

We hired Commander Bob as a part-timer. We put him on the music dubbing and labeling detail. He worked well with Heavy Earth. Heavy had driven his MG Midget, Fletcher, to Norfolk the same day we called. It's strange for a man to have a car that was approximately the same size he was.

Getting vinyl to cart is not the easiest thing in the world. I.P. built a great production room; we used a Panasonic Techniques turntable that had variable speed. We were also using a Pultec EQ-H-2 equalizer. The key to getting the tune to cart correctly was to speed up our tunes enough but not too much. The audience couldn't notice the speed difference, but it was enough to make the other stations sound draggy when they played the same tunes.

We used the EQ to bring out the catchiest riffs of each tune by zeroing in on their frequency and boosting their prominence. The competition never figured out how we did it. They just thought it was FM as opposed to AM. Of course, we'd pulled the same trick at AM stations and the competition didn't get it then either.

Commander Bob had taken to wearing his flight suit every day. He told me I needed an appropriate girl friend and he knew just the girl. "And don't worry, Geoff, I'll fix it up!"

That was on a Friday. The next morning the Commander appeared, as if by magic, at our bedroom door. He had one of those gorgeous young women that you somehow just knew was rich. She had the look, even in hip hugger jeans and one of those half blouses that showed her belly button.

Sun Tzu was already up, purring and doing figure eights around the girl's ankles. "Look, Commander, I'm naked and I don't have my wrap handy."

"That's okay," the woman said with that cultivated voice. "I've seen it before. Go right ahead."

I ran to the bathroom, jeans in hand; came back and Commander Bob introduced us. I found a sweater and slipped it over my head. The young woman was Penelope Pricilla Hamilton Lee and she was a very unhappy young woman.

I put on my jacket and took Penny for a walk on the beach. It was just across the street, and even though it was December it wasn't all that cold so her not having on a coat didn't seem odd. Nevertheless, after a few minutes, I noticed her shivering so I draped my jacket around her.

Without prompting, she told me her story. Her Mom and Dad were in the middle of a messy divorce and she didn't know where she belonged. On the beach, the water of the Chesapeake Bay came in very gently and created small sand islands.

I walked to one of the small islands and held out my hand. "Come here, Penny, this is a place of your own. A place where you belong." She came to me, holding my jacket open with both hands so she could wrap me up close to her. Watching her long honey blond hair blow in the sea wind and her green eyes wet with tears got to me. I could really like this young woman. Was she the one?

We had two dates, both arranged by Commander Bob and always with several other people around. The Commander, in that way, began to introduce me to the younger society folk of the Tidewater.

I.P. wasn't interested. He did finally get his XKE back, along with his passport and his billfold. But I.P. wasn't happy; I couldn't put my finger on it and he said nothing.

I loved the new Lotus. I sold the Cobra. We were on the way to PAMS. We took the XKE to the airport and steeled ourselves for the Piedmont flight to Atlanta. Piedmont landed at every Podunk airport between the Tidewater and Atlanta. From Atlanta we were pampered by Delta to Love Field.

Frank Jr. met us at Love Field and had my old friend Cooper Wallace with him. They had both finally come out of the closet and set up house keeping together. Well, well, well.

This time, I.P. and I had reservations at the old Adolfus. The suite was being held for us, so we went straight to PAMS. We arrived just as management and sales were sitting down in the conference room.

Franklin took us right in. "Gentlemen, these young fellows are Ken Camden's field team."

Bill Meeks, Ken and Toby stood up. Hands were shaken all around. We were surprised to see Ken. We didn't know that he and Toby had personal business and Ken wanted to see or hear how we would handle the inward basics. So did everyone else.

Bill Meeks said, "I want you to meet someone." A long lean man unfolded from one of the conference room chairs. Bill went on, "G.C., I.P., I want you to meet Bill Stewart."

My God, Bill Stewart? Genius, hero, radio wild man!

"Hello, Mr. Stewart." I almost stuttered. "This is an honor, sir." I shook his hand again. "I thought working for Ken would be as close as we could get to the wonder and creativity of McLendon and Storz," I babbled, "but here you both are, two giants of rock and roll."

"Young Geoff," Mr. Stewart said, "you are very kind. Ken told us some of your and I.P.'s exploits." He reached out for I.P.'s hand and continued. "A Bic Pen, a free lid and the strange case of the disappearing and re-appearing engineering gear?" He patted us both on the back with those big hands, "I think the tradition lives on. Tell us about the inward basic."

Ken had asked me to bring two copies of the format guide. We explained that the inward basic idea was Ken's. Meeks and Stewart thumbed through the guide.

"Can I use this?" Meeks asked. I looked at Ken. He gave me a slight nod.

"Yes, sir. After the second book. I am guessing here, but you want to syndicate the package, right?"

Meeks laughed, "That's the idea."

"Well, great. Of course any recompense would be up to Ken and yourself. All I ask for is a free package." They all laughed. "There is one more thing. I would hate to do Frank Jr. out of his commission." They laughed again. Meeks agreed and we went into the control room.

The package wasn't complicated. We cut three inward basics; slow, medium and fast tempo. The audio was a rip of the WABC jingle. The inward basic started with the logo sans lyrics, then continued with a bass

guitar, rhythm guitar and mid-range Motown style drum work. A lead guitar, almost subliminal, repeated the logo. The idea was for the jock to have music to work over from the end of the last tune leading into a stop-set to the first spot. We only cut two regular basics, fast and medium. We were never going to come out of a stop-set with a slow tune. The regular basic was 'Q-Rock'. We also cut an I.D. jingle, 'WQRC—Norfolk, Q-Rock. We cut three of these. No weather jingle or any of that bullshit.

We did rip Tom Merriman off a bit. He had already done Phase One for Billy Ed Young at KILT. What we did was cut four different versions of the inward basic that ran just over a minute. We left the beginning logo off these four cuts. They were for use in promos and such; all in all, not a bad package. I.P. was the producer of the package; he did a great job.

We flew back to Norfolk as soon as possible. Still we had to endure the Piedmont torture; Atlanta to Savanna to Charleston to Charlotte and so forth. We hadn't even taken the time to visit Jane Anne and Windle Rexford Cliff. It was a Friday when we got back to the old apartment. Our Landlady, BA, had been looking after Sun Tzu.

"What the hell is all of this?" I.P. screamed, entering the apartment. Plastered around the apartment were knitted pentagrams. "G.C., that Cat person is scary."

"You think she did this?"

"Yes!"

"I.P., BA was taking care of Tzu. She did it! You know, she is from Tarrytown. Spook city. Headless horsemen and all that."

I walked down to BA's apartment. She came to the door in panties and a translucent t-shirt. I was sorely tempted. She was a beauty and what a body. There she was for the taking. I couldn't do it. I was no saint, but she was still a newlywed and I just couldn't. I couldn't hide my hard-on either, so I left after asking her to please stop doing things to our apartment.

I ran into Cat on the way back to the apartment. "Did you finally fuck her?"

"No, Cat, I did not."

"Well, she sure is trying. That rich bitch girl came by earlier. She said she wanted to check on your cat. I asked her if she meant me. She just gave me a strange look. I told her if I saw her around here again I would cut her tits off."

“Jesus, Cat!”

“She left. Want to come up and meet a friend? I told her about your little pal. She wants to see for herself.” I know it sounds like I was inundated with pussy and I guess I was. Apparently there just weren’t very many 27 year old bachelors around. I enjoyed it while I could.

I.P. turned 22 on January 1<sup>st</sup>. That week the Balkin deal closed and I.P. and I picked up a nice chunk of cash. We flew to San Diego and met Jack McCoy to get the seminar on The Last Contest. George Wilson had become the COO of the Bartel chain and Jack was now the National Program Director.

Since The Last Contest was sales oriented, we took Raynor Schine with us. He was totally clueless. I needed I.P.; he didn’t want to go but I convinced him. He was finishing up everything at the FM. The AGCs and the Limiters were the things one would usually find in upscale recording studios. I.P. had to modify them some for broadcast use and he was very anxious to get to it but I needed him in San Diego more.

We were once again in the old Coronado Hotel and Jack gave the three of us the seminar. Raynor Schine looked like a puppy dog run over by a Harley. At the end of three days, we flew home.

Our furniture came in from Washington and we moved in to the new place. It was one of two penthouse apartments. We had a good view of the Atlantic from our balcony. It was laid out almost exactly like the Watergate apartment we’d just left and we set it up the same way. When I.P. walked in, he would still look at the Jasper Johns canvas and say, “Who threw the paint on the wall?”

The big difference was instead of paying \$1,500 hundred a month, we now paid only \$700. Ken was not happy with us for moving out of the District.

## CHAPTER 30

# COME MONDAY IT'LL BE ALRIGHT

We were finally ready. The jocks were settled in. We gave them the run down. I.P. played the jingles for them and put them to work practicing. Don had been bragging about us and his new station. He was on my ass constantly about getting on the air. I sent out my gotcha letters, 'On the way to ruin your day'. The collateral stuff looked great.

The 18 hour days and too much coffee had finally taken its toll. I was a physical wreck. Thursday, the week before we hit the air, I had not made it to lunch and I'm hypoglycemic. I get a bit testy when I haven't eaten and it was that evening, sitting in Raynor's office trying, once again, to explain that The Last Contest was a sales promotion aimed at accounts that normally would not use radio and it had to be sold now! He simply didn't get it.

Don chose that moment to jump up my ass about engineering's phone bill. That was the wrong thing to do.

"Fuck you, Don. You can stick this son of a bitch up your ass. I'm out of here!"

"Geoff, you can't talk to people like that!" Raynor whined.

"Fuck you, Raynor. You are one dumb bastard." Raynor was appalled. I stormed into my office with Don on my heels. Don finally found his tongue.

"Who's paying you to do this Geoff? Who?" I'm packing my brief case.

"You, Don. You are. You've pushed and pushed to get on the air. This

gear is not off the shelf. I.P. has had a phone in his ear for months trying to get all of these pieces here on time and you're jumping in my shit about the fucking phone bill? I do not want to leave, but I also do not want to put up with a bunch of shit from your fucking bookkeeper who doesn't like me anyway."

"Okay, okay, Geoff. I guess I just didn't understand the situation."

"Don, do you know we have been putting in 18 hour days for weeks? And I haven't eaten today."

"Let's go to dinner and forget this ever happened, Okay?"

The next morning that dumb ass Rita, the receptionist, knocked on my office door although it was open. "Geoff, uh, there's a man here to see you. He's from the FCC. His name is Mr. Wetzel. Shall I show him in?"

"Yeah. Find I.P. and get him in here."

Rita got close to my ear and whispered, "When are you going to take me parking?"

"Out, Rita." With a scowl, she twisted around, swirling her skirt and disappeared.

As Wetzel walked in, I.P. was right behind him. My pal the engineer was dressed in jeans, those hideous shoes with thick soles, and a XXL t-shirt that didn't cover his navel.

"Howdy, Pard," I.P. said and offered his hand to Mr. Wetzel. "I shore am glad to see you." I knew what I.P. was up to. He was taking Mr. Wetzel to Hillbilly Heaven.

"I was fixing to give you a call to thank you for those mighty fine frequencies. Oh my, they work so good. Come on with me. I really got to show you what fine work you old boys do up thare in D.C."

Wetzel had come to visit because we did not have a construction permit for the microwave. We had the freqs they had allotted to us, but I.P. had been a bit slow in filing for the C.P. It's not like he didn't have his hands full.

I.P. led a stunned FCC inspector out of my office. We talked it over with Don and our communications lawyer in Washington. If we waited for the CP, we stood to lose \$15 grand in pre-sold air time; on the other hand, the Commission fine was only \$2,000. Fuck it. We were going on the air without the C.P.



Turns out we were never fined. I don't know what other hoops I.P. jumped through or vice versa. We had no more trouble from the FCC.

Our kick off date was this coming Monday morning at 6AM and we were ready! The weekend was ours to rest and relax. Saturday morning I smelled coffee. It was still early and I thought it was Penny, so I just threw open the covers on the water bed and little Susie crawled in rubbing her cute butt up against my front side. Sun Tzu moved over to my left arm pit.

Half asleep, I unbuttoned her jeans. She slipped out of them and I slipped into her. Slowly, slowly. She wriggled out of her tee. We stayed that way for what seemed like a long time. She was very wet and her pussy opened wider. Finally she turned me over and said, "Now".

"Now," and she came and so did I.

It was good coffee. Susie stayed for a while, and then told me she had errands and was expected at home. She left.

I had a date that night with Penny and was looking forward to it, our third date. I changed the sheets. Do you have any idea how hard it is to find high thread count sheets for a king size round waterbed?

I put a duckling out to thaw. I found my figs. Living with I.P. you never knew what might be missing. When he was hungry, he'd eat anything. I found the black cherries as well and I looked through the wines for the right burgundy. I was going to do this duck in a clay pot. I filled up one side of the sink and submerged the pot. This was going to be a good dinner.

A bottle of Stolichnaya was getting cold in the freezer. Next to the vodka were two stemmed sherry glasses. The toast points were ready for the oven. I had considered chopped egg and onion, but then thought, why screw up Beluga?

I was dressed. My Grandmother had given me a nice silk and wool turtle neck for Christmas and I had decided on matching black slacks. I had a few hours before I needed to start the duck, so I pulled a book at random from the shelves. I made myself comfortable in my old leather easy chair. The book was a favorite, Harper Lee's autobiographical "To Kill a Mockingbird".

I couldn't concentrate on the book at all. Instead of Scout and Atticus all I could think of was why I.P. had been so surly lately. I imagined part

of the problem had to be money related. All I could pay I.P. was \$350 a week. We usually made the same money. The other thing must have been his driving around in that old remote unit waiting for his XKE while I was in a \$15,000 dollar Lotus. But with I.P., you never knew. He was damn secretive. I'll admit I was just as secretive; we just used different methods of hiding. I played the open book; he was mysterious.

Then, there was Ken. What was he pissed about? I just didn't know. And I was jumpy on top of all of that. I wanted Q-Rock to come off perfectly on Monday morning. This was the first time we had everything we needed. No excuses!

I.P. told me that he wouldn't be back until Sunday, so I had the weekend and Penny. I was invited to meet her mother, Katherine, at the family home in Portsmouth on Sunday. I had seen the house from the outside. It was beautiful in that 'we have so much money, we really don't need to show it' kind of way.

I put the duck in the oven and left to pick up Penny. She was very proud of the Lotus. She had already showed it off to her cousin Schyler. Schyler referred to me as 'radio trash'.

Dinner came off perfectly and Penny was relaxed. But I didn't know the girl rules. Apparently, young women only pick at their food if they expect to sleep with you. Who knew!

Over after-dinner brandy she told me about her love of animals and that she competed regularly as an equestrian. We were snuggled on the couch. Sun Tzu was in Penny's lap. Now, that was unusual for my very picky and jealous Tzu.

Penny went on to tell me about her mare, a wonderful horse; but she had her eye on a big boy—a gelding, an American saddle bred, 3 gated and the Grandson of Wing Commander. I don't remember his Dam, but she was the reason he was a gelding. We talked horses for a while, then I kissed Penny, really kissed Penny, for the first time.

She had that hard body of a rider; in the words of body builders, she was cut. We woke up the next morning at sunrise. Penny calmly called the very proper Katherine and told her we would be over for breakfast, if that was alright? It was alright. I expected Katherine wanted a better look at the man her 19 year old daughter had just spent the night with. *Radio trash!*

Sunday went well. I did not get those questions I would have gotten if I was visiting Jane Anne Cliff. I.P. came back to the apartment on Sunday afternoon.

“How did it go with the rich and famous, Bubba?”

“It went well, and your weekend?”

“The same.”

“I.P., do you have anything you want to tell me?”

“Want to partake in a tuna or two?”

“Sure. I’m a little nervous about tomorrow. You?”

“Take a toke G.C.”

I was going to find out zip about I.P.’s personal doings over the weekend, so I gave up. Instead, we changed the conversation to Monday morning. 6:00 AM could not come soon enough for me. I knew we had done everything right.

Back in November I.P. told me that Buzzy was using a new method to research his music. He was calling people on the phone and asking questions about his playlist. For a week or so, I thought about how that might work. Then I had four phones installed in the traffic and billing office. It was the largest space we had except for reception. I found some interns from Old Dominion University and took the phone book and just started in. First we qualified the respondents as to age and music preferences. For the people that qualified, we asked them to rate the tunes on a scale of 1 to 5. Since we were going to play only the hits to begin with, it was a fairly easy procedure.

The week between Christmas and New Years was practice. Then, after that it was for real. One of the most important things that we learned was when was a tune really burned out? Jocks became burned much sooner than the audience; even the music director did. We continued to do all of those other music research things too, like call the record stores, keep score of the requests and check the trades.

I.P. always accused me of being wrapped too tight. I suppose he was right. If it’s not exactly right, it’s wrong. I took a toke.

The young women that seemed to congregate around us still did so. They cut up strawberries for Sun Tzu, made our coffee, etc., but not Monday morning. I was at the station by 4AM, rechecking everything.

I had gone through the license renewal and found we owed the Commission only three minutes an hour of news. We produced that in two pieces with appropriate music under each piece. That way we could run spots in the middle. We grafted a basic to the out piece and bam, right into a tune. We did the giveaway in the :36 set.

At 5:30 M.F. plugged in his Koss headset and got ready to rock. For the two days prior we had been running a produced piece saying that “this is a recycling period,” and so forth, giving our new identifier Q-Rock, but not playing the new playlist. It was just a weird series of sci-fi sounding stuff. We got the idea from KGB in San Diego.

At 6 AM, straight up, M.F. punched off the basic. Q-Rock, the jingle, came through the speakers in production where we were listening. Crocodile Rock rolled on the beat.

At 6:03 the promo/I.D. rolled, shaking the JBLs. Then ‘You’re So Vain’ took M.F. into the :06 set. The inward basic kicked in and M.F. started his rap, “Q-Rock with M.F. My Momma calls me Melvin Francis, but you can call me M.F. and I’ve got your Johnson swinging. It’s 6:06 and 41 degrees in The City by the Bay. Stones and O’Jays coming up. In minutes an Official Q-Rock t-shirt or one thousand dollars could be yours. Hang in, my children.” The first spot went on the beat of the inward basic.

At the end of the second spot, M.F. rolled the basic and ‘Frankenstein’ was thumping your chest. The station sounded great, exactly what we had hoped. Before the first hour was over, the hitline was burning up. Q-Rock was in your face.

Don was ecstatic. We were all pleased. I went back to my office and started the aircheck recorder. An aircheck a day keeps the ennui away.

On the third day on the air, I was in my office. The aircheck recorder was on and Nap Stone was smoking. As usual, my cigarette butts were lined up in my crystal ashtray; my legal pad was placed just so; pens were lined up neatly except the one I was using to make notes about the Spring book promotion. Don, all lanky and loud, bursts in. The first thing he blurts is that the manager of the Koger Center had come to tell him that my jocks were scaring the other tenants.

“Geoff, can’t you clean them up?”

"Well, no, Don. We have to look like the audience. So long hair and jeans, even for the receptionist, is the right thing to do. We don't mail out the contest prizes; the winners come here and we want them to be comfortable and to relate to us."

"You don't dress that way."

"No. I'm management so I don't need to look like a jock. I can wear a tie."

"Oh. OK."

Next, he tells me about an ad agency run by two women with accounts that make sense for Q-Rock. He said I should go pitch the station to them. I agreed.

When I called for an appointment, Cindy, one of the owners, suggested dinner tonight as a way to get to know about the station. I was more than a little surprised, but of course I accepted. I suggested the Copper Kettle in Virginia Beach. We agreed on a time for me to pick her up at the agency.

I picked her up in the Lotus. Things went well and she gave me two orders before dinner was over. Things continued to go well and we ended the meal with plans to go visit my round waterbed. We hadn't been in my apartment for five minutes before there was pounding on the door. Penelope Pricilla started screaming.

"I know you're in there and you have a girl! You let me in right now!" And there was weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. This was the first display of neurotic jealousy I'd witnessed from Penny but it was not the last.

This went on for several minutes, Cindy and I waiting for it to stop. Penelope must have worn herself out because eventually the noise stopped. I thought the timing was good to take Cindy home.

I ushered Cindy into her apartment. She asked me if I'd like to meet her roommate. I said, "Sure." She led me straight back to a bedroom where her roommate was already in bed, a curvaceous redhead. You could see her large breasts through the thin sheet. Cindy introduced me to Stephanie.

"Oh, I've heard about you!" she said.

"Really? I just met Cindy today."

"Well, you and your partner are the talk of the town. And aren't you a slim one!" She continued, "You know, Cindy and I share."

"Not tonight, Steph," Cindy said. "C'mon Geoff, let me show you my room."

I was too up in the air for anything to happen that night. Cindy was a cutie and I thought I might like to see her again another time. Same with Stephanie, thank you very much. Just not tonight. I got back in the Lotus and drove home.

As I walked passed the apartment that Katherine and Penny occupied, Penny came out and began accusing me again.

"I know you had a woman in your apartment."

"It was a client. Can we take this up another time?"

I turned my back on her, went into my apartment and went to bed.

## CHAPTER 31

# KILLING ME SOFTLY

Three weeks in and Q-Rock was a phenomenon. I decided to take Saturday off. The truth was I just wasn't feeling that well. I.P. was off on one of his mysterious errands, so I lay down on my round waterbed. Sun Tzu curled up with me. I put the phone on the floor where I could reach it if I.P. called.

That was the last thing I remembered until I heard, from what seemed like a distance, "The fever is down to 103. I think it's broken. Don, I believe it's just exhaustion. He needs rest." Then, apparently, I drifted off again.

The next thing I remember was waking up and Penny was sitting on the edge of the waterbed. I had been out for five days. Don had found me on Tuesday when I hadn't shown up for work the second day and they couldn't get me on the phone. Somehow, Don had our apartment opened and found me in a pool of sweat. I don't know how he got a Doctor to make a house call, but he did. A nurse and Penny had been watching out for me. I.P. had been in and out of the station, but he had found a 'friend' in Hampton and had been staying there.

I.P. finally showed up. I was feeling much better and I was lost again in the mechanics of the format. God knows, enough people had told me that I was more than a little inwardly focused. I was sitting in the living room, Tzu at my feet.

I.P. sat down and rolled a tuna.

"I'm not happy with the news," I said. "It's really boring. I mean, we're clipping shit out of the newspaper for Christ sakes!"

"G.C., does this mean more production?"

"No, Stickman, but it will be more entertaining. Last night Penny and I were at the Giant supermarket and as we were checking out I noticed all of those goofy magazines and tabloid papers. You know the ones—3 headed babies, women on the moon; like that."

"So our news department becomes the check-out line at the Giant?"

"That's the ticket. And we graft a contest liner, using a different voice, then splice on the basic."

"I've got to admit, it would be different. Let's do it."

The next afternoon, I.P. and I went to the news department. The radio was blaring and Right-On was cooking. You could always rely on Right-On. He was coming out of 'You're So Vain' into 'Papa was a Rollin' Stone', "Q-Rock and Right-On, Right-On, Right-On Richards! 4:14 and a heat wave, 47 and overcast. New stuff. We've added \$100 dollar bills to hand out. Stay right there, that phone number could be coming at you in moments, but now The Temps." He hit the sync point dead on. Some tunes had a talk-up that was so long we marked the music cart at a sync point.

"This is a far cry from Jim Bob and me sending out "bills for \$100" at the cowboy station in Ft. Worth, huh, I.P.?" We were coming out of the Supermarket with an arm load of National Enquirers and Globes.

"You're a fine American, G.C."

"You know what they say? The informed citizen..."

"...is the corner stone of Democracy."

My birthday had come and gone and spring was almost on us. Don called about the remote unit because the Country AM had sold a remote and needed it. I passed the word to I.P. who had it last.

The station, Q-Rock, was doing just what it was suppose to, except...we were coming up on the Spring ARB and I knew that I couldn't run The Last Contest. Raynor had not sold a dime's worth of advertising for the promotion. It's true Q-Rock hit the air in the black last January, but almost all of the FM's revenue came from Big Susan's AM sales department. The other thing was I.P.'s harping on the added production load.

The Last Contest required 16 promos a day. To date, I had been



voicing the promos in the McCoy style, but I knew that I couldn't keep it up. To get my voice right, I had to breathe through my mouth for 60 seconds or so, just to get it low enough. That dried and relaxed my vocal cords so I could sound like Jack McCoy. Nap stone had the voice, but he was all over the station already.

I'm sitting in the office, when that idiot Rita buzzed me. "Don's on one."

"G, I need that remote unit," Don said, sounding up in the air. I told him I.P. would deliver the unit the next day. I called I.P. into my office and asked him to bring it in.

"I.P., I've got to have the remote unit tomorrow."

"I swear, GC, I'll have it here tomorrow," he said with that sneaky look.

Then the phone rang again. This time Rita announced that it was Katherine Hamilton Lee, Penny's Mom. Katherine asked me to tea that afternoon. I showed up on time.

"Good afternoon, Geoffrey. I would like to introduce Larry Knucles."

"Hello, Larry." We shook hands.

"Actually, Larry and I have met. Penny introduced us once. You're a P.I., I believe?"

"Yes, Larry has been helping me. The divorce and all... Thanks, Larry. That will be all." And just like that Katherine dismissed him.

"Sit down Geoff. Milk or lemon?"

"Milk and one lump please."

"Larry wasn't just helping me with the divorce." Katherine had a file folder in her hand.

"Yes m'am. He's hard to miss, 6'4", red headed and driving that white Cadillac. The guy reminds me of that bit player on 'The Rockford Files'. You could have just asked!" Katherine looked up at me.

"Would you have told me everything, Geoffrey Graehme Barclay de Cliff the Fifth?"

"Probably not."

"But you are sleeping with my daughter and I need to know who you are. Now let's see. Your family arrived in Virginia in 1653. You are Old 400. You're also Old 300 in Texas. Are you going to marry her?"

"I don't know. She's only 19. I think we might buy a horse together."

"Oh?"

"Well, she wants Grand Wing Commander or Wing Ding as Penny calls him. I told her that I would put up my \$7,500."

"A round waterbed?"

"Tacky, huh? I didn't even have a pair of bellbottoms until Penny took me shopping."

Katherine Hamilton Lee decided I could continue to date her little girl.

I called I.P. in again to make sure the remote unit would be here tomorrow.

"Geoff, I lost it."

"What?"

"I lost it last fall. It would only do 40 and it overheated. The Jag had just gotten here, so I parked the unit, called a taxi and came home."

"Aw, shit!"

"Well, I'm looking for it," he whined.

"They have to have it tomorrow!"

"I'm looking." And he left.

I.P. found it that evening. The unit was only six blocks from the Koger Executive Center. Squirrels had made a nest in the upholstery. A quick wash job and an interior cleaning made it look relatively presentable. I.P. delivered it on time and as promised.

Q-Rock trucked along sounding like nothing else on the air anywhere. I was very proud of the station. The weather became beautiful. Spring in the Tidewater is a favorite. Penny and I bought Wing Ding. He was a big boy, just over 17 hands and he was a gentle soul. Sun Tzu and Wing Ding got along well; that big horse would lower his head and nuzzle Tzu. Tzu would purr that loud purr of his and do figure eights around Wing Dings hoofs.

Penny showed him and won more often than not. Even when they didn't win Wing Ding would go to the center of the ring and put his right leg out and take a bow. He was a complete ham. Penny couldn't stop him. He became very well known with the Horsey set. Win or lose, they waited for Grand Wing Commander to take his bow.

We had to bail Nap Stone out of jail only one time. He swore to God

he would never do it again. I didn't fire him. I.P. took his trench coat away from him. It was only a symbolic act, but it was something.

Danny London got a job offer from the Chicago country. It was more money and the third market so I told him to take it. I replaced him with a kid named Middlestein. This guy had the resume; strangely, he was a Jewish boy from Skokie that programmed Country stations.

We were in the book now and we had begun to run recurrent; only one an hour for starters. I had never planned to run more than two an hour and then only when I had more than 100 in the category. We were still running the 'a winner an hour and sometimes even more'. This was the beginning part of *The Last Contest*.

I was sick at not being able to go through with my original war plan. I couldn't run *The Last Contest*. Raynor Shine still hadn't sold anything. And our production load was already too heavy. I thought the best we could do was trade out a pair of Harley Davidson motorcycles and a new Jag to give away and handle it with Last contest methodology.

I was embarrassed. WIDE, the Top Gun, was still minting money. Q-Rock had gone on the air in the black and I was proud of that. I don't know of any other start-up station that hit the air making money. My problem was our profit margin was 10 to 15%; that's not exactly what I had in mind. We should be throwing 40 to 50%.

In April we ran a Mediastat just to see how we would come out in the ARB. We came out 3<sup>rd</sup> 12+; #1 12 to 24; and 2<sup>nd</sup> 25 to 34. Not bad all in all, if the ARB came out the same. In the meantime, my world began to fall apart.

Penny dumped me. We had a date and she came over but I was so tired, I fell asleep on the couch and she took it personally. Fuck, here we go again. Her mood swings were making me nuts. Maybe she'll stay away for good this time, I thought. I was sure Katherine would make good on my \$7,500 for the damned horse.

It didn't take long to realize Middlestein was a cluster fuck. All of my guys really disliked him and he couldn't program his way out of a paper bag. I called him in with the intent of firing him. He advised me that if I did fire him he would sue the station. He had already talked to his lawyer; further he had proof that I.P. had fudged the AM transmitter readings while Larson, our AM engineer, was on vacation. Just fucking swell!

I.P. 'fessed up. He did it. I went to Don and told him the story.

"Fire that son of a bitch Middlestein anyway." That was usually Don's answer. I showed Don another way out of this.

"Fire I.P. and me," I said, "Then hire us back as consultants. That will protect the station and get rid of Middlestein." So that's what we did.

## CHAPTER 32

# YOU'RE SO VAIN

The book was over and I was having the pre-book release tremors. Every programmer has them, that time between the end of the book and the actual arrival of the book. After being dumped by Penny, I met a smart, beautiful school teacher. She had the blond hair and high cheekbones that Eastern Europe seems to produce. Her name was Miss Butka.

Miss Butka was very lovely and probably would make someone a good wife, just not me. The spark or whatever it is? She, or we, didn't have it. She had completely misunderstood. Apparently having sex one time was a marriage proposal in her world.

One evening I arrived at her place for a quite dinner. I knocked on the door and was greeted by a large man in a Police Captain's uniform. "Hello, there. You must be Geoff. Come in, come in." We shook hands. Then I was introduced to the rest of the family, Momma and three younger brothers. Miss Butka gave me a wifely kiss on the cheek and asked me if I would run to the store for a few things she had forgotten to pick up. The little brothers wanted to go with me. Well, okay.

"My sister says this car cost \$15,000. Is that true?" Oh shit! I took the little brothers back to Miss Butka's place with the things we had picked up at the Giant. Then I split!

I.P. chose that night to give me his notice. He wouldn't give me a reason, he was just gone. I was having a hell of a day. Monday morning I didn't go to work. It was one of those days when Don was all worked up

about something, so he fired me. I thought for an hour, then I called Don back.

I guess I should explain a bit better. I forced Don to fire me, he really didn't want to, but I hadn't finished thinking my situation out.

"Don? Geoff. Look, I don't want to leave. Can you give me an hour?"

"Damn, G. What's going on?"

"Don, meet me somewhere and I'll tell you. I'm in the shit with everybody and when you called I just hadn't thought things out."

"The office?"

"No, Don. How about that hotdog place you like?"

We sat down in a booth at the back of the little restaurant. I told Don that I.P. had quit and that Ken was pissed at me. Don didn't know that Ken had sent I.P. and me to pitch Immediate Media to do their Kansas City FM.

"Don, I blew the pitch because I didn't want to leave. You have been very good to me and I love Q-Rock. Also, I like Tidewater."

"What else, G?"

"Ken was so mad he fucked up the Lotus."

"What?"

"Yeah. He wanted to drive it when we were in Middleburg two weekends ago. He was going to show me what a driver he was and doing a down shift he missed his heel and toe and pegged the tach. He blew the head gasket, burned some valves. God knows what else. And when I asked I.P. to open the glove compartment and hand me a pack of cigarettes, it was locked so he just ripped it out, burlled walnut and all.

"And, Don, I need some help with Q-Rock."

"Do you want higher pay?"

"No, Don. You treat me very well. I need a real sales staff! I've seen what big Susan can do. She is good. I need her to find me a sales manager and some sales people that she trains."

"I'll make her the general sales manager. What else?"

"You know why I didn't run The Last Contest. It wasn't sold and then there was the production load. I need another production room and a good blade to run it and a great engineer. Please hire me back. And keep your secretary off my back."

“G, we can work this out. She doesn’t like you because she thinks you’re just another promiscuous male like her ex-husband.”

Telling Don the story of that miserable trip to Middleburg reminded me of something else that had happened on that route. It actually started back in the sixties. The apartment I had while waiting for my ship was at the same location as the first apartment Don had secured for me and I.P.

While living in that old apartment waiting for my transportation to the war zone, my neighbor and friend was an Ensign and a newlywed. My pal, the Ensign had married a beautiful young woman that happened to be half Japanese. Back then there was a miscegenation law on the books in Virginia. I had no idea that such a law could exist, even in the sixties, but it did! Miscegenation? One of the men that pushed for that law to stay on the books was a well known preacher named Jim Robertson.

One evening sirens were heard and police cars pulled up in front of the apartment house. My friend and neighbor with his beautiful wife were led away in handcuffs.

My friends were back the next day. Her father was a Navy Captain that had married a Japanese woman during the Korean war. Still, they had been arrested because they had fallen in love. Jim Robertson didn’t approve of the mixing of the Races! What a man of God.

So on the way to Middleburg, I.P. wanted to stop and see a new 10K Christian station that Jim Robertson was building back in the pines outside of Richmond. Of course I agreed. We stopped at a Little Giant to pick up I.P.’s favorite breakfast, two packages of Snowballs and a pair of Pepsis. I bought two five pound bags of sugar.

The thing that interested I.P. the most was that the 10K transmitter was powered by diesel generators because there was no power that far out in the woods. We had powered our 10K in Africa with diesel generators and I.P. wanted to see how these guys did it.

The Lotus navigated the sandy track that led to the Christian station. While I.P. looked things over, I poured the sugar into the diesel fuel tanks. Fuck a bunch of Jim Robertson and the horse he rode in on!

Don hired me back. I took the Lotus in for its new valves and head gasket. It was four weeks before I got it back so I was driving the Green Monster. Ed Christian found me an engineer and while this guy wasn’t a friend like I.P., he was very good.

Big Susan was looking for my sales manager. It was now high summer and the tourists were all over Virginia Beach. Much to my surprise, Heavy Earth applied for the job of doing The Last Contest promos. He walked into the office and began to do the promos ...and, oh yeah. Another Harley for your best friend...

"What do you think, Geoff?"

I gave him the job. I had hired another guy to handle the big production room, Solomon Fox. Fox could also jock, so I had all the headcount I needed. We bought the T.M. sound effects library and all of the movie sound track albums Heavy would need.

I talked Don into a summer Pulse so we were running Phase 2 of The Last Contest. We hired some college kids to knock on doors. "When we come to your door and we ask what radio station you listen to, just answer 'Q-Rock' and \$1,000 could be yours..."

We wouldn't start Phase 1 until the fall book because I had to wait for the production room, the sales team and the voice. The spring ARB was still not out and I was still a nervous wreck.

It was after 7PM, but it was still light outside and I was just driving around, listening to China Boy Davis. He was coming out of a recurrent, Harold Melvin and The Blue Notes. China Boy hit the inward basic, "Q-Rock and the China Boy, 7:36 and 82 out there. In my hot little hand is a \$100 dollar bill. 55Q-Rock is the number. Call now. Loudon and Bowie coming up." China Boy hit the first spot. It was then that I saw her.

I hadn't had the Lotus back for long and it was a pleasure just driving her around close to the beach with the windows down and the radio up. As I passed a large beach house, I saw Penny in the front yard with some other people. I stopped. Penny ran over to me before I could even get out of the Lotus. She gave me a big hug!

"I was stupid. I knew you were working hard. My feelings were hurt. I thought you loved that radio station more than you love me."

"Not true. Want to talk?"

"Yes, come on, let's tell Mom." We walked in to the beach house and there sat Katherine.

"Hello, Ms. Lee." I said.

"Not Lee. I'm using my maiden name now."



"Excuse me. Hello, Ms. Hamilton."

"Oh Momma, Geoff and I are going to talk. I'll see you later."

"Geoff, as you can see, Penny has company!"

"Yes, I noticed. Hello, Schyler." I held my hand out. Schyler didn't take it.

"Hello Mr. Disk Jockey," he sneered.

"Let's see, Schyler, if I remember correctly your family is relatively new to America? I talked to my cousin the other day, Sir Simon de Cliff, and he was telling me your Mother is making some progress breaking in to New York society..."

"That's enough, Geoff. We all know your breeding. Penny can see you tomorrow." Katherine was a bit up in the air. Through Larry Knuckles she knew about my two tours in the "Nam and that I had been practicing the Martial Arts since Military school.

Penny followed me to the car. I thought she was going to say goodbye, but instead she hopped in and said, "Let's go."

"Dead Skunk in the middle of the road", was playing on Q-Rock. I thought that was appropriate.

## CHAPTER 33

# CAVEAT EMPTOR

The spring ARB was out. It echoed the Mediastat. We were pleased.

It was time to take that trip to New York and Chicago and hit the Agencies. Our Rep firm was Eastman, and we set up for the following week. Big Susan and I were going to make the trip, armed with the spring Arbitron, the Mediastat, official Q-Rock t-shirts and coffee cups. We were ready.

God, I hated this part. I had sold advertising from the beginning, but I really did not like it. We were booked in to the Waldorf in New York and the Drake in Chicago. We were throwing a party in each place for our Reps. Penny was going to stay at my place with Sun Tzu while I was gone.

The Friday before Susan and I flew, Penny and I were going to pick up Sun Tzu and go visit Wing Ding. When we walked into the apartment Tzu was waiting for me. At first I thought he was just ready for his brushing and fish cookies, but he was limping. Tzu took hold of my slacks and urged me into my bedroom. I kept my cuff links and other pieces of jewelry in a fairly weighty mahogany box on my dresser. The box was on the floor and stuff was spilled out everywhere. Apparently, he'd tipped it over and couldn't get out of the way fast enough. Sun Tzu limped over and smacked the box with his paw, then looked back at me. Bad, bad box! I couldn't help but laugh.

I brushed Tzu and gave him his treats, then put him in the back seat of the Lotus. With Penny up front, we were off to visit our scene stealing horse. Sun Tzu stayed in the backseat for about two seconds; then he was in my lap wanting to drive.

At the stables Wing Ding and Tzu did their usual thing as that big horse nudged our pockets for his Pepsi. Wing Ding wouldn't drink Coke or any other soft drink; it had to be Pepsi. On the other hand, he would drink any brand of beer. I don't know where he picked up that habit.

Big Susan and I flew to New York. Sunday evening we had a small party for the Eastman sales staff. I gave them a short talk on what Q-Rock was all about. Susan and I handed out Official Q-Rock t-shirts and coffee cups. I also outlined our promotion for the fall book and played a composite aircheck of the station. The aircheck excited the Eastman people. They all wanted a copy. Luckily we had plenty of them. They were reel to reel, but they said that they would think of some way to get this sound in front of their buyers. I also told them how we accomplished the 'sound' of the station.

A woman I had met in Beltsville at ARB headquarters was now working at Eastman. She took me aside that night and told me that the sales people were clueless and did not understand a word of what I had said about the promotion or how we created the 'sound' of Q-Rock.

"When you go to Chicago, just play the aircheck, hand out the t-shirts and take them through the book."

She also told me that the people in Beltsville hated to hear I was coming to go through the diaries with my legal pad and finding every mistake. I threw a fit every time I was there because I always found tons of errors. I thought I knew a good bit about Arbitron's methodology, but after my visit with Jack McCoy last winter, I knew even more.

I explained to her that Jack had given me the name of a young Korean man that worked at Arbitron with the advice that I should get in touch with him. I did, and he walked me through the process Arbitron used to edit diaries. Most of this I already knew. He also disclosed that the "editors" were minimum wage women whose primary language was not English and the turnover was exceedingly high among them. He also gave me a bunch of formulas to use for breaking down the book; how to calculate the efficiency factor—cume divided by quarter hour; time spent listening; etc., and lots more information on how to use Arbitron methodology to our advantage. I realized that actual listening patterns are very different from how diaries are filled out and that gave me better information as to tune rotation.

Monday, the Eastman people walked our butts off as they always do. They hate it when radio folks from the sticks showed up to pitch the accounts personally.

Monday night we flew to Chicago. Tuesday we met up with Don at the Drake. Susan and Don shared a suite and I had a mini suite. The Eastman Sales guys blew us off so we were on our own. The Drake is across the street from the Hancock Center or, as the natives of Chicago called it, The John Handjob.

Our first appointment was at J. Walter Thompson on the 34<sup>th</sup> floor of the Hancock. We were shown to the buyer's office. It was festooned with all sorts of radio kitsch. We handed out a Q-Rock t-shirt and coffee cup and then played the aircheck. We started going through the book and the buyer who looked about 15 years old said, "I thought you told me you were #3 in the market?"

"Yes," I said, "and #1 with 12 to 24s and #2 with 25 to 34s."

"No, you're not. You're 17<sup>th</sup>."

"What? How do figure..." I was up out of my chair. At that point Susan kicked me. Don was trying not to laugh. He received a kick too! Susan broke in with, "How are you reading the book, Ms. Meier?"

"Well, I'm reading from number one down to WQRC, of course." Again, Don started to laugh. Another kick. With all of the calmness, patience and sincerity of a good sales person, Susan said, "Perhaps you're reading it alphabetically? Look over to the next column that reads 12+."

"Oh!"

So it goes. Too many buyers are dumber than stumps. A good sales dude gets past all of that and the buyer is not embarrassed and the station gets the order. In this case we got The Dairy Association account.

## CHAPTER 34

# LET'S GET IT ON

The summer was over and WIDE and Q-Rock were gearing up for the fall book. I had not heard a word from I.P. or Ken. I called the Camden Corp. several times. Ken was never in and could not be reached.

Commander Bob was holding down the over nights, freeing up Heavy Earth to do The Last Contest promos. Susan found a smart young woman at a local agency to be the sales manager. It was a good move, since this new woman knew all of the good sales people. I soon had an all female sales staff. It worked. There are some things women just do better than men; selling advertising is one of them.

The Last Contest was finally sold out. We had flying lessons and a Cessna, a McDonald's hamburger for you and 1,500 of your close friends and so on.

We alerted Chesapeake Bell by calling the local president and we sent a registered letter that we were going to run a phone contest and there could be many calls. Of course, they blew us off; after all, they were the Phone Company.

The Pulse we ran in the summer had us at #1 12+! We had finally caved in WHG's audience. WNFK was no longer a factor. Tidewater's version of WGN, a middle of the road that had been there forever, minted money, and had been #1 12+ was still #1 35+ but not the top dog anymore!

Penny dumped me again and for the same reason. I loved that damn station more than I loved her. Tears and Drama!

The first prize package we gave away was on Right-On's shift during the 5:36 PM set. We took one hundred and four calls, each of them on the air. We took out the Chesapeake area code for two and a half hours.

We immediately began to run both the winners promo and the apology promo.

"Q-Rock will now stop offering the prize packages we were offering. Q-Rock believes those prize packages were simply...too small." The jingle rolls 'Q-Rock' and right into Elton's Saturday Night's All Right for Fighting!

The Arbitron ratings diary is filled out by randomly selected people who log their listening for one week, starting on Thursday and ending on the following Wednesday. Four of these weekly cycles make up a "Book". Since Wednesday is the last day of the diary, it makes sense to give away the big prizes then. Most people neglect to fill out the diary every day, hour by hour, and actually finish filling out the prior days' listening at the last minute.

So if you get their attention on Wednesday, creating impact and impressing the winner at the time nearest to when they'll actually be filling out the diary, your station is top of mind and you get the benefit of 'recall'. "Just listen for that secret phone number. It could come at any moment now!"

After four days of running the winners promo and the 'simply too small' apology, we were back and now running \$15,000 prize packs. The first prize packs were only \$5,000. It was breath taking. We backed up the promotion with \$50,000 of TV spots. When we dropped the big prize pack on the last day of the book, we took out the phones from South Carolina to the District. That's when Ken called.

"Hello, Geoffrey."

"Hello, Ken. I've been trying to call. I've been trying to get I.P. as well."

"We've been down south. It's time now. The book is over and you've done a good job. Don and his partner have decided to sell."

"Sell?"

"Listen. The AM/FM was appraised at \$750,000 a bit over a year ago, now I have an offer for \$2.2 million. It will be a nice payoff for you."

"I'm going to split the money with I.P."

"Whatever you think. I've talked to Don, so he knows what I'm about to tell you. Pack for at least six weeks; mostly suits, two blazers, leather brief case. Don't forget your passport. Oh, you'll need your trench and do you still have that grey cashmere top coat?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then bring it, both Rolexes and the cat. He can stay here. I'll see you for lunch tomorrow at the Middleburg house."

"Where are we going?"

"London. Our plane leaves two days from now at 2:30PM." Ken hung up. Typical.

I had no sooner hung up with Ken when the doorbell rang. It was Don. He gave me a big hug. Here was this tall, lanky 65 year old guy with that loud and boisterous manner, giving me a hug. His eyes were shining with tears. So were mine.

"We had a great run, Don."

"We showed 'em. They made fun of us at first, you know? Fuck 'em."

"A drink?"

"Yeah!"

"Martini or cognac?"

"Cognac."

We talked for awhile and Don told me he'd been diagnosed with colon cancer, but he and big Susan were getting married. I wished him well and gave him another hug. There were more tears.

We said good-bye. I called M.F.; I had been grooming him for P.D. "Ms. Johnson, is M.F. home?"

"No, and I really wish you wouldn't call him that."

"Ms. Johnson, would you tell Melvin that as of now he's the new Program Director?"

The uppity Ms. Johnson was very happy and let me know it was about time. Melvin would let all the people know that I.P. and I were on our way to England.

## CHAPTER 35

# BOBBIES ON BICYCLES TWO BY TWO

Flying first class on British Airways wasn't bad; just long and tiring. "Okay, I.P., give me the rest of the story."

"About down south?"

"Yes."

"I can't. You know Ken."

"Uh huh."

"It was that mega watter in Costa Rica."

"Alright. Now, what about Radio Thames?"

"The new commercial stations are all FMs, and there are only three of them. Ken had all the gear shipped to a recording studio. It's the same processing equipment that we had at Q-Rock. You know, processing gear is illegal on the new stations."

"So EQs, AGCs and Limiters are against the law?"

"Correcto mundo, my good man. It all must be 'pure'." I.P. gave me that half lidded look with twinkling, larcenous green eyes.

"And needle time?"

"You heard the man, old chap; 12 hours of rolling tunes and 12 hours of Public Service. Those fuckers make no sense!"

Customs at Heathrow was no problem. Ken had a Rolls Royce, or a Roller as they call them there, pick us up. I.P. and I were settled at the Conaught. Ken rented himself a large flat in Belgravia, the most expensive area in London.

London was trying to rebuild the river front with all its old buildings.



The goal was to refurbish them to appeal to the upscale yuppies. That's where the studios were, or would be when they were built out. Some work had already been done, much to I.P.'s dismay. He already had an idea of how he was going to do it and he didn't want anyone around so he could sneak his gear in.

It was November in London and it was always cold and rainy but, as I.P. said, we ate well. I finally got in the habit of carrying an umbrella. Even I.P. carried one.

There was a landline from the studios to the transmitter, no microwave allowed. The question was where could we hide the processing? An all-cart music operation flipped out the Brits, but at least that wasn't against the law. We could even use an EQ going from vinyl to cart.

My job was to program the 12 hours we could play tunes and find some jocks. I called my cousin Tony for some advice. For years Tony had hosted a 15 minute show on BBC Radio, *The Top of The Pops*. A fifteen minute show? Un-fucking-believable!

One of the odd things about non-needle time was it didn't have to be Political shows or documentaries on hippopotamuses or whatever. It could be comedy or strange and interesting interviews, or whatever. Now I began to think this over; if I.P. could hide his processing gear, maybe I could hide my rock station in plain sight!

We didn't see much of Ken this first week; one never knew what that man was up to. You just held on and hoped for the best.

The labor laws were weird and the unions were so strong that bam, the engineers were gone at 4:30 in the afternoon. Exactly. That's when we went in and did some sneaking around on the build out.

We met Tony at the Conaught. He suggested his club for dinner. He had brought another cousin, Lord Geoffrey Graehme Barclay de Cliff, the 28<sup>th</sup> Earl of Cliffshire. After we talked about having the same name and catching up on the family in the colonies, Lord Geoffrey told us to call him Puffy. Puffy was so excited about the "American" cousin, he called yet another family member, his oldest son, The Viscount Geoffrey de Cliff. How many Geoffreys can you have?

"I say, old boy, that just won't do," I mocked I.P. So he changed from

his jeans to a suit. Lord Geoffrey arrived in an ancient Daimler with a chauffeur, and off we went to Sir Anthony's club.

Smoked trout, beef Wellington, a good Montrachet followed by decent claret put us in a warm, slightly woozy state. We retired to a corner of the sitting room. All of the family wanted to know what we were doing in Merry Olde England, so we told them. The young Viscount Geoffrey was overly boisterous; he was asked to please be quieter.

Tony called for a pen and paper and began to write down names of radio performers that I might be interested in for Radio Thames. Like the union stations in the states, jocks were not allowed to touch the gear. A union engineer had to do that. The concept of 'no dead air' was a new one for the Brits.

I explained subliminal irritation and research methodology. Only Tony was really interested, especially regarding the two programming rules:

The methodology that measures your audience structures the station format;

The demographics and psychographics of the target audience dictate content.

"Upon my word," said the old Earl, "I had no idea that just talking on the radio was so complicated. Exactly what is a psychographic, old boy?"

After I had bored the 'old boy' to death, he ordered all of us a brandy. The Viscount left as hastily as he could, but politely. Tony was fascinated and kept asking questions. He asked us to lunch most every day after that, still asking questions. I knew that our competitor, Radio Capitol, had made him an offer, but he was very interested in what I.P. and I were up to so he didn't accept it.

After the carpenters were done in the studios, I.P. installed all of the gear—legal and illegal, so we could test the candidates and rehearse the keepers. The engineers weren't used to paying close attention. The concept of 'if it's not EXACTLY right, then it's wrong' annoyed them. Most of them didn't want any part of the yanks. We were too picky. Tony loved it and kept sending us people.

One of the people Tony sent was a man named Stuart. His main source of income was selling walking sticks; he also appeared on the BBC doing

'interviews' with people that may or may not have been real or alive. Often he did both voices in the interviews and did his own comic writing. Stuart was hilarious. I was beginning to see how to deal with non-needle time.

When you least expect it, Ken shows up. Tony, I.P. and I were sitting around our room in the Conaught, talking about, what else, radio. "Mr. Camden, may I present my cousin, Sir Anthony de Cliff? Sir Anthony, my Boss."

"Very good to finally meet you," Tony said. "I've heard so much about you and, of course, I know your family or at least The Baronet, Lord Camden."

Hands were shaken; Ken said all the right things and knew just what to do. He has beautiful manners when he tries. Tony continued, "I was about to invite your young protégés for a weekend at the country house. We would be honored if you also accepted."

"I would be happy to. Do we dress for dinner?"

"But certainly."

"I.P.?"

"I'll bring it!"

Then Tony said, "You know, we don't own the manor any more," referring to the country house. "The government has taken it over as an Historical Site. I believe that's what the Americans call it. We call it high taxes. Oh, we still live there, but it's not really the same."

Ken asked, "Did I interrupt anything?"

"Not at all, old man. I'm learning more about competitive radio than I had thought possible. Caesar's ghost! I had no idea. You gentlemen do go at it."

Come the weekend, we piled into the two Rollers and headed to Cliffshire.

Sir Anthony said, "You know, Puffy has no interests except horses and pigs. He raises prize winning pigs. Expect much talk of animals at dinner."

Driving up, there was a quarter mile of yew trees lining the driveway; gardens that stretched away as far as we could see and in the distance we saw a trout stream.

When we pulled up in front of 'the country house' I.P. was struck dumb.

“Goddamn. What the fuck...Over?”

There were four stories on the main house and three stories on the wings. There were battlements, balustrades and gables. I thought, “When was this pile built? It had to be the 17<sup>th</sup> century!”

Three young men greeted us and unloaded our luggage. As Tony walked through the front door, he said, “Battles, this young man is my American cousin. Settle his things in the suite with the southern view. These other gentlemen are also our guests. Make sure they are comfortable.” Turning to us, Tony added, “Shall we retire to the library?”

And it was a library! It looked like a movie set; even Ken was impressed.

“Have a seat, gentlemen,” Tony said as he pulled on a dangling red satin cloth with the de Cliff coat of arms and a gold tassel. In seconds Battles entered.

“Sir?”

“What will it be, fellows. I think we have most anything. A sherry, cousin?”

“Very dry,” I answered. I was doing my best to fit in, but all of us were Texans and radio people. I.P. and Ken ordered a half pint of ale.

Tony began, “Gents, I really want to be a part of this. I’ve always loved radio, much to my parents’ chagrin. I might even be of some help. I’m relatively well connected at Whitehall. It sounds to me as if you fellows will do most anything to win, am I right?”

Ken responded, “Tony, do you think you could stick to the format? More precisely, can you get the other announcers and engineers to cooperate?”

“The real answer is I don’t know, but I can do my best.” So we toasted him and his new position!

Since I ride, Puffy and I got along fine. Thank God, he did not organize a fox hunt! Sir Anthony had invited several other guests. Dinner was both amusing and scary. I never knew what I.P. would do. Neither did anyone else at table, but some how or another, I.P. became a favorite with the ladies.

Tony, Ken, I.P. and I spent much of our time talking about American radio and why it works. We also got some insight into the British psyche and how to adapt our methods to kick ass in London.

ARB ran audience research in England, but there was also a Brit firm that put out a book. The Brit book used much the same methodology as Pulse.

In the third week of November, that old Country House was cold. Now I know why they wear all of those clothes. Even if you love a fireplace, there's nothing like good American heat pumps! After dinner and over a decent Port, Tony brought up the idea of a weekend trip to Paris.

"Lads, have you ever experienced Maxim's?" All but Ken answered in the negative. I had been in Paris, but only for a day, when I was in the Navy. I knew Maxim's was in The Ritz hotel and had heard of it for years. It was legendary. I had never really explored the left bank or taken one of the tour boats down the Seine. I definitely wanted to see the Louvre.

"Well," Tony said, "there's a lot to see. Shall we?" Without waiting for an answer, Sir Anthony continued, "Puffy, old man, can we have the use of your pied a terre this coming weekend? Chaps, it's a fine location, just off the Champs Elysee."

So it was agreed that we would take the ferry and Tony's Roller!

When we arrived back at the Conaught that evening, the concierge motioned me over and handed me a pink envelope. I had been receiving these Hallmark cards from Penny since the last time she dumped me. Her Grandfather had decided that I was a cradle robbing ne'er do well. His daughter, Katherine, approved of me, but he did not. I think it was mostly the fact that I had been accepted by Virginia Society so quickly and he and his wife had been trying for years. This branch of the Hamiltons was 'new money' which means they didn't make their fortune Ante Bellum. The last time Penny dumped me, it was the same as every other time. There was much crying, waving her hands about and other signs of emotional distress.

As I started through the lobby there was a tap on my shoulder. Penny said, "Hi handsome." There was nothing for it. She had flown over and was staying at The Savoy. Quite the little detective. I knew that another scene was imminent and I didn't want it to happen here. I told her I had loads of work and wouldn't have that much time. Penny replied that she would love to help. I'm thinking, "Yeah, catch a plane to the States," but I said, "Great!" My head is yelling "Help!"

“The best help you can be right now is to wait for me at your hotel, OK?”

I wrote the format guide for the 12 hours during which we could roll the tunes. I thought Tony would make a good P.D. or, as they say in London, Managing Director of Programming. Ken agreed and I started our mutual education.

Tony and I went through the research methodology of the local ratings outfit. As I said, it wasn't that different from Pulse. We just had to be careful to keep our promotions between the lines. The Government really expected us to play nice. Sir Anthony was tickled with the intensity with which we played the game. Take no prisoners!

We hired Walking Stick Stuart for 7 to 9AM., what we called morning drive; however, London didn't start to work until about 10AM. Time is not as important in England as it is at home.

I instructed Stuart to interview as many rock stars as possible; that way we could play music and not have it count against the station's needle time. I also explained the need to have memorable names, such as Walking Stick Stuart. I thought Tony should do afternoons from 3 to 7PM. Tony had never done a show longer than 15 minutes. At first he was appalled; he gradually became comfortable with the idea.

We really went to work trying to find some other jocks. Tony knew a few fellows from the BBC; he also knew some of the guys that had worked the Pirate stations. I.P. was mostly not around. He was doing most of his work at night without any help, not even mine.

Penny, on the other hand was right there all of the time. She'd brought a gift package. One of the gifts was raspberry douche, a favorite flavor. She liked lubrication by tongue. Her pussy was small. The outside labia could barely contain the inner lips. On each side of her vagina, there were at least 4 folds. Penny liked to watch with a mirror as her inner folds slowly opened to my tongue. Often she would cum once or twice before I entered her. When I did fill her with my penis, all I had to do was take a nipple in my mouth and she would flood. Then I let her set the pace...if I could hold back that long.

“You know why I always come back to you Geoff?”

“No, Penny. It confuses me.”

“You're the only one that makes me feel this way.”

## CHAPTER 36

# THE CITY OF LIGHTS

French drivers are not to be toyed with. It's a damn good thing that Puffy and his ancient Daimler decided to come with us at the last minute. Ken amused Puffy with tales of travel and the old Radio Caroline days as we made our way to our quarters.

Puffy's pied-a-terre turned out to have eight guest suites, 12 foot ceilings and French doors everywhere. Each room had an incredible view. Penny and I shared a suite. As big a pest as she could be, I did enjoy her on this trip.

The game room had a snooker table. I don't even play pool, so you can imagine my confusion at snooker. Ken and Penny were the only Americans that were any good. The game room also had card tables. I learned in college that cards were also not my game. I avoided the game room except when port or Armagnac was served. The dinners were exquisite. Right bank, left bank, local brasseries or 4 stars, it was all good.

We did all of the usual things, the boat tour, Eiffel tower, Notre Dame and the Louvre. I think Tony and Puffy felt compelled to show us all of the tourist stuff.

We even drove out to Louis the XIV's pile, Versailles. It's huge, has gild and furniture everywhere; huge gardens—it's the most beautiful edifice I've ever seen. We saw several Cathedrals and other must see things outside of central Paris. The four days flew by, except for the last one.

"Let's stay and be married here in Paris. Wouldn't that be romantic?"

"Penny, as much as I love you, this really is a working trip and the money is important to me. I have a cat to raise."

"Now you're teasing me. You don't need money. I can have two or three million dollars transferred into your account today and we can honeymoon as long as we want! Huh?"

"For Christ sake, you know Grandfather Hamilton hates me!"

"Not if we were married. You know he's just jealous of the de Cliff name."

"Yeah, and he thinks I'm after your money. Pen, the time is just not right."

Hysterics ensued. Crying and foot stomping were followed by an immediate flight back to the States—and frankly, great relief on my part.

Sir Anthony, I.P. and I got to work. We hired a staff and tried to pair up the right jock with a compatible engineer. I.P. rigged it up so the engineer and the jock could hear the product through their Koss headsets, just as it would sound off the air.

The jock-engineer teams were flipped out. They had never heard anything like it. They were also amused that we called what they created in the control room 'a product'. What they did not understand was that they really did create 'a product' when on the air! It had never occurred to them that they were in fact manufacturing a product by the second.

This was a new way for them to think about radio. They found it strange that we took it so seriously. We practiced and practiced until they finally began to get it. It was as tight as a Nun's business, and there was nothing like it in London.

During needle time we did quarter hour maintenance, just like in the States. We gave away Rock'n London t-shirts. Under the slogan we put 'Radio Thames' and the frequency. We had thousands of those t-shirts printed up. We also offered 100 pound notes and 1,000 pounds. At the same time, we promoted, "If some one comes to your door and asks you what radio station you listen to, just answer Radio Thames and you could win 1,000 pounds". We had some 30 people out knocking on doors. We changed neighborhoods daily, and we always gave them something even if they didn't answer correctly, usually a t-shirt. We worked the East End hard and we stayed away from high-end neighborhoods; they were too snooty.



Our first visit from the government came the first day we were on the air. We got a lecture on hyping the ratings. We reminded them that no ratings were being held at this time.

“Okay, then why is Radio Thames louder and better sounding than the other two commercial FMs?” I.P. took them on a tour of the transmitter site. These guys were not engineers and everything looked alright to them. We received nearly daily inspections. Fleet Street had a field day with Radio Thames. You couldn’t buy publicity like this. Rock’n London.

When the ratings started we were asked to stop promoting the station. We reminded them that we did this year around so it wasn’t hyping the ratings. That confused them and they left.

We found out, finally, that some very powerful people owned the other two stations. There were yet more commercial stations coming and the owners and operators of the existing facilities and those that were to come could not figure out how to compete. These guys were all tied to the government and they kept the pressure on Whitehall to harass us.

They also did what operators do when they’re not very good at their jobs; they threw money at the problem. It finally worked, sort of. They hired one of our jocks, but not his engineer. They couldn’t understand why that didn’t work.

I don’t have to tell you we raised a firestorm of protest from not only the other privately owned stations, but the BBC threw a fit. The result was new anti-hyping laws. In other words, the Yanks had stomped a mud hole in the BBC’s monopoly.

They finally caught Radio Thames, but it took almost six months for them to figure it out and we were long gone by then. The government allowed only one little limiter per channel on our stereo FM. This was not acceptable, so I.P. wired around things and hid the processing equipment under the floor. The approved gear was in the rack as it should be. When they checked the wiring, the little limiter read correctly. When they put the oscilloscope on the signal coming out of the approved gear, it read correctly. But when you punched Radio Thames up in the car, it blew everything on the dial into oblivion. Something was not right; the Yanks were putting it over on them again! We beat the pants off the BBC.

We went home eventually, but they did not find I.P.’s hidden

processing until after the second book. Radio Thames smoked Radio Capitol and the other competitors including the BBC. Even with that wimpy 'pure' sound, Radio Thames kept winning. Cousin Sir Anthony got it!

## CHAPTER 37

# HOMeward BOUND

Once we were back in the states, Ken did not have a project for me so I packed up the Lotus with Sun Tzu, some clothes and my Q-Rock check and rolled toward Dallas. I gave the round waterbed to Penny; sold other stuff, and I shipped everything else. I got home two days before the New Year.

I sent I.P. a birthday present. He was aging; in two days he would be 23.

Jane Anne Cliff was welcoming as always. She had several questions like “Why weren’t you here for Christmas?” Or, “Are you staying for New Years?” Mom always had a question or two.

Tzu and I stayed a few days at the little frame house Dad would never admit was a mistake. A couple of days after the New Year, the two of us moved into The Marriot. Mother really didn’t like cats, especially Sun Tzu. In fact, Tzu didn’t like her either; he would get in front of her door and growl viciously. I think Sun Tzu was the only person of whom she was afraid.

I called Sean Grabowski to wish him Happy Holidays only to find out that he needed some help with his FM. Sean had been running a true Progressive station. The jocks played whatever tunes they felt like. The logs weren’t clustered and the P.D. was clueless as to ARB methodology. Sean really hadn’t had to pay any attention to his FM because for a few years he had no competition and he was minting money.

Then another local FM changed its format to a well done AOR. Both

of these FMs were Class Cs, 100K and 1,500 feet. They split the audience and Sean's numbers were cut in half in one week. Worse, his revenues had gone to hell. He asked me to come in and talk it over.

On January 5<sup>th</sup>, I'm sitting in the reception area, waiting for Sean to come in. I was a bit early; it was 8:30AM. Another year had passed. It was 1974 and I had been on the road for 3 years with I.P. I was tired, but Sean was an old pal, so there I was in a blue 3-piece suit and the leather briefcase waiting to hear the story of yet another ailing radio station. I was thinking, for the hundredth time, that six months is a rock and roll lifetime.

It was then that she walked in. Oh man, did she ever! Almost 6 feet tall, red wavy hair almost to her butt, and it was an excellent butt. She obviously owned the place, strong features tilted slightly up. Like a Queen, a beautiful Queen, she marched over to the front desk and exchanged a few words with the receptionist, then turned and left. She hadn't even noticed me. You would think she would have noticed a guy with his chin on the floor.

Sean came in and we walked up to his office. He did pay attention to his AM and it was doing extremely well. It was the 50K that Ken had been building back when I.P. and I were doing KBYU. But Sean had gotten caught not paying attention when Belo hired a couple of guys from Detroit to run their FM.

Sean gave me a rundown on what I had to work with in terms of his FM. He gave me a thumb nail sketch of the air staff. When he got to afternoon drive, he just shook his head. "Geoff, the number one rock jock in town is our music director. She is also the afternoon driver and she's a feminist bitch!" I knew who it was immediately. I told Sean that certainly I would help, but let me do some research and some listening before we decided how to act.

Several things were going on; some I knew about and others I didn't. I knew Bart McLendon was supposed to be running KNUS, a CHR. Bart was one year behind me at Military School and I wanted to beat him. What I didn't know was that Craig Melinowski was his Chief Engineer. I thought it was still Gordon's Chief. Craig was a genius and although KNUS was a Class B, it still covered Dallas and was the best sounding FM in the market. I wasn't worried about it and should have been.

I knew or thought I knew that I could at least equal the audio with Sean's Class C FM. Something else I didn't know was that both Sean's FM and Belo's FM were built by the same guy and this guy sat on both Company Boards.

I also didn't know that Ken had hired Sean's Chief, Rob Shoat, from El Paso. I groaned. Ken can't hear and he and Rob were good friends. That meant no matter what, I could never get rid of Rob. Fuck!

Sun Tzu and I moved into the Lexington Hotel. The Lexington's slogan was 'A day or a Lifetime'. I thought we would stay there until we found a decent apartment. It had a kitchen, a bedroom and a sitting area. Tzu was happy enough, so we spent several days there, just listening up and down the radio dial. We also drove the signals. I needed to know what we were up against.

Sean's FM, KFM, didn't cover north Dallas and that's where the AOR audience was! OK. KNUS didn't cover Ft. Worth very well. Sean's competition covered both Dallas and Ft. Worth, but their audio sucked. What to do, that was the question.

I continued to listen. The redheaded woman was good, really good. A big smokey voice, better than Allison Steele in New York. The redhead's air name was Lady Jane. Her real name was Clancey Santina Maria Theresa Roselli. She was half Italian and half Irish. No wonder Sean was scared of her.

One night when I was listening, the KFM overnight guy started to cry! He began pleading on the air with his lover Bruce not to leave him. This went on for at least 30 minutes until I could get there. I called Grabowski to alert him and get him to call someone to take over. I also told Sean that I was on my way to get this loony off the air.

I got there, sent loony home and took over the controls. I'd never done Progressive or AOR, but what the fuck, at least I wasn't going to cry. In less than an hour, the redhead walks in, "You are really bad at this!" Apparently, Sean called Clancey to come in and take over.

"Well, I've never done this before. It's a new format for me. I've put two AORs on the air, but I never rolled the tunes."

"What do you do, then?"

"I'm a consultant."

“Oh, are you? Get up and let me fix this. Where’s Howard?”

“Was he the overnight guy? I sent him home to make up with Bruce.”

When Lady Jane came in to cover, she brought her boy friend, Chuck U. Farley, or something like that. She had him all dressed up with one of those little boy purses and one of those embroidered denim shirts. She was in jeans and a blue silk shirt. God, she was beautiful!

“Okay, Mr. Consultant. I think we can take it from here. Bye, bye.”

## CHAPTER 38

# JUST A CUBAN CRIME OF PASSION, ANEJO AND KNIVES A SLASH'N

This one just didn't feel right. At first I thought I would go straight up against the Detroit boys, but then again, I had driven the signal. Remember what Gordon McLendon said, "All other things being equal, he who has the best signal wins." You can't win if you don't have the signal!

I.P. had warned me about the gear and the signal. I really didn't get it at first. KLM had beautiful equipment, boards with slide attenuators, two production rooms, Orban EQs, etc. The thing that bothered me most and ate at the back of my mind was the Dorrrough processing.

The other things I had been warned about were the Consulting Engineer who sat on both Boards, and Rob Shoaat. Shoaat was an AM Engineer Ken had worked with in El Paso; FM was not his forte!

Even knowing this about the engineering, I still considered formatting the big records with the little holes. I would have still gone all-cart, but I didn't know the worst yet! I tried to talk to Sean's P.D., a guy that called himself Gandalf. Gandalf, for Christ's sake! Why not Frodo or Sam Gamgee? Anyway, I tried to talk to him about the ARB. This guy had a degree in Mass Communications, but was clueless about research methodology—a P.D. that couldn't read the Book. Okay, I thought, I'll teach him the methodology. The connection between ARB methodology and the success of his station was something Gandalf had yet to grasp.

Then I tried the Music Director. Lady Jane was not only the top rock jock, almost a legend in the market; she was smart. My thinking was to fire that moron of a P.D. and put Lady Jane in that position. She had no problem understanding the ARB, but using the methodology to raise the numbers of the station seemed like cheating to her. For fuck's sake! Then I brought up the subject of music research. I even put in phone lines and taught the statistics of call out research.

Lady Jane refused that as well. She told me that as Music Director, her job was to know what people wanted hear and she did that very well, thank you! So Lady Jane, real name Clancey Santina Maria Theresa Roselli, blew me off. There was no one else on staff smart enough to sit in the P.D. seat.

I had been at KFM just over a week and I had to re-think my approach. I still didn't feel right about the station. The damn thing felt like a lizard to me. I wasn't going to bring in The Traveling Salvation Show. I didn't want my guys stranded in Dallas. I knew I was burned-out and as soon as I had done the best I could for Grabowski, I was going to take time off, probably in the Caribbean.

The Hallmark cards from Penelope Pricilla Hamilton Lee began to arrive again. The AM P.D.'s secretary stopped me in the hallway and asked me why I hadn't asked her out yet. One of the saleswomen, Julie McKinnon, asked me to watch some pornographic movies with her. A long tall girl that worked in AM traffic wanted to show me Dallas.

The CBS record hyper wanted to know me better and offered to have me visit her apartment and meet her neighbor because they liked to 'rodeo'. She went on to say that her neighbor had an interesting pet—a sloth. Sloths were very slow but you had to be careful because if they did bite you, you were really bitten! The neighbor had hung a rope across her living room ceiling that her pet sloth liked to hang out on.

While I was trying to decide what to do with KFM, I thought some distraction might be in order. For some reason Sean, Ken and I.P. had come to believe I was a ladies man. I've never understood this conclusion. I don't seek out the attention; it just happens to me. Sean told me the first day I was there to keep my wick out of company ink.

I took it that 'company ink' meant the FM staff, so when the AM



P.D.'s secretary asked me out I figured it would be OK. She was one of those rawboned country girls. She didn't make any moves and I politely took her home.

The long tall traffic girl was sexy with dark hair and legs up to here. She showed me around Dallas then invited me in for a nightcap. She said, "You might like what you see." I told her that Sean asked me not to date, or anything else, his employees. Did that ever piss her off! My God, I was lucky to get out of that apartment alive. She hated me the whole time I was at KF'M; she even filed a sexual harassment complaint against me.

Julie, the sales woman with the porno movies, suggested it would be best to watch them where I lived. I said that would be fine. Apparently I didn't get it, so I invited Sean and six or seven other people to come see Julie's movies. (Have I mentioned women always know more about sex than we do? Or maybe it's just me?) When Julie heard that I had invited other people she caught me in the hallway at KF'M and elbowed me, "Stupid! That was just for us. I want to fuck your brains out. Get it right next time!" The next time was the next week.

I went to Sean and told him that because of the signal problems that we should go up against KNUS. At least they were a Class B and in the TSA we might have a better shot at overall numbers. Sean and I both thought about it.

In the meantime I learned that our antenna was mounted on the wrong side of the stick. No wonder we didn't cover the northern part of the market. We were blowing major signal west over Ft. Worth and south over Waco. There was not a soul that wanted to hear this from me. Rob Shoat, the chief, just blew me off.

"Oh Geoff, that doesn't make any difference," he said. The old fart that was our consulting engineer actually ordered me out of his office. I told all of this to Sean. The studio equipment rolled off at 7KC. There was no way we could compete. I didn't know whether to shit or go blind. So Sean went to the owner and reported all that I had learned. Well, the owner didn't care. The AM was making tons of money and he could care less about the F'M.

We finally decided to do a modified Q; that is to say, a CHR. I went over and talked with Bill Meeks at PAMs. My intention was to just cut one

basic; I should have cut the inward basics as we did at Q-Rock but I didn't. I've already mentioned that this one didn't feel good.

I hired some jocks that I didn't owe, mostly guys from a Kansas City FM that had originally been programmed by George Wilson. I rented some rooms at the Marriot as crash pads for these guys. The first one to arrive was Garza Bob.

Julie invited me over to her house to show me what she had meant to do the first time she offered porno movies. I got Garza Bob started on dubbing tunes to cart and Julie picked me up at 8PM. At her house, she started taking her clothes off before the door was shut. She picked up the phone and called her Mother, all the while she had two fingers gently rubbing her clit. She asked her Mother to keep her son overnight, something had come up.

"Come over here," she said and unzipped me. When I was undressed, she took one hand and pulled me down over her and pulled me in to her. She had a great body. Her only flaw, if you could call it that, was her gapped teeth. Julie reminded me of Chaucer's lusty Nun. "Now I'm going to show you something." She reached into her nightstand and handed me a small jar. She turned over onto her knees. "Lubricate me easy." I began to do as I was told.

"Not there. The other one." I'd never had anal sex before. Julie seemed to like it, but that was the last time I saw her.

The next morning I checked Garza Bob's work. Not one of the dubbed songs was up to par. I tried to dub a tune and I had the same result.

L.P. was nowhere to be found. I couldn't find Ken either. I called Rob Shoat. He told me it sounded fine to him. I called Jack Williams and asked him to fly in and give me an overview of my studios. He flew in and looked things over. He too blew me off. He told me that his gear wouldn't help me and "Do you have my check for the consulting?"

The other jocks began to show up. I gave them a week to find apartments. A week in the Marriot was a good crash pad.

Late at night I was training the new jocks. The truth was they didn't need much training. George Wilson knew what he was doing and he'd trained these guys well. I began to feel sorry I had gotten them into this mess.

I told Sean we would be ready in a week. Then a strange thing happened. The beautiful Clancey Santana asked me out for coffee.

"Let me play you some album cuts. I want you to hear the right songs," she said.

"I would like that very much. Do you have any smoke? I haven't had a joint since I got here."

Clancey said she might could dig up a joint or two. We met that evening at The Lexington. She brought some tunes and some high test roach dope. We smoked the joint and she played me the tunes. Sun Tzu was purring. He approved. I was laying on the couch and she was sitting on the floor playing the LPs. I asked her if she preferred Clancey or Lady Jane. She told me Clancey was her name.

On impulse, I leaned over and kissed her. Then something happened that had never happened to me before. Bells rang, rockets went off and that kiss lasted forever! When the kiss finally ended, I asked, "Did that just happen to you, too?"

Without hesitation, she answered, "Yes!" The night in The Lexington passed all too quickly. A day or a lifetime!

## CHAPTER 39

# SHE WENT TO WOODSTOCK; I WENT TO VIETNAM

I arrived at the office the next morning at 8:30. Sean caught me in the hallway just in front of his office. "Okay, Geoff. Where is she?"

"Where's who, Sean?"

"Don't bullshit me. Her boyfriend has been calling me and everybody else all night. Now where is she?"

"On her way home, I imagine."

"I warned you about her." Sean sat down heavily in his chair and slapped his hand to his head. "It'll be a lawsuit! Aw, shit."

"Sean, be easy. I'm going to move in with her tomorrow. She is throwing her boyfriend out right now. Then I'm going to marry her."

"Are you completely crazy? You? Marrying? That redheaded tall piece of trouble?"

"Done deal, Sean. I asked her last night."

"Geoff, does she know you are going to fire her and all of her friends in two days?"

"Nope. That would be unprofessional."

"Oh, shit!"

I moved in with Clancey the next day. Sun Tzu and Clancey's cat, Macho, took a bit of adjustment, but they finally worked it out with only a small pissing contest. Her apartment was just off Oak Lawn. That area was becoming the hip, gay area of Dallas. Clancey did the place in red and black. She had as many books as I did.

I told her I needed some down time after being on the road for years. I had planned on the Caribbean. She agreed. We talked about our honeymoon to come and I promised her a year long honeymoon by the ocean.

That evening Clancey came home with an armful of books on the Caribbean, navigation and scuba diving. Clancey made pasta with her own special sauce and she served Annie Greenspring Berry Frost wine. She didn't know about my love affair with good wines, so I said nothing about the fizzy sweet wine. There would be time for that.

After dinner, we were feeling mellow and close to each other. Clancey had a long, banana shaped bean bag lounging chair where we cuddled together. We started telling stories about how we got into radio.

Clancey started DXing when she was twelve, sitting in her father's car at night in upstate New York, listening to WLS, WBZ, WABC and WKBW. She never imagined that she could be part of the magic that came out of the box; it just thrilled her to listen. After her junior year in high school she was looking for a summer job and went to Snelling & Snelling, an employment agency, telling them she had just graduated and was looking for full time work.

They told her of a job writing copy for the local Top40 station, WENE. (Their basic jingle was 'Wonderful Wee-Nee'.) She took the job and that was it—she was hooked. During the summer, she wrote copy, hung around the production room, learned what the buttons did, recorded her first commercial and then had a turn at a weekend shift. The PD should have known she wasn't ready for on-air and he took her off in about an hour, but she was hooked. She spent her four years of college at the campus radio station.

I told her about when my father moved us to Dallas when I was thirteen. My sister L'arris and I were doing the dishes and she turned on the radio and asked me if I'd ever heard this and tuned over to KLIF. Sexy Remy Miller was spinning "Charlie Brown" followed by an amazing jingle—"K-L-I-F—eleven ninety; ninety—nine, oh". I listened raptly until he finished his afternoon drive shift and I was now hooked on Rock and Roll radio.

I also listened to the other Top 40 station in the market, KBOX. At

fourteen years old in my first car I found one place in Dallas where I could pick up KTSA in San Antonio. But I couldn't pick up the third station in McLendon's Golden Triangle—KILT in Houston.

We talked most of the night. Clancey told me about her 'radicalization' in college and her trip to Woodstock. She was proud of the fact that she had an FBI file as a result of marching against George Wallace. She told me how exhilarating it was to stay up for four days, producing issue after updated issue of *The Iconoclast*, the university paper, when the campus was taken hostage by anti-war protesters.

I was very hesitant, but I knew that I had to fess up that I had been in Vietnam. I wasn't just in Vietnam; I led an F.O.D. team. Clancey wanted to know what that was so I told her Explosive Ordinance Disposal. I confessed that I had 32 personal kills. Her tears rolled right down her cheeks and so did mine. If we were going to make it, she had to know this about me.

Clancey was not hostile like the people who spit at me when I returned to the states, but I knew she could not understand what the role I played did to me. She gave me a long hug and told me how awful that must have been. She was right.

I told her that I set up ambushes on the so called Ho Chi Min Trail, and blew up fifteen and sixteen year old boys; then searched their bodies for intel. I explained that I thought I was doing my duty, but you are just never the same again. You are changed for life. She held me tightly, all through that night.

I never said another word about her being in Woodstock. I thought about it, but I could never hold it against her. It was my problem. Despite these differences, we shared the deep understanding that we were kindred souls and our love for radio was the bond. Eventually we retired to Clancey's waterbed and did what newlyweds do.

The next day I came home with a Hallmark card announcing Penny's imminent arrival. I had to explain to Clancey about Penny. This did not go down well, even though I explained that Penny would go nuts yet again and be gone in three weeks. Still, Clancey was smoldering. She asked, "Why three weeks? Why not tell her to go home now? Why not tell her not to come at all?"

Then I.P. called with more bad news. He let me in on the reason that the boards in every studio rolled off at 7KC—every one of them was a piece of shit! That meant every board in the FM spaces needed to be rebuilt and that was not going to happen. The rest of the joy was that was when I learned it was not Mr. Callahan engineering KNUS, it was Craig. It was time for the joy song. *‘How much joy can one man have? Doo dah, motherfucking doo dah!’*

I couldn’t win with KFM no matter what I did. I’d found the woman that I wanted to spend my life with and I was about to fire her. Penny was showing up again. And I’d promised Sean that I would see him through the book. Fuck stick!

Sean had called a staff meeting for Monday morning. The FM jocks were all told the meeting was to go over the interim format. But when everyone was assembled, Sean in his delicate way, started with “I’ve got some good news and some bad news.”

I was sitting across the room from Clancey. She was giving me loving looks. Then Sean continued. “The good news is that we’re changing formats at midnight tonight. We’re going CHR. Now the bad news is you are all fired and here are your final checks.” Sean stood up and began handing out checks. “Wait, I forgot. I have more good news. We’re going to tear up your non-compete contracts.”

Clancey was now shooting daggers at me. I thought quickly and said, “I want to see Lady Jane in my office. Now, please.”

Sitting in my office with her arms tightly folded across her chest, Clancey was tight jawed and very quiet. I told her nothing had changed between us. “I really couldn’t tell you about this before today. But I did tell you about Penelope. Please understand. I want to go on with our plans.”

“Give me your phone”, she said angrily. I handed it over. She called the competition. “Eye, I’ve just been fired and I need a job.” She listened for a few seconds, then, “Is tomorrow soon enough?” She hung up.

Clancey turned to me with glistening eyes, “I want to go home...and you’d better get rid of that rich bitch and I mean now!” We went home together. It was a quiet, long ride. I still didn’t know what she was thinking. My heart was full of dread. I worried if she wondered if any of what was going on with us was real.

Things eventually got better. Penny came and went, just like all the other times. While we were waiting for the end of the book, Clancey got her PAID card. We bought new diving gear, sold the Lotus and saved every dime. We kept Clancey's Gremlin. We had decided to drive to Miami to catch the plane to San Juan. We would sell the Gremlin in Miami. Along the way we would see New Orleans. Clance had never seen the Mississippi or tasted gumbo or fried oysters. Yes, the plan was still in place.

Two days later, we had the wedding. She didn't like diamonds, so for a wedding ring I called our old Rolex connection and found a Victorian round cut 3.5 carat ruby. I had it mounted. She loved it.

We'd decided to not tell our parents about the marriage yet, because both sets would have been incredible hassles. Clance's people were Catholic and would have insisted on a church wedding. Jane Anne would have wanted something traditional. And we just wanted to run off.

The ARB couldn't end soon enough. At the earliest possible day, we left Dallas and KFM behind.

As I said, Clancey had never tasted gumbo, so we stopped at Thibodaux, Louisiana. She loved it! That girl knew how to enjoy good food and would try anything; another reason I loved her—she was fearless.

We had to go over the Mississippi Bridge two times before she was satisfied. She insisted that we stay on Highway 90, not the interstate, so she could be as close as possible to the water.

We stopped in Biloxi and ate fried oysters. She loved those as well. We stopped in the Keys at Key Largo and went to Pennekamp State Park for Clancey's first ocean dive. She was a natural. We spent a week at a cabin at Pennekamp. Macho and Sun Tzu became tom cats that week and prowled every night.



## CHAPTER 40

# LIVIN' IN ¾ TIME

We flew across to Puerto Rico, rented a car and drove to Boqueron, a little town on the Mona Passage on the south west corner of the island. From our study of the area, we found Boqueron.

Then we found a small two bedroom house sitting on an acre and a half. The house was about 300 yards from the beach and 2 blocks from Nori's King of the Sea restaurant. Nori's restaurant sat next to what the natives and the expats called The Triangulo. It was where three roads came together—the center of town. Boqueron was one of those little resorts only the Puerto Ricans knew about. The expats just stumbled on to it and fell in love with the place.

We were suspect with the expatriot community right away. They numbered about 30, and had come from all over the States. With our money, they thought we had to be Company or some other law enforcement. I was 29 and Clance was about to turn 27. People our age did not have brand new diving gear, nor are they shopping for a boat. Our other sin was that we dressed too well.

Our little house was on a dirt lane that turned off the beach road and wound up a small hill. On the beach side were four houses; the first two were attractive homes occupied by our landlord's family. Our place was next, then another very nice home where the dirt lane came to a dead end. Across from us was another house that was a mirror image of the small home Clancey and I leased. We only wanted to lease the place for a year, but the landlord would only lease for two years. Clance and I talked it over and thought what the hell; we could always sublease if we had to.

Our neighbors were an interesting bunch; a couple of Californians, Chris and Marilyn, lived next door, in the nice home at the dead end. The road ended at a huge mango tree. Chris was kicking a heroin habit and Marilyn watched after him. Chris was doing well; he had transferred his habit to beer.

A young Puerto Rican man and his mother were on the other side of us. The young man's name was Alfredo and he was a flautist. We didn't know the people that lived across from us, but we met another couple that lived close to town named Mike and Patti. We liked them from the beginning.

From our backyard you could see the bay and there was almost always a cooling trade wind coming off the water. We were amazed at the number of fruit trees in our yard. On either side of the short driveway in front of our house were two pomegranates. In back were six banana trees of three different sorts; regular bananas like you would buy in the local supermarket; small apple bananas, and plantains. We also had two lime trees, canipa and guanabana. The most incredible part was the 80 coconut palms. I know there were 80 because I was compelled to count them, there were so many.

I was very surprised one day when the neighbors walked through the backyard helping themselves to the fruit. When our laundry was hanging on the line, they would often finger Clance's underwear or occasionally 'borrow' one of my t-shirts. Apparently, I wasn't yet anointed in island ways.

Without invitation, Alfredo would come to our front porch and serenade us on his flute. Clancey accepted all of this quite easily. I've always guarded my privacy, so it took me a bit longer. In fact, I blew up at Alfredo for trespassing before Clance was able to explain island mores to me.

Mike and Patti, Chris and Marilyn all quickly became our friends and we got together with them almost every night. Clance and I were shopping for a boat. We had learned about Mona Island and the more we heard about it, the more intrigued we became.

We also met the Popisle brothers. Everybody called them 'the popsicle brothers'. They'd sold their insurance agency in Wisconsin, moved to

Boqueron and bought a diesel powered sloop that was locally built. They were now in the fishing business. The brothers knew Mona well.

After being shown every kind of thing that would float, we finally found something that we could buy. She was a 34 foot fiberglass sloop with a full complement of sails. She had a small inboard engine and an even smaller outboard one. The deal included a dingy. She slept four, but was only comfortable for two. We bought her and changed her name to 'Rock & Roll'.

Clance and I fashioned seaworthy harnesses for Macho and Sun Tzu, which they hated. We took the *publico* to Mayaguez and bought some camping gear. Mona had no fresh water; you had to take your own.

We loaded the boat up, harnessed the cats and followed the Popisle brothers to Mona. The Mona Passage is calmer at night and it's a 49 mile sail. We could cruise at about six knots so the brothers powered back in order for us to keep them in sight. Our sloop had a tiller and Clance liked to handle the boat. I handled the jib and the main.

At dawn we made landfall. There was a passage blasted through the reef, and we were briefed on the two points on the island to line up with in order to make it through the reef safely. There was only a small swell and in no time at all I was in the lagoon with mask and flippers setting the anchor. The water was incredibly clear. Sun Tzu and Macho had wiggled out of our carefully crafted harnesses before we cleared Boqueron bay. Both of them had found favorite places on the boat; Macho was aft with Clance; Tzu stayed just aft of the main mast with me.

The brothers showed us around the small *playa* and told us how to get up to the El Faro, the lighthouse. It was automated these days, but a couple of guys from the Puerto Rican Park Rangers came to check it every two weeks.

Clance and I set up camp and let the boys run loose. They ran up and down the beach, sniffing and digging and chasing crabs. They even liked the tent. We had a Coleman stove but we built a grill for beach cooking.

Before World War One the Germans had mined bat guano on Mona to be used for making gun powder. They left a few remnants behind. We pitched our tent on *la playa* next to a sturdy pier that was just right for tying up the dingy.

## CHAPTER 41

# AND A PINK CRUSTACEAN

“Geoff! Geoff! They’re circling me! Bring the bang pole! Hurry!”

I was pulling off my flippers and was about to remove my booties when I heard Clance’s call for help. She wasn’t panicked, but she had that danger note in her voice.

“I’ll be right there; keep your face toward them.” I’d been out spearing yellowtail while Clance was free diving in the turtle grass, collecting conch. She was about 40 yards away in 20 feet of water. I ran down the beach; that was faster than trying to swim the whole way. I hit the water and slipped my flippers on. When I ducked my head under, I could see her problem. Two fair sized barracuda were swimming slowly around her, circling her in their ritual hunting dance.

Clance was using one of those black plastic garbage bags to collect conch. One of the sharp edged shells had poked through the bag and cut her leg. I could see the tell tail blood drifting from her calf. ‘Cuda rarely attack humans, but it’s not unknown. “I don’t care. They’re ugly,” she would later pout.

I swam over toward her. We had been diving together long enough for Clance to know what to do. She gently swam toward me until I was between her and the ‘cuda and we swam to shore. I didn’t need the bang pole. In fact with all of the diving we did I never had to use the 44 caliber sling. That night we had conch salad.

“Baby, have you been shaving your legs?”

“No, why would you ask? You know that was the conch shell that cut me.”

"I don't mean that. I just don't see any hair on your legs."

"That's because, Baby Boy, it's bleached out from the sun."

Her hair everywhere on her body was bleached to a nearly white light blond. We were both tanned dark. Even my dark hair had blond sun streaks. We were in the best shape of our lives. We dove for our dinner everyday. Langosta, the local sweet lobster with small claws, was a favorite. Some nights we hand lined from the dingy out near the reef.

Someone, probably one of the regular visitors that came for fishing weekends, had left a hammock on the beach and we used it most everyday. Two people engaged in 'athletic activity' on a hammock takes a lot of practice! It takes time to learn to balance. We had time to learn and we did.

Our cats found a friend. They ran up and down the beach, playing with a four foot young iguana that we named Kucko. The iguana loved saltines and would eat them right from our hand.

Macho and Sun Tzu liked to swim. It was much harder for Tzu because of his long coat. Macho was green eyed, black and short haired. When he came out of the water all we had to do was give him a fresh water rinse and dry him off. Poor Sun Tzu had to have the same treatment plus a complete grooming. Tzu was also prone to mats, especially around his ruff. He hated that.

We'd been on Mona for almost a month and our fresh water was starting to run low. We'd been told about the fresh water cistern at El Faro so we decided to go there by climbing the Spanish ladders, rope ladders that scaled the cliffs. Once we got to the top, there were still hundreds of yards of thick brush and cacti to get through. The next time, we took the longer but tamer dirt road.

This cistern water was cool and refreshing. We lay back on the warm concrete cistern to rest in the sun. We were still honeymooning, after all, and one thing led to another. For whatever reason, feeling free under the blue sky and warm sun, it was particularly great sex, and we were not happy when a voice interrupted us. It was the park ranger.

"Hi, guys!" We scrambled back into our shorts. "Oh. Sorry! Didn't know. I'm leaving now," he apologized. It was ok; he had a jeep and drove us down the road back to our tent.

We met up with him later one evening when a group of doctors, over for the weekend to fish, went with us up to El Faro. The recreation room had a pool table. We tried to swat the bats that skreeched around, but the pool cue was no match for them.

One afternoon, I motioned for Clance to come over to where I was in the lagoon. I was gathering conch on the edge of the turtle grass where rocks had collected. Clance swam over, all curious. I motioned her to look underwater. She got up close to the hole in the rock I was pointing to. I stuck my spear gun into the hole to stir up the critter inside. It was a Moray eel, God's most ugly creation ever. The Moray thrust out about a foot from its hole; Clance was so startled, she 'ran' for the beach. It was the first time I'd ever seen anybody walk on water!

One afternoon I fell on my foot up in one of the guano caves we explored. My foot was quite swollen, but Clance had doctored me up out of our First Aid kit. My foot kept me out of the water so we decided it was time to sail back to Boqueron. It had been an adventurous start to our honeymoon. Our parents still didn't know we were married.

The next morning we started loading the 34 footer. It takes a while getting everything onboard from the dingy. Rowing is a bitch, but it was easier than using the little outboard motor off the sailboat. Rock&Roll was loaded just before sundown. Clance was at the tiller and I was on the bow. Getting out of the lagoon is just as hard as getting in. This time we had no one to follow.

There was a channel from where we were anchored to the breach in the reef. I was the look out; the former redhead turned sun-bleached blond steered. It was still light enough to see into the water. We motored out instead of trying to sail. We made it through, but not without puckering our assholes a time or two. Clance had marked our passage on the charts; we thought it would be difficult to miss an island as big as Puerto Rico.

I raised the main and set the jib. The boys were below locked in the master's cabin. I went below and made tinned meat and cracker sandwiches in the galley. The crackers were stale but edible. As Clance handled the tiller, we both sat aft and ate our snacks. As the sun dropped, the wind started to kick up. That was not usual for the Mona Passage. I

went below and checked the radio for weather information. It reported that we were in for a small blow. I reefed the main and taking no chances, being novices, I rigged the storm jib.

We were still in hurricane season, but the glass wasn't falling. I thought we were fine. Clance being Clance full time, showed no fear.

As morning dawned, no land was in sight. We should be seeing something by now. We decided that we couldn't have made that much leeway; it must be that we just hadn't made the speed we expected. I raised the main and things picked up. At 3PM we finally sighted land. Clance had brought us right in to Boqueron Bay.

Being in the salty spray and hot sun all day did not sunburn us, but jeez, we were dark. We moored and rowed in to shore. We tied the dingy up to the little pier and carrying what we could we trudged up the hill to our small cement block house. We thought we would wait to get the rest of our gear the next morning. So, instead of working like donkeys, we headed for Nori's King of the Sea restaurant. As we walked in, Tiny, our local communist and a sweet man, handed us two double Ice Bombs, straight vodka out of the freezer. With the drinks came the double fried plantains, the Puerto Rican version of French Fries.

When Nori came out of the kitchen, he spotted us with that radiant smile of his. In his hand was a letter addressed to C. Santina Roselli. It was from Clance's father. The letter was angry, pleading and read, in part, "Who sold you this bill of goods?" and "Your mother is sick with worry" and it went on from there.

"We'll talk about this later, Geoff. Have you ever considered that you have been Catholic all your life?"

"Certainly. I've always been Catholic. We're going to be married again, aren't we?"

"Uh huh. And you thought living on a deserted island for a month was an adventure?"

Nori, Tiny and Gungalo, the dishwasher and premier pig raiser, were all listening in and giggling. Nori brought us up on all the expatriate gossip. Mike and Patti had been thrown out of their casita and were looking for some place, any place, to live.

We had new neighbors, a fellow named Wadsworth Hoover and his

wife, Hillary, a card carrying communist. He was building a 'strange' house behind our place. To Nori, the house was strange because it was up on wooden pillars. The upstairs had a large veranda around it which shaded the wooden deck below. There were two bedrooms, a living room and it was loaded with books and paintings on the second floor. The ground floor held two rooms; work rooms where Wadsworth could paint, sculpt, etc. But oddest of all was the windmill Waddy had built.

Nori continued, "Chris is wearing a stuffed chair as a hat after he has too many India beers." Mike and Patti walked in about then looking defeated.

"Have you found anything?" Clance asked and looked at me with those eyes that were either blue or green depending on the light.

Tiny piped up, "Those people that live across from Geoff and Clance are going to move." I looked at Clance and got a small nod.

"Why don't you stay with us until that house opens up?" Mike and Patti moved in the next day.

Chris, Marilyn, Mike, Patti and the two of us held a caucus the next day. Together we had three and a half acres. We decided that we would try and make ourselves as self sufficient as possible. Mike would find a traditional Christmas pig, probably from Gungalo. Clance, not knowing a thing about pigs, volunteered to feed it. I was to buy the chickens because I could speak some Texas border Spanish. Marilyn would take care of the chickens. Mike also volunteered to be the fisherman. Chris and I would try to grow things and to harvest the fruit. Patti was the cook.

We got the pig; the most ill tempered sum 'a bitch I had ever run into. We named it Santa Claus because we were feeding him up to eat at Christmas, a tradition in Puerto Rico. Clance hated it after it bit her ankle and she couldn't wait to eat him.



## CHAPTER 42

# FREE BIRD

Clance's father ran the Athletic shoe division for one of the largest manufacturers in the States. He had sent Clance a \$500 check for her birthday before we left the states. Several weeks later, after we'd moved to Boqueron, Clancey sent back a post card to thank him. She told him she'd bought a diving watch with her present and was now trying it out. Her post card had our return address. That's how he got his letter to us.

"Who sold you this bill of goods?" I knew that I was in trouble. His older brother was a retired 'made man'. I was going to do the right thing or wear a cement wet suit. It was a matter of time. Clance and I had been married on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 1974, but not in the church. We started trying to work out our plan.

In the meanwhile, the chicken man came around in his old truck with stacks of chicken cages. He really couldn't understand what little Spanish I possessed and I couldn't understand his rapid fire Puerto Rican Spanish. It came down to this; I wanted 12 hens and a rooster. He wanted to know whether I wanted the expensive chickens or the cheap chickens. We went back and forth doing our best to understand the needs of the other. I ended up buying the cheap chickens.

We spent the next few weeks honeymooning, sharing in communal meals and my chickens grew. We dove and sailed and crabbed and fished. Generally a good time was had by all of us on the hill.

I got a letter from Sean with the numbers for KFM. The station was number 2 in Waco, 5<sup>th</sup> in Ft. Worth. In the combined Dallas/Ft. Worth ARB, we didn't do dick.

Sean had quit and gone to work for the Clear Channel facility in San Antonio. Before Clance and I left for the Caribbean I'd told Sean that he would either go to work for Heftel or that 50K boomer in San Antonio. Now Sean thought I was prescient. Actually it was Norton Horton that told me before I left that Sean was going to get offers from those two outfits.

We also got a second letter from Clance's Dad. They were coming to see us as soon as we had set the date. How fast can two people dance? Clance wrote back that we would call as soon as the arrangements were made. There was only one phone in Boqueron and it was a pay phone down by the beach. It frequently did not work.

We let my chickens just run around our yards and now they were mostly grown. Each chicken had found its own place to roost, mostly close to our bedroom windows. Then one morning just before dawn the crowing started. It was the big joke down at the King of the Sea.

"Geoff bought 13 roosters!" Tiny howled. We ate lots of roosters and I ate crow. No eggs.

When the chicken man came around again, I bought 12 expensive chickens and one cheap one. Santa Clause was getting fat. Nori had been giving us some of his leftovers to feed Santa.

The people across the lane from our house were taking their time moving out, so Mike and Patti settled in to our second bedroom. For two different couples living in the same house we got along well. Clance and I were very much in love and didn't notice too many inconveniences. It's true the water always cut off when you were washing your hair and your head was piled with suds. The electricity went out periodically also, but we were equipped with candles.

## CHAPTER 43

# WHAT A LONG STRANGE TRIP

In late September Clance and I decided to take a trip to St. Croix to buy Christmas presents tax free. We knew about Little Switzerland and wanted to see the selection of international goods. We could buy presents for everyone and they would ship them for us. We would take the *publico* to San Juan, and then fly the Goose to Christiansted. Mike and Patti would take care of Tzu and Macho.

Along with their other baggage, Mike and Patti had brought a puppy with them to the island, Jose Perito; in English, 'Joe Puppy'. That dog was an amiable but strange looking critter. He was half Beagle and half Daschound. His ears were so long he stepped on them with his short legs and big feet.

Our front door was rarely closed, but the aluminum screen door was always shut. It opened with a button next to the handle. Jose couldn't reach the button, but in no time he learned to find either Sun Tzu or Macho to open the door for him. Soon one or the other of our cats, sometimes both, would take Jose Perito for his walks.

Clance and I arrived in San Juan and checked into the Hilton. It was my idea to call Bob Bennel and his wife Jill for lunch. Clance had not met the Bennels, but had caught a glance of Bob at the NAB back in March, just after we were married.

Clance had never been to an NAB and after my first, I never missed one. I suppose it was habit for me to troll for mullets come the spring. We flew to Houston. The damndest thing was that Clance wouldn't let me

pay for her ticket. She had just gotten her first credit card and was anxious to use it. She had no problem letting me pay for our suite. Working for Ken had probably spoiled me. A regular hotel room said to the prospective client that you were not successful.

I left Clance in the suite but she left on her own to walk the floor and see all of the new gear while I went trolling for mullets. My first stop was the Billboard Hospitality suite to say hello to Claude Hall and to see if Claude had a lead. He did—a guy that ran a station in San Juan named Bob Bennel.

I looked Mr. Bennel up and he was interested. I met his wife and we all talked radio. They told me their problems in a market of just over one million. Bob asked me how I would handle that kind of situation. My reply was that he should understand how I thought about radio and the best way to do that was to read one of my format guides. I warned him that what he would read did not necessarily apply to his station, but it would demonstrate how I thought. My briefcase was in my suite, so I invited him down a floor to take a look.

We walked in to the suite and Clancey was propped up on the couch, my briefcase on her lap, using it to roll joints on. Sitting in the chairs were two very well known programmers. Clance had heard their names, but had never met these big time guys. She looked them up and invited them to come talk radio with her in our suite! I ushered Mr. Bennel out quickly.

“Was that marijuana I smelled?” he asked, looking back over his shoulder.

“Oh, no,” I replied. “It was patchouli oil. Yeah, patchouli oil.” I was flustered and I ditched Bennel as soon as possible.

And now I’ve invited the Bennels to have lunch with us at the Hilton in San Juan. We made small talk over lunch. They mentioned that they had heard we were on the island, but didn’t know where. We told them about our house in Boqueron and Bob asked if I still might be interested in helping with his station. I answered that I could be, but I would need to look it over and see the ratings books.

At this point, lunch was over and a long silence ensued. Then finally Jill said, “There’s something we should tell you.” Another long silence. Then Jill began again, “Bob’s gay.”

"Uh huh," was my reply.

Clance said, "And?"

"No, he's really gay." Jill repeated.

"Oh, my Dears," Bob said. "My lovely wife is trying to tell you that I'm a Queen. Oh yes, and she's asexual. It's a marriage of convenience." As Bob talked his lisp became more pronounced.

I responded, "We've been in the radio business all of our lives and there are plenty of gays in radio. If it bothered us we wouldn't be in this business."

"Well, in that case," Bob said, rubbing his hands together, "I think you should take a look at WBMJ. You know, I wanted to come in that day at the NAB and take a toke or two. Claude said you were very good." Pause. "And you move like a young cat."

Jill then said, "We have a guest house in Isla Verde. Could you spend a week or so when you return from St. Croix?" We answered in the affirmative.

We caught the Goose, diving bags in tow and all. It was a short, but beautiful flight; dozens of small islands dotted the turquoise water. I got into the seat up front next to the pilot.

Landing in the lagoon at Christiansted was a thrill. The Goose taxied out of the water, right up the ramp onto an asphalt area just large enough for it to turn around and slide back into the water for take off. We were let out right in downtown Christiansted.

We checked into the King Christian Hotel, right on the water. Jill had called the owner, Betty Sperber, to say we were coming. Betty greeted us herself. It turned out that she once managed the band, The Brooklyn Bridge. We enjoyed complimentary gin and tonics at the outside bar. When we were hungry, Betty fed us and put us in a great room. This was paradise.

That night there was a huge storm. It caused flooding, knocked down some trees and took the electricity out for awhile. The next day was beautiful; the sun was out and the air was fresh. Light danced off the waves in the lagoon. Clance and I chartered a boat and sailed out to Buck Island to free dive the reef. Teddy, the captain, played Jimmy Buffet tunes sprinkled with Reggae hits.

Clancey decided it would be a good idea to swim around Buck Island not knowing it was a seven mile swim! Half way around, I made a 50' free dive to get Clance a star fish.

Then I needed to take a break. Frankly, I was exhausted. I didn't have the strong thighs or the buoyancy that my wife did. We walked up the beach and rested under a cluster of manchineel trees. We later learned that the manchineel is very poisonous and sitting under one was a big mistake.

We took a load of pictures with our underwater camera. I damned near drowned the last mile or two. But we still had our star fish in tow. When we returned to the King Christian, we put our star fish on the balcony in the sun to dry out. Being novices, we didn't know that the pretty star fish you can buy in the tourist places had the "fish" part cleaned out. When we went to retrieve our homemade souvenir, the smell was overwhelming. We looked at each other and knew we'd made a mistake. Clancey felt bad because she had killed the fish! We closed the balcony door and went shopping at Little Switzerland.

Later we discovered the Café de Paris and their specialty, Langosta sandwiches. We wound up a little drunk, but not so drunk that we couldn't honeymoon. This was the first time I had ever really been in love. Clance said it was the first for her too.

## CHAPTER 44

# OYE, COMO VA

We flew Prinair back to San Juan. The Bennels picked us up at the airport and whisked us off to their guest house. It was a beautiful home with a pool and six small guest suites attached. The next day Bob and Jill showed us the station. It occupied the top floor of the Borinquon Hotel. They had great space, but the gear needed up-dating. Why is that always the way?

It was immediately obvious to us that every employee was gay and the staff spent more time being gay than being radio people. The format was English language Top 40. Stupido! Why would one think an English language Top 40 would work in Puerto Rico?

The Queen and I talked it over and decided this was a lay down hand, so why not. We told the Bennels we would take the gig. We didn't know at the time that we had asked for the same amount that Bob was making, but they believed in us and expected to reap the benefits, so they agreed.

On the fourth night at the guest house, at about 3 AM, the Bennels knocked on our door. Bob and Jill looked very sheepish. Jill said, "We really hate to wake you up but we need your help. Did you know we have a record store in the Condado?"

"No."

"Well, one of Bob's friends, Paul, has run that store for us for several years and tonight he was attacked by a young man he was "entertaining". He was hit over the head and there's lots of blood.

"We need to go to the hospital. Would you please clean up the record store before the police get there? We don't want any trouble!"

We both said, "Yes, of course we'll help."

They dropped us off at the record store with two mops, a pail with a ringer on top, plenty of soap and Clorox. When we opened the door to the record store, we couldn't believe the amount of blood everywhere. It must have been an inch deep and sprayed in every direction.

In Vietnam I'd seen plenty of blood but Clancey had never seen anything like the scene in front of us. She didn't flinch. We went right to work and the Bennels left to look after Paul.

Two hours later when Clancey and I had cleaned the floor and doused it with Clorox, Bob and Jill picked us up and we all returned to the hospital to see how Paul was doing. He was conscious; he lived, but it was a close call.

Clancey and I knew we had to move to San Juan in order to do WBMJ, so the Bennels loaned us a new Volvo and we drove back to Boqueron to make arrangements. We parked in front of our cottage on the dirt road. It was apparent that the people across the road had not yet moved out. And we learned that Waddy Hoover had moved into his new 'strange' house.

I took Mike aside and asked him if he would like to sublet our place. He told me that he and Patti couldn't afford to do it but the house across the dirt lane had its lease renewed. He was in a jam, so I told him that Clance and I would keep up the monthly payments, but he and Patti could stay there; it would still be our place.

I explained that The Queen and I were going to move to San Juan for awhile to rebuild and reprogram a radio station. It might have been the first time he understood who we really were. I also slipped Mike the keys to Rock&Roll with the understanding that he would keep her up and ready to sail when The Queen and I had the time.

Clance and I loaded up the Volvo with cats, wardrobe and our Jimmy Buffet albums. Sun Tzu packed his carrying case as always, and then sat on the luggage until we loaded the car. Macho was not used to moving as much as Tzu, so he sat back and waited for things to unfold. Finally, The Queen put him in the rear seat and we were off on yet another radio adventure.

Most advertising in San Juan was bought based on a locally owned



ratings company. Strangely, instead of four books a year, they surveyed six times a year. They used the Pulse methodology—in house interviews. It was like putting cream in front of a cat! I was ready to lick it up.

First I needed an engineer. The bottom was muddy, the high end fried and inter mod distortion was obvious. I called Ken.

“Why don’t you call your friend, Fast Eddy?”

“Boss, I need I.P. It’s a rebuild job and it’s on 1190.”

“Call him. He’s in Seattle.” So I called.

“Are you bankrolling this deal, G.C.?” Once again I sent him a ticket from SeaTac to San Juan.

Clance and I moved in to an apartment the Bennels found for us in Viejo San Juan. The building was almost 400 years old. We both liked the place; there were floor to ceiling windows with shutters that opened onto the sidewalk; there was an interior court yard that the boys loved to play in. And our upstairs neighbors were good people. She was an airline stewardess and we were told that he was a photographer. It eventually turned out that he was something else entirely.

Back at WBMJ, Bob, Jill and I looked over the ratings. The station was 17<sup>th</sup> out of 22 signals in the market. As I thought, this was a no-brainer. We fired the staff and hired Spanish speaking jocks and trained them to do the format. We cleaned up the playlist using the usual methods.

I.P. got in and immediately felt at home in San Juan. He had to relearn his Spanish, but other than that it was an easy transition. He rebuilt the transmitter and put in a new processing system that he’d worked out. We updated the equipment. I.P. had Bob buy two new MCI reel to reels. They were so much easier to use to do production. He knew how to put these pieces together so that the whole was greater than the parts.

Our competition was interesting. Mike Joseph of WABC and WLS fame consulted the #1 station in the market. Dave Gleason had recently come to town and consulted a 5K regional and changed the call letters to WJIT (Radio Hit). We kept our call letters, but called the station Radio Rock.

I didn’t know Gleason, but he knew me. He came over to our station to chat. I think he saw the same hole in the market that I did, but changed his approach after we talked for a while. We decided to cooperate instead

of trying to beat each other's brains out. Dave took Hit adult contemporary. We went together to the ratings firm to look over the interviews. We found so many mistakes the owners of the ratings company literally threw us out. They finally accomplished something ARB had wanted to do to me for a long time.

Finding and training a Top40 staff in San Juan was not easy. I did write a format guide and a policy manual and put them in 3-ring binders. I made copies of them for everyone. The tricky part was having the format guide translated into Spanish. All of the jocks spoke English but they didn't read it very well so they actually got two format guides, one in English and one in Spanish. Who knows what the Spanish version said. I don't read Spanish and neither does Clancey. Nonetheless, the jocks learned to execute the format correctly.

Here was the lineup: for mornings we found Brother Luis; mid-days and P.D. was Mano; afternoons we had Moon Shadow and finally Heavy Willy did teeny bop drive. We had various overnights.

The format was the same as Q-Rock but without the inward basics. The promotions that we ran were all variations of The Last Contest Phase 2. "There's a winner an hour...and sometimes even more." Of course we had the crews on the street asking "What radio station do you listen to?" No matter what you said, the crew handed out Radio Rock t-shirts, \$100 bills, albums and so forth. Remember, it was the same methodology as Pulse's in-home interviews where they asked, "What radio stations do you listen to?"

In our first book we were third 12+. In the second book we took the highly prized 'Number 1' position. We were so 'Number 1' that the other stations in the market accused us of everything they could think of, but the agencies bought. Being sold out is a good thing. Dave came in #2 and he was sold out as well. So much for Mike Joseph.

The night that our Number 1 book came out, Bob Bennel threw a party at his guest house; lots of Don Q, pot and poppers. Poppers were new to Clance and me, but we learned to use them very quickly.

Clance, Dave, his new wife and I were sitting around the pool smoking a joint and enjoying our victories, when Dave's new wife blurts out, "Geoff, you make me think bad thoughts." At first none of us got it; we were stoned.

## *THE RADIO GYPSIES*

Then she said, "I really want to fuck you!" She did not speak English all that well, so it came out "Fooooock". Dave got it then and took appropriate measures. Clance and I couldn't stop laughing.

Bob had invited lots of young boys to the party that night and tried to have sex with all of them. San Juan was a known vacation spot for New York's gay community. Clance and I met many interesting new people and several people that we knew and liked.

Bob was so stoked with his Number 1 book that he asked if I would invite Claude and Barbara Hall to come visit and WBMJ would pick up the tab. Claude and Barbara were delighted.

## CHAPTER 45

# WHO THE FUCK ARE YOU?

And so we planned to be married. Again. Mr. and Mrs. Cliff needed to be married by a Priest or we weren't really married in the eyes of The Church, or of Clancey's dad.

I asked Mike if he could do a mass. Mike was a licensed minister of The Universal Life Church of Modesto California, but had been a Catholic all of his life.

"Of course I can do a Mass. I can do a reasonable marriage ceremony."

"Do you have a black suit?"

Patti piped up, "I can make your collar."

John Joseph Roselli was a tall slim man with the strong features of Southern Italy. He was also a powerful business man. He was the Vice President of the Athletic department of a major shoe manufacturer and, by God, he was going to give his little girl a real Italian wedding! So, there was nothing for it; Geoff and Clancey would have another ceremony and this time a good time would be had by all.

Clancey talked her father into having the wedding in Boqueron. This meant the whole village had to be in on our secret. Also, we decided it would not be a good idea to invite the Bennels. The drunker Bob got the more his gay personality came to the fore—not a good thing as far as John Joseph would be concerned.

Clance and I rented a couple of cars to transport her parents, her sister and brother-in-law. Clance was the younger and her father's favorite. This had always been a bone of contention between the sisters. Worse, Clance was considerably smarter than her sister.

When we picked up Clancey's family at the airport, the first words John Joseph Roselli said to me were, "You need a haircut and trim that mustache." I enthusiastically agreed with him and off we all went to deposit everyone at the one upscale Mayaguez hotel.

Mike, or Father Mike, and I moved out of the girls' house and in with Chris and Marilyn. John Joseph made arrangements for the dinner with Nori at the King of the Sea. Nori found 60 langosta from somewhere. Clance and I had a wedding cake made for us in Ponce. Patti found flowers.

Clancey looked beautiful. Her hair was streaked with white blond waves. The ladies of the village cobbled up a wedding dress for her. Like everything else about this ceremony, the dress was not traditional; it had a long blue and white skirt, topped by a lacy peasant blouse.

At the King of the Sea, the ceremony began. 'Father' Mike stood next to the jukebox which was playing 'Autumn Leaves'. We had structured an altar, found incense, a chalice, wine and all the accoutrements of the mass. The constant clacking of 60 live langosta could be heard from behind the swinging doors to the kitchen.

Chris was my Best Man and was just sober enough to stand straight and keep track of Clancey's ruby wedding ring. For a change, he was not wearing a stuffed chair for a hat. He too was dressed in one of my suits. The Bride entered by the pinball machine, escorted by a man who did not like or trust his 'prospective' son in law. I was nervous, so I imbibed a couple of ice bombs. I was as steady as Chris.

Clance and I had written our own vows. Mostly the lyrics were from the Birds 'Turn, Turn, Turn'. *For everything there is a season!* When the time came, Chris pulled out the ruby ring. I could hear Clancey's sister say, "That can't be real!" I put the ring back on Clancey's finger. She did not like to take it off except for diving.

Wadsworth Hoover, our new neighbor, came dressed in a tailor made blue pinstripe suit but was barefooted. His communist wife wore classic island clothes. Other neighbors and new friends were also there; Selma who crocheted bikinis for a living; Sissy, her 6 year old daughter; Peggy, a Puerto Rican roller derby skater. Albert played the flute. Patti and Marilyn kept a close eye on Chris and me.

Nori served the wedding meal of freshly boiled langosta, plantains and salad with pink dressing. Tiny and Gungalo kept the kitchen humming. A good time was had by all!

We spent a few days with my new in laws. Clancey's sister wanted a closer look at the ruby ring. Clancey, being Clancey fulltime, showed her the ring and showed her the appraisal. Her sister immediately told her father who then wanted to see the appraisal for himself.

That was the first step for my new father-in-law believing that I might be able to support his little girl. John Joseph seemed to like me a little more, but I could tell I still had a lot to prove to him.

Then it was back to Viejo San Juan and WBMJ for Clance and me.

## CHAPTER 46

# LONG AND WINDING ROAD

Finally we were back at work, sitting in our offices on the top floor of the Borinquon Hotel, trying to decide what our next move would be with the radio station and how would we entertain Claude and Barbara Hall. Clance and I were just throwing ideas around when the Bennels came in. Bob said, “You know who owns this station?” We nodded in the affirmative. Bob went on, “The president is the oldest son of our owner and he would like to meet you!”

The owner was one of Hollywood’s most celebrated actors and his oldest son, Tony, was the President. It was obvious what we had done and were continuing to do for the station. We achieved winning in the ratings and dramatically raising the cash flow, but there was a problem...me! The mantra of my father that I had lived with all of my life—if it’s not exactly right, it’s wrong—was hard enough to live with in the States. But in a Latino society? The station staff had a hard time with that philosophy and with me. I.P. tried to explain me to the staff, but mostly he just laughed. Clancey said the problem was that I just had a strong personality; her way of saying that I was a full time asshole.

That evening we met Tony at dinner. The Bennels served a wonderful meal, then brandy. Finally the three of them came to the point. Tony wanted to start a new company that would serve the Caribbean with the same services that we had in San Juan. “You see, Geoff, we could market your skills up and down the islands,” said Tony, who was also the family lawyer.

I responded, “Tony, Bob, just doing the programming won’t work. We have to have engineering and it would make sense to also supply the equipment.”

Tony answered me with the lawyer question, “Why?”

I explained that most of the stations in the islands had been built in the first six years after WWII by Collins, a now defunct company. I went on to tell them that most of these stations had never been updated.

Tony asked me more of those silly lawyer questions while hitting on my gorgeous redheaded wife. The upshot of the idea was HBC, a new broadcast company that would serve the Caribbean. Tony would be the CEO; Bob, the President; I was COO and Senior Vice President. Jill, or “The Gunner” as they called her, was Treasurer and Secretary. Claude Hall gave Jill the name ‘Gunner’. She was one tough cookie. Of course, I.P. was V.P.—Engineering.

I talked it over with Clance and I.P. and we all decided to give it a shot. The only fly in the ointment was that Clancey felt left out. This was not a good thing. Back in Dallas I’d learned that Clance could be a bit touchy if not fully involved and included. So we decided Clancey’s new title would be Manager of Operations.

I told Jill and Bob how this was going to work. Their job would be to take care of the money and stay out of the way. Clancey would check the books monthly.

“Do you have a problem with that?” I asked. They did not.

In the policy manual, one of the rules was that the telephone could not ring more than three times without being answered. The receptionist cried almost every day because she couldn’t quite meet the requirement. That was not the only problem. Bob still wanted me to consult WBMJ, but only *through* him because some of the staff didn’t like taking orders from a straight white guy with a personality like mine.

The staff members that had objected were Mano, the so called P.D., and Moon Shadow, the afternoon drive jock. They really didn’t like being air checked or critiqued. When I caught them fucking up, their machismo was somehow hurt. My attitude was ‘so fucking what?’ but Bob thought he really needed to keep these guys happy because of their numbers. Bob never grasped that it was the format and its execution that were the real drivers behind the ratings.



I.P. was still an information junkie. He liked to stay in touch with the states and the P.D.s and the jocks at stations all over the country. The phone bills from San Juan were pretty high until he discovered 'the mystery nickel'.

It was easy. Just press the buttons where the handset sat a few times. It sent just the right tones down the line to drop you into a long distance trunk and from there you could just dial anywhere for free. As far as the phone company was concerned, it was a local call. I.P. could keep up with everything going on in the radio business and Clance and I could keep up with friends and family—no charge!

A couple of weeks after we agreed to do HBC, the incorporation papers arrived and Jill just tossed them on Clancey's desk, apparently expecting her to type them up. After a year of marriage I knew that you did not take Clancey for granted like that.

Clance took a look at the papers and, without a word, typed them up. When Bob and Jill looked them over they noticed that Clancey had put her own name in as Secretary of the company. When she was asked about it, she said, "I typed them, didn't I? I believe that makes me the Secretary!" When the Bennels looked in Clancey's eyes, they decided she would make a very good Secretary.

I.P. and I procured a World Guide to Radio and Television. From the guide Clance, I.P. and I picked out those stations we would target. Clance designed a brochure and I wrote a personal letter to each owner and G.M. While Clance and I were busy doing the marketing, Bob had a teletype machine installed. It was the only sure way of communicating with the other islands.

I.P. was busy lining up the equipment that we would handle. This gear included everything from transmitters to the solid state equipment that replaced the old mercury vapor tubes we were bound to find. We had contracts to sell processing and everything else we thought we would need. Luckily we were fully ready as far as all of the test gear I.P. would need, everything but a new hand held calculator made by Hewlett-Packard. I.P. wanted it; we bought it.

The first respondent to our mailing was from Radio Hoyer in Willemstad, Curacao, in the Netherlands Antilles. I.P. and I loaded up the

gear and flew KLM to Willemstad. Mr. Hoyer was an older man. He had lost one leg to diabetes, which was a shame because as a younger man he had represented the Netherlands in the 1936 Olympics. Mr. Hoyer owned six AMs and six FMs. We took a quick look and the whole operation seemed to have been built by a 12 year old, rat tails and all. It was a complete mess. Neither of us said a word, but Mr. Hoyer was a wily old coot and could read our faces. He invited us to lunch. How could we refuse?

Lunch was at the Peach Tree restaurant, an Indonesian place. This smart old man continued to surprise us; he also invited the head of Radio Lansdienst, Mr. Lunyen. Radio Lansdienst is the FCC of the Netherlands Antilles. Hoyer was giving us a test. Soon, I.P. and the head of Radio Lansdienst were completely sunk in a technical conversation that the rest of us couldn't follow. Mr. Hoyer ordered for us and the food was incredible, candied bacon with large chunks of black truffles. Mr. Lunyen was so taken with I.P.'s new Hewlett-Packard, I don't think he even knew what was for lunch.

"Geoffrey? Do you have a contract in that briefcase?"

"Of course, I.P."

"Would you change seats and come over here? Mr. Lunyen would like for us to help him out or I should say he wants us to help Radio Lansdienst."

So, that's how we got our first 18 clients.

## CHAPTER 47

# LEAN ON ME

While we were in Willemstad we thought we would visit some other stations. We were already checked into the Continental Hotel, so why not make some more calls. Mr. Lunyen had asked us not to mention our new relationship with R.I.. Our first call was on Orlando Cualace, the new owner of Ocho Cincuenta—The Big 850.

The studios and offices were located on the second floor of an old building in Willemstad. I.P. and I walked up the stairs and went into the reception area and asked for Mr. Cualace. The receptionist asked in perfect English, “Your company name is HBC?”

“Yes, m’am”. I.P. and I took a seat. It wasn’t a minute before this well dressed man, about our age, came out and said, “Gentlemen, you’re from HBC?”

“Yes, Mr. Cualace. Did you get our mailer?”

“Yes, but I wasn’t sure at all.”

“Well, that’s us. We build and rebuild radio stations and we would like to talk with you.” Mr. Cualace introduced himself as Orlando and we gave him our first names. Then he showed us the studios.

There was plenty of room, but the equipment was ancient. Orlando then invited us into his office. We were expecting a much less sophisticated reception than we received. Orlando had a younger brother, Gonzalo. The Cualace brothers were Venezuelan and from a rather well off family. Gonzalo really wasn’t an integral part of Orlando’s enterprise; nonetheless, he was there.

Orlando's questions were on target. I.P. and I are radio guys, so we answered like radio guys and not salesmen. I truly believe that's what sold HBC; that and our meeting earlier in the day with Radio Lansdienst. Rumor traveled fast in Willemstad without our help.

That night in my room, I was a thousand miles away from Puerto Rico and only 30 miles away from Venezuela, so I thought it odd that the phone rang. Perhaps it was Mr. Hoyer? Or Mr. Cualace? When I lifted the receiver was I floored! Jane Ann Cliff said, "Hi honey. You were hard to find."

"Mom! How *did* you find me?"

"Oh, Geoffrey, you know we've always had this bond."

I thought, "Oh, god. OK, let's deal with this."

In as happy a voice as I could pull together, I said, "Well, what's up, Mom?"

"Well, nothing, son, really. I just wanted to be in touch. By the way, your aunt Gyp died."

"Mom, I'm so sorry but there's not much I can do. I'm—well, I'm kind of out of touch here. I'm on a small island off the coast of South America. But if you send flowers, please put my name on them. And Clancey's."

"OK. How are you? How's Clancey? Why are you on that island? Is everything OK?" I answered each of the questions quickly and then hung up.

Orlando wanted to know how to make The Big 850 *the* radio station in the Netherlands Antilles. So we told him. We didn't know if we made the sale until the next day when we had another appointment with the Cualace brothers.

I.P. and I ate well that evening and talked over how we would rebuild the 10K. Just as always, we were excited by the new project. We had not seen the transmitter yet, but it was suspect. What we did come up with as we sat in our small suite at the Continental was a full blown U.S. rocker, all-cart, jingles cut in the ABC Islands' street language, Papiamento. We always did business with PAMS but this time we thought we would cut Phase 3, a jingle package that T.M. had come up with through the cooperation of Billy Ed Young of KILT.

Orlando thought that we were on the right track. We explained music

research and the success we had with playing the local hits and having the jocks speak the language of the street. I.P. gave a presentation on how the engineering had to be set up in a way that non-engineering people could understand.

I.P. and I took a ride out to the transmitter site and found exactly what we expected...disaster! While I.P. was shaking his head over a 10K that was never maintained, I priced out the studios and programming costs. I.P. and I sat down with Orlando and explained that his transmitter would be better sold for parts, and we could get him a brand new AEL transmitter down to Willemstad in about two months. Orlando nodded "OK". I put the contract in front of him and he signed it.

Then I met with the station's staff. All of the staff spoke English, Dutch, Spanish and Papiamentu. Most of the staff, including the Cualace brothers, were educated in Holland. The other thing that amazed me was their willingness to accept me and I.P. and to work their asses off!

Curacao was originally used by the Dutch as a slave breeding island; then the slaves were sold in Cuba and the southern U.S. I knew this history and I didn't know what to expect in terms of work ethic or how I would be received. I was amazed. My worst fear was that we would find the same resentment we had experienced with the African American stations we had worked on in the States. This was just not the case; these were the hardest working most dedicated people we had found damn near anywhere!

## CHAPTER 48

# LEAVING ON A JET PLANE

“Geoffrey Grachme, your alligator mouth has oversold our hummingbird ass! How the fuck are we going to do all this?”

“Hey Dude, you’re the one that amazed and amused Lunyen with your little H.P. gizmo. Thus, we picked up 18 stations that we now have to rebuild.”

“Not to mention a full blown rebuild and reprogramming of The Big 850. We’ve got to hire another engineer, G.C.”

I.P. and I were flying back from Aruba on KLM. We’d gone to see the owner of the four stations on that island. The owner was a Netherlands Antilles Senator named Stanley. He was a nice man and a typical politician.

Senator Stanley insisted we attend the dedication of the new Hilton Hotel. The Senator helped to bring Hilton to Aruba; he was very proud of that and as an extra added attraction, he wanted to introduce us to the Governor. Imagine how thrilled I.P. was to attend such a wonderful celebration.

“When the Governor wrung the head off that rooster and sprinkled blood over the new Hilton’s roof, I thought I would shit bricks,” I.P. laughed.

“That was my favorite as well, but feeding the sharks was right up there.”

Stanley had taken us out to the cliffs to show us the throwing of the garbage to the sharks. He thought that was a really fine sight to see. The

Senator also felt the need to show us the Oil Refinery, complete with a long and detailed explanation of the Venezuelan oil business. Venezuela pumps oil thirty miles across to Oranjestad, Aruba where the refinery prepares it and then loads it onto tankers bound for wherever.

We did finally look at the transmitter sites. Aruba has very little top soil, so burying the copper radials was something of a problem. Mostly they were just laid out on top of the rocks.

Out of the eighteen stations, we visited them all except PJD2 on St. Martin and we did not go to Saba. We thought I.P. could deal with those after we talked over the hiring of another engineer.

In my briefcase I had checks that added up to \$80,000 in US Dollars, I hoped. The problem was the checks were in guilders, but I knew Clancey could figure all of that out.

I.P. hired a kid named Randall Schumacher. I say a kid because Schumacher had just turned 21, but he was good. He had worked with I.P. on XEROK, the old XERO, in Juarez. I.P. had also used him in Seattle.

I.P. and Randall were going to have to rebuild all of the power supplies at each station. They were all still using mercury vapor tubes and all needed AGCs and Limiters.

The Big 850 was a complete rebuild. The gear that was needed was not off the shelf; it all had to be ordered and built by the suppliers.

It was Clancey's job to handle the import/export problems, not to mention the exchange of all the different currencies; Guilders, Caribbean dollars, pounds sterling, francs, pesos. It was driving her crazy, but Clancey soldiered on. It was the cat calls and "Oye, Rubia" that really got to her. Red headed, almost 6 feet tall and good looking, she was hard to miss and that did not help her on the docks as she brought in and shipped out equipment.

Tony, for whatever reason, wanted to supply Cuba with up-to-date transmitter equipment. He worked at the Import Export Bank for the Treasury Department, so he issued me and I.P. Irish passports. He managed to fly us into Havana. It was fairly easy. We just took the orders from the Cuban government and in a very roundabout way, shipped Cuba the gear they needed. This must have confused Paul Drew and Radio Marti. Apparently, it did not confuse our government. Tony took our Irish passports back and I.P. and I never heard another word about it.

Since my job was to make first contact with the prospective client, I flew all over the Caribbean. We had responses from the Mainland too even though we weren't trying to sell in the States. Our old friend Claude Hall recommended us several times. Even Ken put in a word a time or two.

It was decided that I should make a trip to the States. Don, my old Boss from Q-Rock, had some leads for me and there were a couple of guys from New Orleans that wanted us to build them a Class C FM. I packed up and flew to New Orleans. These gentlemen were loaded and they wanted their own jukebox. I got the contract and flew to Norfolk to meet with Don.

When I checked in to the Sheraton, the Assistant Manager met me with, "Where's your Feline Syndrome afflicted son?" I assured him that Sun Tzu wasn't with me this time, but unfortunately we now had a daughter with the same problem. He just put his hands in the air and scurried off.

Before I was even unpacked, the phone rang. It was Penny. How the hell did she know I was in town? Then it hit me. Commander Bob via I.P! Those fuckers!

"Hello Geoffrey," she said in that fake shy, but charming way of hers. Penelope learned all of this from Mrs. Rosemond's Finishing School for Rich Girls with Horses.

"Okay, Penny, why aren't you in Maryland at Mrs. Rosemond's?"

"Mother is having a very hard time and no, the divorce is not over. Father is having a hard time letting things go. Would you please talk to mother?"

"Alright, put her on."

"Geoffrey?"

"I am."

"I would like you to have dinner with us this evening. Does your timetable allow for this? The cook is off, so Penelope is cooking." I'm thinking, "Oh God, what am I in for? Penny can't cook a lick."

"Of course, Mrs. Hamilton, I would be glad too. Shall I bring anything?"

"Oh, no. You shall be our guest. We'll just be glad of your company."



Oh fuck. Okay, I'll show up, but with the makings for martinis. At least we'll be drunk regardless of what Penny serves us!

"Mrs. Hamilton, Penny tells me that this is a difficult time for you. It so happens that Clancey and I have a nice little house in Puerto Rico, only a few yards from the beach. You are welcome to use it for as long as you like. We are living in Old San Juan so it's available and I believe you might find peace and ease in Boqueron. I will tell you more about it this evening at dinner."

"Geoffrey, I couldn't think of it, but we will be happy to have you for dinner. Dinner is at 8PM. We'll see you for cocktails at 7." We hung up.

I managed to get them both drunk at dinner and Mrs. Hamilton agreed to spend time at our home in Boqueron. Penny, the little fake, had the dinner catered but she did try to pass it off as her own cooking.

I was in trouble. The Hamilton-Lee's were after me and I was in the shit. I was in love with a middle class woman of Italian- Irish extraction and I was married to her and gladly so. This cut no ice with the Hamilton-Lee's. Fuck stick!

## CHAPTER 49

# THE LOW SPARK OF HIGH-HEELED BOYS

While I.P. and I were flying back to New Orleans, I explained to I.P. that the transmitter site for the New Orleans guys was in the goddamn fucking swamp; I.P. wasn't bothered. All he said was, "Bellbottoms."

"What the fuck are you talking about?"

"If we are going to build out here, we need to drop 24 foot bellbottoms. Cement. That will anchor the transmitter building. The tower is a more difficult problem. According to my calculations, the anchors will need to be approximately the same. This will not be easy, but it can be done."

It got worse. These New Orleans guys had way too much money. One of them had a personal fortune of \$350 million and he was only 26. The other guy, his best friend, was an assistant District Attorney.

Regardless of their wealth, they were cheap! Nonetheless, we decided to build the station. We decided to do it because I.P. wanted to do it. The station would be a full blown Class C. These guys would not cheap out on the station; they just didn't want to pay *us*. I.P. didn't care. He just wanted to build the station. Such a typical engineer!

So we built the damn thing, and it really was a jukebox. They didn't give a rat's ass whether it made a dime; all they wanted was to hear those tunes they liked. I wrote a format guide and a policy manual. I also recommended a guy to be G.M.

The guy, Chuckles O'Donavan, insisted that we meet at his house in Dallas. He had been out of a job for almost a year. I knew he was the one needing a gig, but we all flew to Dallas to meet him at his convenience.

Chuckles took one look at the format guide and said, "This is no progressive format! It's 'Top 40! I won't do it.'" So Chuck turned down more money than he had ever made before. I just couldn't imagine that he turned down the job because of 'format prejudice'. I figured he turned it down because Clance and I took down his great hero, Mike Joseph, in two books in San Juan. Not only that; Dave Gleason beat him, too.

Chuckles worked for Joseph at WABC in New York. As far as Chuck was concerned, I was just a Bubba and had lucked out in San Juan. How in the world could I, just a Bubba, be offering him, the great Chuckles O'Donavan, a job?

I.P. built the station and it was sweet. No expense was spared. The same was true with The Big 850 on Curacao. We cut the jingles, Phase 3, in Papiamentu. We brought up our own singer to insure the accent was exactly right.

It was the first station in the Caribbean that was all-cart and it was the #1 station in the ABC Islands and most of Venezuela. I.P. did a great job with that station; certainly there was nothing like it anywhere in the Caribbean. The station sounded, and was programmed, better than 9/10ths of the facilities in the States.

## CHAPTER 50

# THIRTY DAYS IN THE HOLE

The invitation arrived two months after I returned from the States.

*You are invited to the Wedding Ceremony*

*of*

*Katherine Hamilton*

*and*

*Wadsworth Hoover*

*yada, yada, yada!*

God help us! Clancey and I were invited to Waddy and Katherine's wedding in Boqueron! Who the fuck knew, for Christ Sake!

Katherine had taken me up on my invitation to take some down time at our house in Boqueron, but who would think she would fall in love with Waddy Hoover and then decide to marry him?

Hillary had a heart attack three months earlier and Waddy wasn't doing well on his own. Katherine was a welcomed companion. Both of them had money. It was convenient, but I had no clue why they fell in love.

Clancey was livid but she would not talk about it. I was completely shut out. All I got was smiles and "Isn't it nice that they have found each other." Every time I heard that, I thought my ears would freeze off. She could clearly see that this meant yet another encounter with Penny. There was no way out. I, we, had to go to the wedding, and of course Penelope would be at the wedding.

When we first started living together and Penny showed up, I'd told

Clance that Penny would only be around for 2 or 3 weeks, and then she would run off. . . again. Clancey had seen her from a distance in Dallas, but they had never met. Still, Clancey hated her. And Penny stayed as far away from Clancey as she could. The last thing she wanted was a confrontation with Clancey, I thought. All she wanted was for her grandfather to accept me and for us to get married. When she had run off the last time, I was ecstatic. Penny had fucked with my life too many times. I had finally found this magic woman, the incredible Clancey Santina Maria Therese Roselli Cliff. Then Penny shows up, stomping a mud hole in my life yet again.

But once again, I had screwed the pooch! How could I know that Ms. Hamilton would marry Waddy? That excuse held little weight with Clancey. In her mind, I set it up.

Clancey and I drove the Volvo to Boqueron. I could have turned off the air conditioner, turned on the heater and it still would have felt like Buffalo in January.

We parked the Volvo in front of our little house and picked up Patti and Mike. We all walked back down the hill to Waddy's place.

Katherine and Waddy had decided to hold the ceremony and reception outside. Wadsworth had built his home with a large second story veranda that wrapped around the whole house and shaded the area below. There was an open recreational space complete with Bar-B-Q, hammocks and other decorative outdoor furniture on the ground floor.

The first person we saw was Penny. Immediately, the air crackled. Patti had to hide her face to keep from laughing. She had been looking forward to this showdown for some time; she wasn't the only one. Tiny was setting up the food and carrying in the wedding cake. When he saw the two women, he couldn't keep from sneaking looks.

"Good afternoon, Penelope," Clancey greeted the archenemy, ice in her voice. "Have you put on some muscle, dear? I don't remember you being . . . uh . . . so large."

"And I notice that you are still buying your clothes from the used clothing store. They have so many good buys." Penny was using her rich girl accent of the Tidewater variety. Clancey rolled her eyes in Jack Benny style, a smile indicating how silly she thought the little twit was.

“Oh, Clancey, you wouldn’t mind if I borrow Geoffrey for a few minutes, would you? I just want to talk some things over with him. Don’t worry; I’ll bring him back undamaged.” Clancey shrugged like she couldn’t care less.

Penny hooked my arm and began to march me to the beach. Penny tossed her hair over her shoulder and looked back at Clancey. “My hair is natural, of course, but do you do your own dye job?”

Clancey had already turned and was out of earshot so this silly barb went nowhere. I looked back at Clancey and shrugged but she didn’t see me. Mike saw and heard everything. He looked scared!

Penny kept pulling my arm and skipping along like a child in the direction of the water. We sat close to the water line at the beach. “I know you love me,” as Penny kissed me on the cheek. “Waddy says that he doesn’t believe your so called marriage to Clancey is really legal.”

“Penny, Clancey and I were married in...”

“Shhh...” Penny put a finger on my lips. “Waddy’s a lawyer you know and Mother thinks he’s right.”

“Penny...”

“Shhh, Pumpkin. Mom says it’s the money. You just wouldn’t feel right about not having enough money! Now don’t say a word! I’ll have \$3 million transferred into your account on our Wedding Day. See, all taken care of, huh?”

“No, it’s not. I’m married to Clancey and have been since March 5<sup>th</sup>, 1974,” I said.

“But it’s not really legal, is it?”

“It is and I am married. And I love Clancey. Case closed.”

Penny and Katherine were good people and I always have thought of them as friends. The problem was not that Penny wasn’t a good friend and at times I did think that I loved her, but the longer I knew Penny the more I realized she had problems. As I’ve mentioned, every time I thought that Penny and I had things straightened out, she would run off.

Her Family pushed and pulled her. The result was that Penny stayed confused and cried much of the time. Most of the problem came from her maternal Grandfather. I mentioned before that he really didn’t like me. Then there was the messy divorce between her mother and father. She was completely neurotic.

In 1973, after Penny's first year at Mrs. Whatever her name was Finishing School for Rich Girls with Horses, she had come home pregnant. I was the first person she called. Penny had gotten involved somehow with a towney named Archie and now she was preggers. She didn't want the Family to know and would I please help? In Virginia one could still not get an abortion, so off to D.C. we went. It was over in a few hours, but Penny was not up to the ride back to Portsmouth. We stayed the night at the Mayflower.

I had to let Katherine know what was going on. I called her and let her know that her little girl was alright. I knew she would understand and would be supportive without letting Penny know that I had called.

When we drove up the long driveway to the Portsmouth house, Penny started to cry. Katherine had been watching for us and as I pulled into the portico, Penny jumped out of the Lotus and into her mother's arms. The whole story spilled out. So much for keeping it quiet!

Katherine knew her daughter and had everything prepared, including a psychiatrist to talk to *me*. Why would I help a girl that had cheated on me? Not his exact words, but certainly the gist. Apparently I passed his little test because Penny wanted me to stay and hold her through the night and Katherine approved. Of course, Penny's Grandfather found out about the incident and that added fuel to the fire. I was just after her money; I was using her like a whore, etc.

The first person to see Penny and me as we walked back from the beach was Mike. Penny was crying. She was distraught, having someone tell her 'no'. As soon as she saw Katherine, Penny ran into her arms, getting tears and mascara on Katherine's new dress. Mike and I both saw Clancey smirk.

"To the bar, Michael."

"Good idea, Geoffrey." We both had a stiff one in hand when we heard "You Bitch!"

"I'm a Bitch? You're the one that stole him, you fake Irish-Italian." Mike and I ran around the corner just in time to see Penny take a header over one of the hammocks.

"Run for it, Mike. Grab some stuff from the bar and head for the dingy. It's at the pier."

“What do you want?”

“DonQ and scotch. Now! Rock on!” We hit the bar, grabbed what we could carry and made it to the dingy. We could hear the dust up coming from Waddy’s new house.

“I’m betting on Clancey!” I said, feeling pride in my classy wife who was now engaged in a fist fight.

“I hope so too, but they’re pretty evenly matched.”

“Untie that rope and get in. We’re heading for Rock&Roll!”

“What did we end up with?”

“4 bottles of DonQ and some Chivas Regal. Don’t worry; the boat’s galley is well stocked. I can lie low for at least a few days.”

“I’m staying with you, Geoff. Patti is going to be as mad as Clance.”

“Okay. We’ll tie the dingy up on the far side. At least our cover won’t be blown until tomorrow. Hand me that scotch.”



## CHAPTER 51

# TIED TO THE WHIPPING POST

Mike and I stayed drunk for two days. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, full of false courage, we rowed back. To our surprise, Patti wasn't mad. Clancey had driven the Volvo back to Viejo San Juan victoriously. I took the *publico* back to our apartment at 52 San Justo.

Clance was still fuming when I walked in, still shooting daggers, smoke coming out of her ears. Clancey, as a rule, does not show her feelings, but this was not one of those times.

"I'm leaving! Now!"

"Clancey, we're married. I told her that."

"I've already called Eye; he's coming to get me and I have my old job back!"

"Clancey, Clancey...please! I love you."

"Why is that bitch back in our life? Because you asked her back, that's why. Shit a Goddamn!" This was the worst cussing phrase Clancey ever used. She usually didn't curse at all, but at her limit, she fell back on her mother's worst curse phrase.

"How much did they offer you to marry that neurotic? I will not put up with you running off to that rich brat every time she wags her finger! I am cutting this off right now. I will not live like this!"

"Clance, we have to do the Chicago NAB; then we'll move back to Dallas. And I'll never see Penny again, I swear!"

Clancey rarely cried, but she was doing so now. I knew she was very upset. But she had put in a great deal of work on our Hospitality suite. I was hoping this would buy me time for her to cool off.

“I overheard them, you know.”

“Who? What are you talking about?”

“Katherine and Penny. Who do you think? They called me an immigrant and a tacky Irish and Mommy dear said ‘...and Italian’! What could Geoffrey be thinking? He’s a de Cliff and he would have plenty of money.”

I’m thinking, “I can’t lose this woman. I’ve finally found my life mate and Penny shows up again to make a mess of my life.”

“It will really hurt, Geoff, but eventually I’ll get over you and that’s better than hurting for the rest of my life waiting for that woman to show up again.” And I’m thinking hard how to save my world! I knew she meant it. How could I stop her from leaving me? I loved her so much!

## CHAPTER 52

# A TICKET TO RIDE

After much sturm and drang and tears on both sides, me reminding Clance that we were married and had been married for over two years and that I loved her very much, Clancey and I came to a compromise. The compromise was that we would both go the '76 NAB. And then we would talk.

We put in a great deal of work and treasure into this NAB. I.P. had a brilliant idea to show off our audio processing systems. We had systems for both AM and FM. I.P.'s idea was to actually set up a 10 watt AM transmitter and a 20 watt FM transmitter. The AM transmitter was in one bedroom in the hospitality suite; the FM was in the other. An AM radio and an FM were set up in the living area of the suite so prospective clients could hear what the processing really sounded like.

Now, here was the genius of the idea. Two racks with our gear and all of our competitor's gear were also in the living area of the suite. The clients could A-B the gear and hear the difference in the sound *over the air*.

It's only one week until the NAB and Clance, I.P. and I are all in the HBC offices, talking over the logistics of getting all of the equipment to the Hilton in Chicago. Our suite was on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor. It was the largest suite we could procure.

I.P. had just gotten back from the Dominican Republic. He was convinced that he could take the San Juan station from 10K to 50K. The only problem was our station was supposed to be protecting a Dominican station, called Rocket Radio that was also on 1190. But I.P. was convinced

that Rocket Radio was broadcasting on 1200. I.P. was right, which explained why the San Antonio clear channel boomer didn't go east as far as a 50K clear should.

I.P. went to talk with the bureaucrat that passed for the Dominican FCC. All of the frequencies and channel power allocations were kept in a large book, not unlike an old time bank ledger. The book showed that Rocket Radio was on 1200 but they were supposed to be on 1190—it had been written down wrong. But the Dominicans wouldn't budge. If they did, it would be admitting it was not in compliance with a Communications Treaty with the U.S. and other countries.

As we stood around the HBC offices, I.P. explaining the dilemma, I noticed something that I had seen many times in Vietnam...leaping freckles!

"I.P., I really hate to tell you this, but I just saw some of your freckles move."

"I don't have any freckles."

"Yeah well, look at your arm and by the way have you had any itchy places lately?" I.P. looked closely at the hair on his arm at the same time he scratched his crotch.

"Goddamn, what the hell is this?"

"It's the crabs, I.P. Don't worry, they're easy to get rid of. I'll have somebody run over to the pharmacy and get you the stuff. You just smear it on and take a hot shower."

I sent the receptionist over to pick up the cure and that's when Randall Schumacher walked in. He had just gotten back from the Netherlands Antilles run. We called it the 'paper route' because he had to check 18 stations every month.

The first thing out of Randall's mouth was, "Geoff, I am just not making enough money. I have to have a raise."

I said, "Clance, would you please pull Randall's pay records for the last six months?"

Randall was a short young man, skinny as a rail, long blond hair to his shoulders and large light blue eyes. I.P. chimed in, "You would have more money if it didn't all go up your nose!"

Clance pulled the pay records. I.P. was brushing the hair on his arms

looking for more leaping freckles. As this was going on, Randall was taking the access panel off his oscilloscope. "It's not all going up my nose," Randall piped up. "Anyway it's cheap. Look!" Randall pulled a baggie of cocaine from his oscilloscope. It must have been at least an ounce. We were stunned!

"You dumb son-of-a-bitch," I.P. sneered. His green eyes were already turning into small black stones and he was tight jawed. "Don't you know you could go to jail forever for smuggling coke?"

"You really are an idiot," I told him. "Do you have any idea the trouble you could bring to HBC? You could ruin us, asshole!"

"By the way, you are averaging \$5,000 a month," Clancey said. "Not bad for a moron!"

"Wait, wait, you guys. I've got a friend in customs. He never checks anything. He's really a good guy. His name is Dewayne—a real pal! The funny thing is old Dewayne is always there to greet me and he's there when I leave.

"And another odd thing, I just don't know how he does it, but when I fly from one island to another good old Dewayne is already there to see me through. Amazing, huh?"

All together, the three of us say some version of, "How can you be such a shit head?" Randall looked at us, confused, grinding his teeth and twitching around. We knew he had been doing the snitz for days.

"How does good old Dewayne spell his name?" asked I.P., his eyes completely black now, clenching and unclenching his fists. This was not a good sign!

"Well, I guess it's the Dutch spelling. It is odd." Trying to control his voice, I.P. asked again, "How the fuck do you spell his name?"

"Okay, okay. It's D-u-a-n-e." A simultaneous groan from the three of us.

"It's not pronounced 'Dewayne'. It's pronounced 'De-WA-nee'. It means Customs Officer!"

As I was about to strangle Randall, a blood curdling yell came from the stair well or as I.P. called it "The Homo-Break area." Running, screaming toward us was Bob Bennel, his pants around his ankles. Hot on his heels was Heavy Willy, doing his best to pull up his jeans. Willy was having

trouble getting his woody back into his pants. The skinny little brown pecker wasn't cooperating.

At first we were speechless. Then Bob started to yell, "The beast, the beast! Get him off of me. I'm being attacked! Help me, help me!"

It was then we noticed Sun Tzu nestled tightly in Bob's well coifed silver curls. Tzu's coloring and Bob's hair were almost the same. Apparently those silver curls looked comfortable to Sun Tzu, so while Heavy Willy was going down Bob's Hershey road, Tzu just availed himself of that lovely hair do! When Bob was sufficiently startled, Sun Tzu dug his claws in deeper to hold on and stay put.

Stumbling into the HBC office, wearing a 14 pound cat hat, trying to pull his pants up and still screaming for help, Bob needed me to lift Sun Tzu from his beautiful curls. Sun Tzu, purring softly, began doing figure eights around my feet, waiting to be congratulated!

When Clancey saw what was happening she began to giggle. I.P.'s eyebrows crept up his forehead, his eyes turned back to green and he started to laugh. By this time Randall was rolling on the floor. He couldn't stop laughing; of course he was high on the bad thing!

Bob turned red, but managed to pull up his pants and without a word, turned on his heel and marched off to cry on The Gunner's shoulder and to steady himself with a few martinis. Heavy Willy disappeared.

## CHAPTER 53

# THAT TODDLIN' TOWN

The 1976 NAB was held in Chicago. Most of the Hospitality suites were in the Hilton. As I mentioned, our suite was on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor. That March was warm for the Second City. The Hawk was not blowing; it was quite nice.

Sun Tzu's punishment was that he couldn't accompany us to the NAB. It was the first one he had missed since 1970. Macho could have cared less; he was a stay at home kind of guy, but not Sun Tzu. Tzu had traveled with me since he was three weeks old.

When Clancey and I started to pack so did Sun Tzu. When he had finished lining up his stuffed lion cub, his yarn and both of his mice in front of his carrying case, he went to my luggage and sat on it. When I told Tzu he wasn't coming with, he was very unhappy and peed in Clancey's make-up case.

Our Morning man, Luis, and his wife volunteered to baby sit the boys. I always liked to get to the Hotel two days early so not to be rushed setting up the suite and to be rested on opening day. Another reason was that if something went wrong, we would have time to fix it. This particular NAB was complicated for us, and I wanted I.P. to have plenty of time to set up.

Going early also gave us time to smuggle in our own bar. Buying from the hotel was outrageous. And dealing with the unions in the hotel was a nightmare. That old joke about getting a light bulb changed in one of the bathrooms and 17 people show up plus a supervisor? It's true! You ask the supervisor, "How many people does it take to change a light bulb?" The answer was, "Seventeen. You got a problem widdat?"

If you've never worked a hospitality suite, know that it's a bitch! You are up at 6AM and in bed by 3AM. Bob, the Gunner, Clancey and Randall had only worked one other Hospitality Suite and they really didn't want to get up that early. I insisted that they did so they could lay out our brochures on every seat at every Seminar and Panel Discussion. I.P. and I were old hands at this, so we set the example. We always left someone in the Suite, but every morning it was the same drill. Get our information in front of the prospects.

This year our theme was Competitive Engineering. Ken was the first to ever tell me the McLendon saying, and you've heard me say this before, "All other things being equal, the one with the best signal wins!" I'm sure Gordon wasn't just talking RF; AF is just as important. You could always tell a McLendon station. They just flat out sounded better. My suspicion is that the mind set came from Mr. Callahan.

Too many engineers watched their signal on an oscilloscope. The problem is you don't watch radio, you *listen* to radio. Many, if not most, engineers don't know I.M. from a frying high end or a muddy bottom. If you pointed out a problem with the sound, they would say, "Looks good on the 'scope!"

10:00 AM the first morning of the NAB, we were set. Bob, when he wasn't being a Queen, had beautiful manners, so he was the greeter. And he could mix any drink you could name. Jill took care of the clients when Bob handed them off. Jill then steered them to I.P., me or Clance. Randall kept checking the transmitters.

By 11:00 AM, people started to crowd into the hospitality suite. I.P. had both of the transmitters up and broadcasting. The folks that started strolling through were amazed that they could A-B the processing whether it was AM or FM. About noon, Mike Dorrough heard that his equipment wasn't sounding nearly as well as it should. Mike was in the suite by 12:30 with a screw driver, adjusting his processor.

At 2:00 PM our brochures needed to be laid out again for the next set of panels. As I say, we always left someone in the suite; everyone else worked the seminars and panels. Then we were back in the suite working our asses off. Clance demonstrated the gear, I.P. and I worked the hotbox.



I probably should explain ‘the hotbox’. We used the bedrooms to close sales—these were the hotboxes. The name came from when jingle companies used the bedrooms to close sales, but in those days the ‘hotboxes’ included young ladies. They were there to insure the client enjoyed the sale. That was back in the ’50s; however, the name stuck. Now we just used the bedrooms for privacy so that the contracts could be signed.

Our first day was successful. We sold 12 sets of gear, but we couldn’t get rid of Mike Dorrough until we closed the suite at midnight. He was still trying to get his box to sound at least as good as ours, but no luck. His wife finally got him to leave, thank God!

I.P. and Randall busied themselves powering down the two transmitters while Clancey, Bob, Jill and I were shaking hands and moving people out of the suite. It was Martini time. In my case a martini was two ice cubes in a glass filled with Stolichnaya.

We were all settling in with our drinks when somebody knocked on the door. It was the kid that had been hanging around the suite all day. He introduced himself to all of us but none of us had ever heard of him. Nevertheless, he knew us. At least he knew of me, I.P. Clancey and Randall.

The guy was from Greenwich, Connecticut and dressed like it. He was wearing a tatty old blue blazer of cashmere, blue jeans that had been pressed to a knife edge crease down the legs and Gucci’s with no socks. He wanted to be in radio so badly, but couldn’t get a foot in the door, so his Dad bought him a company that produced radio kitsch like coffee mugs with call letters, key chains, etc. He was a nice kid so we offered him a drink and let him listen to us debrief the day. He even volunteered to help with the handouts the next morning. Best of all he had some great pot.

We had barely finished our first drink when there was another knock on the door. “Aw, shit,” came from I.P., but he opened the door.

“Hello, I.P.” It was Greg Oganowski followed by Bobby Orban, Harv Rees and Ed Buterbaugh. Including I.P., these were the best competitive engineers in the business.

The U.S. is the most competitive radio market in the world. Many of

us had worked overseas, so we knew that these guys were the best in the world. I thought the kid from Greenwich was going to faint. All of his Heroes in one room!

Drinks and joints were passed around and an impromptu seminar began. Chairs were moved into Clance's and my bedroom. The Greenwich kid sat on the floor; Clance and I took the bed and then we just listened to the best in the world. These gentlemen were not just RF, they were also AF. It was amazing to just listen! The session lasted until about 3AM.

One of the stories told that night was about Harv's desk plant.

"Harvey was the Chief Engineer for radio at NBC Washington, and he kept a beautiful lush green plant on his desk. His boss was down from New York to look over Harv's station.

"Sitting in Harvey's office, he noticed the plant and touched its shiny leaves. The reason Harv's boss was in the District was to get an explanation from Harvey as to why he wasn't using RCA gear.

"Harv had replaced all of the pre-amps in the consoles and was using non-RCA equipment throughout the audio chain. The NBC rule was to always use RCA gear; after all, RCA owned NBC.

"Harv was already in trouble, but he was the best engineer in the chain and they really didn't want to lose him. So Harv said, 'Yes, the plant is beautiful. I found it in Rock Creek Park. I'm glad you like it. Do you have any Calamine lotion?'

"Well, no. Should I have some?'

"It might be helpful,' Harv said. 'That plant you like so much is Poison Ivy. Would you like a cutting?'" And that's where I.P. got the notion to have his own poison ivy plant.

The day started again at 6:00 AM. By 10:00 AM our brochures were out in every seminar and panel room; the bar was restocked and we were all in our places. I.P. and Randall had the transmitters fired up. Mike Dorrough showed up again with his tool kit. He was still trying to get his box to sound as good as our processing.

We were all still waking up, but when I.P. brought up the story of Harv's desk plant again, we all started laughing.

By 10PM we were all really tired. The suite was packed and we had two

racks of gear and two transmitters running. The suite was hot and stuffy, so I went around and opened windows. The old Hilton had those high ceilings and floor to ceiling windows.

That was when Sean Grabowski and his new boss walked in. Sean had his boss' arm and was holding him up. The guy was obviously drunk as a skunk. Sean's new boss was the guy Ken and Norton Horton had sold the clear channel boomer to in San Antonio. Ken had recommended Sean for G.M.; of course, Sean took the job. Apparently, part of the job was to monitor the boss' Scotch intake.

Bob was still manning the bar and without even being asked, Bob fixed a large single malt Oban and put it the large man's hand. Sean scowled, but said nothing and tried to introduce me to his boss. His Boss wasn't interested. When they walked through the door all Sean's boss saw was a 6 foot, blue eyed, wavy haired redheaded woman—my wife. The big man headed straight toward Clancey. It scared her actually and she began backing up, not noticing she was backing toward a tall, open window.

I saw what was happening and placed myself between the big guy and Clance. When I say a big guy I mean 6'4', 240 pounds. I'm 6' 1" and weigh in at 155 pounds.

Sean saw the whole thing too and tried to reach his boss, but I got there first. I hit him mid chest with my shoulder and all of my strength. Thank God he was drunk. He went over backwards and flipped over the couch. The thing was he didn't spill his drink! Sean got him out of there as quickly as possible.

The story was all over the NAB before we could close up the suite. At mid-night, when we finally got the door locked and Mike Dorrough's wife drug him off to their room, the engineers began to show up again. It was the same crew as the night before. I.P. told them the story of his trip to the Dominican Republic and explained why the San Antonio boomer was lame to the East. He also told about the leaping freckles.

The next morning about 10:00 AM, Sean and his boss showed up. They wanted to apologize for last evening. The thing is they apologized to me and didn't say a word to Clancey. It pissed us both off but we didn't say anything.

They asked me out to breakfast and I accepted. As we were walking three abreast out of the Hilton through The Hay Market coffee shop, we were accosted by a group of right wing evangelists. One, a tiny girl, tried to hand me a pamphlet. "Did you know Christ died for you?" she asked.

Without thinking I said, "No! I didn't even know the son-of-a-bitch was sick!"

Sean's boss laughed all the way up Michigan Avenue and through most of breakfast.

Sean wasn't sure if it was OK to laugh, but when his boss did, he did too.

Sean never knew what I was going to do next. Two days later, he asked me to do overnights on his Clear Channel and just tell stories. He said it would amuse the truckers.

## CHAPTER 54

# I WAS PROCEEDING IN A SOUTHERLY DIRECTION

The NAB was a complete success. Clancey, the Queen, surprised all of us when she sold the Australians three sets of our processing gear. She also sold them Engineering Consulting.

We had been back at 52 San Justo in Viejo San Juan only two days; I.P. and Randall were preparing for their trip down under. They were excited to be going to Perth, Sydney and Melbourne.

Mike and Patti surprised us one afternoon, knocking on the door. We were further amazed when they told us that they had found the money to take over the lease on our home in Boqueron.

“But wait,” Mike said. “There’s yet one more surprise! We’ve brought you a Chinese Temple Dog!” and he pulled out from under his shirt a Puerto Rican female kitten. Puerto Rican cats are strange to look at. They’re almost hairless, with huge ears. Clance and I were both taken aback, thinking for a minute, “Could this creature really be a dog? Maybe a Chihuahua?”

There was no way we could accept the gift. Clance, hostess that she is, invited Mike and Patti to spend the night. Over really good pot, we had a case of the giggles about the Chinese Temple Dog. We named her Trixie from Dixie and sent her home with Mike and Patti the next morning.

The Queen and I continued unpacking from the Chicago trip and the day seemed to be going well until our telephone rang. Clancey answered,

listened for a moment, and then turned to me with that look that said, “Boy, are you fucked!” She held her arm out and dropped the phone to the floor.

Shaken, I picked up the phone. “Hello?” God damn it; it was Penelope!

Crying, Penny whined, “Oh, Geoff, you must come over right away. Mother and I have a suite in the Condado. Oh please, please hurry!”

“Penny, pay attention. Clancey and I are married and have been since you left Dallas in a huff. If you remember you were yelling at me that your Grandfather hated me and I was just using you!”

“Oh, Geoff, I love you so much. I miss you. My Grandfather was wrong. I thought we had straightened this out at Mother’s wedding, right? You will have plenty of money!”

“Oh, for Christ’s sake, Penny, get a hold of your self!” In the background I could hear Katherine telling Penny to give her the phone. Clancey was throwing garments into her suitcases. I frankly didn’t know whether to shit or go blind. Katherine came on the phone.

“Geoffrey, let me speak to Clancey immediately!” With trepidation, I held out the phone to The Queen.

“I don’t want the damn phone. You can talk to your rich bitch all you want. You’ll have all the time you want. I’m leaving for Dallas on the next plane.”

“Look, Clance, it’s Katherine and we agreed to take three weeks to settle our business and get our money from HBC.”

“OK then. Hand me the phone, Geoffrey.”

“Katharine?” God, she was cool.

“Clancey.” I could hear Clancey’s end of the conversation. It was all “Yes. Uh huh. I see. Then we will we see you soon.”

The next thing I know, there was a knock on the door and there was Katherine. I was informed we were dining at the Convento. This was a high end restaurant in old San Juan; it was also a hotel. The place had been a Nunnery 300 years ago.

In any case, Katherine asked to be shown our apartment. We complied. The only thing that seemed to impress Katherine was the small plaza with a fountain, surrounded by exotic flora—a French door opened

from our bedroom onto the terracotta tiled plaza. Katherine made it a point to show Clancey how unlikely it was that she was good enough to marry a De Cliff, in that snotty upper class way. Clancey showed who really had class by remaining calm, polite and gracious to this unwelcome guest.

Katherine mentioned that Wadsworth didn't think our marriage was legal.

For the umpteenth time, I explained that Clancey and I had been legally married in Dallas before we began our honeymoon in Puerto Rico. Having Father Mike marry us in Boqueron was only a show for Clancey's parents. They'd insisted we be wed in the Church. And nevertheless, I did not want to be with Penny. I wanted to be with my wife. Why couldn't they understand that?

Dinner was a stilted affair to say the least. I don't know why we went at all. Clancey cried most of the night and then flew to Dallas the next morning. It took me three weeks to wind up our business at HBC; then I flew to Dallas. I was a wreck.

Clancey had rented an apartment and was back on the air as Lady Jane. She had resumed her place as Queen of the rock jocks! When I showed up at her front door I didn't know what to expect, but she greeted me as the prodigal husband.

I had my two cats with me. Sun Tzu was quite surprised to see that Clancey had acquired a tortoise shell little beauty she'd named Tortuga. A day later, this big gray tabby tom strolled into the apartment from the balcony. Apparently he'd jumped from the adjoining balcony and it was obvious that he was quite attracted to the beautiful Tortuga and he wouldn't leave.

"Geoff, I believe we now have four cats," Clancey said.

"Well, what do you think this old boy's name is? He looks a little like Humphrey Bogart. Let's call him Sam Spade."

"He's not fixed."

Clancey had taken an apartment in the artsy Oaklawn area. Living across the pool from us was another jock—a guy named Don Burns. Clancey had known him from WKBW and I had met him before. He had come to Dallas to work at KLIJ. It was like old home week.

I hadn't been in Dallas long before I got a call from St. Croix. A man we had met in San Juan wanted me to build and staff a 1K AM in Fredericksted. I had nothing else going on, so I talked it over with Clance. It would only be a three month gig and the money was good. We decided it was an okay deal. I called I.P. He was on the beach at the moment, too, so he was up for it.

I.P. started lining up the gear and I started hiring staff. I.P. flew out first to find a transmitter site. On an island that's 17 miles long and 5 miles wide, it's not that easy to find land.

I hired a G.M. named Richard Lipschitze and a traffic director, a woman with the improbable name of Spots. I left the hiring of jocks until we got to St. Croix. I loaded them all on an airplane, including Lipschitze's wife Heidie, a good looking accountant that couldn't wait to get to the islands.

When we finally made it to Fredericksted by way of American Airlines and Prinair, I.P. already had the two Ampexs installed plus the boards. He was still waiting for the transmitter and the steel stacker, not to mention the cart machines. The cart machines were usually the last pieces of gear to arrive.

Meanwhile Lipschitze and I started looking for jocks. That really didn't take up all that much time, so in my free time, I gave diving lessons to the crew that was already there.

Fredericksted is not that big so it didn't take much time for the Brown sisters to find us. They were all very curious and intrigued to know about us radio people. There were four of them from 18 to 24 years old. Their father was the Dean of St. Croix University and they were all accomplished divers.

One of the joys of Fredericksted is the outdoor market—all the fresh fruit and vegetables are displayed every day around the fishpond. The fishpond is a salt water holding area for fresh fish—you just pick out what ever you want and they pull them out for you. It doesn't get any fresher than that.



## CHAPTER 55

# AGAINST THE WIND

When I say that I was giving diving lessons to everyone, I did not include I.P. The closest I.P. ever got to the water was to look at it from a distance.

We found all of the jocks we needed easily enough, except for afternoon drive. Our competition was another 1,000 Watt AM in Christiansted called, of all things, the Magic Christian. The competition had one decent jock, a female named Marley. She had a good voice, not unlike Allison Steele or Clancey. Marley wasn't nearly as polished as either of those two women, but the talent was there.

I called her and made an appointment for two weeks in the future. I explained that I was going back to the States for a few days, but I would give her a call when I returned. Meanwhile, I.P. and I sat down and talked over what to call this strange little facility. I had already decided to go all Reggae. As far as we knew, no one had ever done an all Reggae station. We included Lipschitz in the conversation so that he would feel part of the process. Frankly we didn't expect much from him. He was a smart guy, but not a real radio person. We decided on the calls WRRF, The Reef.

I left I.P. in St. Croix to finish up the studios, but I took Lipschitz with me to PAMS. I'm sure he had never cut a jingle package and I wanted his buy in.

When we got back to the island, I.P. had everything ready to go. I still didn't have an afternoon driver, so I called up Marley. I made an appointment for dinner the next evening.

There was one decent French restaurant in Christiansted, The Top Hat. It was the Top Hat where, during our honeymoon, Clancey had discovered steak tartar. Before that she rarely, if ever, ate beef—now she wanted it raw!

The day I called Marley I was heading out to do a bit of free diving. The youngest of the Brown sisters had shown us this reef area and it was wonderful. This Brown sister was only 18, but stuck to me like glue. She had one of those crushes young girls get.

The unfortunate thing was that Lipschitze's wife also had a crush on me. Worse, she made no bones about it. She openly flirted with me in front of her husband; she was also jealous of the Brown girl. I had made it perfectly clear to both of them that I had a wife and I loved my wife very much. It made no difference!

Heidie wanted me to meet her at the country club for a sandwich and to teach her a little more about snorkeling. She had tried earlier to free dive but sucked in some salt water through her snorkel and panicked. She was coughing and started grasping at anything she could hold on to. Since I had insisted she wear a life vest, I just set her on my knee and blew it up for her while I was treading water. Then I towed her back to shore. The event certainly pissed off Lipschitze!

While I.P. was tweaking the recording gear, the rest of us headed down to the reef. Our plan was to have lunch at the Country Club, then free dive and snorkel that afternoon. Before we were out of earshot, I.P. yelled from the studio balcony "Hey, Geoff, phone call."

"Take a number, I.P."

"I think you should take this. It's from Chicago!"

"Hello?"

"Is this Geoff Cliff?"

"Indeed it is."

"My name is Terry Chess. Several people said I should talk to you."

"You are the son of Phillip Chess, the record guy?"

"Yeah, I'm the guy."

"Well, Mister Chess, how can I be of service?"

"I run my father's FM in Chicago and I can't seem to get any traction. I've been here for six years and we are still 73 out of 85 signals in the market."

"What have you tried?"

"Well, I hired Chuckles O'Donovan. He's an old friend of my father's, but he couldn't make anything happen, although I paid him for a year. We are still 73 out of 85 signals.

"Then Chuckles suggested you. I talked to other people, too. Claude Hall and the broker that appraised the station, a guy named Ken Camden. When can you come to Chicago?"

"Mr. Chess, I'm finishing up a project for an old friend. He asked us to build, staff and program a little AM on St. Croix. We're almost done, so we could be in Chicago in two to three weeks. Is that alright with you?"

"I noticed you said 'we'. Is there someone else with you?"

"Yes, Mr. Chess, my partner. He's an engineer. I'm surprised he wasn't mentioned too. We've been partners since '68. His name is Freelay, I.P. Freelay.

"Sir, if I recall correctly, you have a class B on top of the Hancock Center—'WSDM, the station with the girls and all that jazz, smack dab in the middle'. The freq, as I recall, is 97.9. That puts us right in the middle of the dial—a very good place to be."

"You seem to know a lot about our station."

"Yes, Sir. It's our job. Harvey Pearlman talked to me several years ago and we researched the market back then. Before that, we took a look at what Spittman was doing at NBC."

"Would you please call me Terry?"

"Yes, and call me Geoff. We should have the Reef on the air in a week. I'll need at least two weeks to make sure the staff has it down; then I.P. and I will fly up. Is that ok?"

"That's fine, Geoff. You'll want tickets? I understand you're always paid expenses?"

"I'll call you, Terry, so that you'll have the exact date."

I caught up with Heidie, Richard and the youngest of the Brown sisters just as they were leaving the Country Club and were shuffling toward the reef. The country club made me an egg salad sandwich to go. At least I wasn't going to go hungry.

As we were walking down to the reef, Heidie pipes up with, "Geoff, you should really wear those brief swimsuits like Richard has on. At least you have the body for it!"

“Well, that’s swell,” I thought. “That will motivate Richard.”

The dinner with Marley did not go well. She thought I only wanted to get into her pants and she turned me down for the afternoon drive gig. She had told me she was from Chicago so I even told her about my call with Terry Chess and that I was headed shortly to Chicago. She didn’t believe that either.

We got The Reef on the air and it was a hit from day one. After two weeks, my G.M. still had not made a sales call. We had one of those little talks; you know the kind I mean. In politics, they call it going to the woodshed. After Heidie had hit on me and we had our little chat about sales, Richard was steaming! I told I.P. it was time to go home, the sooner the better.

I called Clancey and Terry and told them we were on the way.

## CHAPTER 56

# A MAN OF WEALTH AND TASTE

“Hidey, buddy. Gotten a call from Chicago?” Ken asked.

“Yes, sir.”

“Well, you know, boys, I think this might be a good thing for you to do. Chicago’s a nice place. I did WNUW up there a few years ago. You’ll like it.”

“OK, Boss. Tickets are in hand; we’re on our way.”

I.P. and I stopped over in Dallas first. I wanted to see Clancey. I.P. and I both needed to get some warm clothing. Neither of us had spent much time in Chicago in the fall or winter so we made the mistake of underestimating the Hawk. I.P. picked up only his leather jacket. I did the same, as well as my Burberry. I loved up my beautiful Clancey and made reservations to the Windy City. She agreed that if I got the gig, she would move to Chicago with our herd of cats, our goods and our chattels.

Clancey told me that while we were building the Reef, our beautifully marked true grey and black tabby with the classic eraser nose had never gotten fixed so Tortuga was now preggers. She was getting plump and seemed very content.

I.P. and I picked up our tickets and flew to Chicago. We landed at O’Hare and took the \$18 taxi ride to the Hancock Building. We were in an early fall blizzard. One could barely see out of the cab window, it was snowing like crazy.

We were freezing, even in the taxi. I.P.’s leather jacket was letting him down. I was better off, but not by much. I had on a turtle neck sweater,

my leather jacket and the Burberry with the lining zipped in and I was still freezing.

Our plan had been to dress before we met young Terry Chess, but the airline lost our luggage, so no luck. Terry had booked us into the Playboy Hotel. This was not our first choice. I tried to book a suite in the old Drake Hotel, but I.P. won that argument; the Playboy was free.

We made it to the free hotel and were shown to our rooms. Terry had actually booked two rooms for us and it took me an hour on the phone to explain that we always took adjoining rooms, preferable a suite. Finally, Terry understood that we worked 24/7 so we always stayed in the same suite because we just never stopped working. Once he understood it, Terry liked the idea. He'd never had a partner that he worked closely with.

We were finally shown to our small suite; even I.P. was appalled—the Playboy used naugahide as bed covers!

“What the fuck is this?” I.P. exclaimed.

“This is tacky, my man, but we're stuck with it for the moment. Remember, you wanted ‘free’. We only have 20 minutes to get to the station. The damn building's doors close at 5PM.”

“And how do you know that?”

“Remember when I got sent to pitch The Dairy Association account, and that dumbass buyer thought the Q was 17<sup>th</sup> in the market because she couldn't read a book?”

“Yeah, I remember.”

“Pard, JWI is two floors below the station; I know the building doors are locked at 5:30 PM, so let's rock!”

“And we are dressed so beautifully.”

“So we're in jeans. We do have on leather jackets and I do have on a Burberry topcoat...wait. You're fucking with me. Let's go! As you always say, we are fearless motherfuckers.”

It was so cold that we had to stop half way and warm up at Carton's restaurant. Turns out it is the hang out for the police and for prostitutes. We found out later that it was owned by a Greek family and the place was famous for a deep fried sandwich that they called the “Monte Crisco”.

Several years later, Terry and I were reminiscing about this first meeting. He told me that he was nervous about meeting us. We were the

last people he was going to interview and it had taken us longer to get to Chicago than the other candidates.

Terry also told me that he had taken out a small vial with a tiny silver spoon attached—a bit of snitz, just to buck him up a bit. He hid his coke and was uncorking the blackberry brandy he kept in the bottom drawer of his desk when his assistant, Barbara, walked in.

Barbara had been with him a long time and felt she was entitled to chastise him. Terry really liked Barbara. She was quite beautiful. Her hair was cut short, in a pixie cut. She was Sicilian, but with blue eyes and light brown hair. She must have been a descendent of the Anglo-Normans that conquered Sicily in the Middle Ages.

Terry shook his head, put the brandy up and continued to pace. He had a huge crush on the perky Barbara.

“Goddamn G.C., I’m cold! Are you sure we need to do this?”

“Hang in, Stickman. You know what Lord Kenneth said.”

I.P. and I had walked through double glass doors into the station. To our left was a bright looking African American woman behind a large desk who asked us to have a seat. On the right was a grey divan with chrome arms. The carpet matched it. The receptionist let Barbara know we were here.

Someone we thought was probably Barbara walked by the reception area, took a look, and proceeded straight to Terry’s office. Later, Terry told me that Barbara reported that we looked like refugees!

“Gentleman, this way,” Barbara beckoned us. We followed her down the hall to the right. It was decorated with several paintings and prints, all with a musical theme.

We passed her office with “Assistant” on the door and Barbara showed us into Terry’s office. It was large and windowed. Terry was turned to look out of his window. The snow was blowing sideways. He had his hands behind his back more or less at parade rest. Barbara coughed. Terry turned on his heel and faced us.

“I’m Geoff Cliff and this is my partner I.P.; we’re pleased to meet you. We’ve played Chess records for as long as we have been in the business.”

“Gentleman, I’ve heard good things about you. Have a seat. What do we do next?”

"Mr. Chess, we need to know what we have to work with. I.P. needs to go through the engineering and you and I need to decide what you want to accomplish. Then there is a certain amount of research that needs to be done. I understand from you that Chuckles consulted the station, but out of 85 signals, WSDM is still number 73. Is that correct?"

"Yes, Yes. That's correct."

"May I suggest that I.P. takes a look at the equipment and you and I have a chat?"

"We have an engineer named Larson. Chicago is a Union market, but I don't think that will be a problem with Larson. If you'll wait a moment, I'll have him come down and give—I.P., is it?"

"Yes."

"Then I'll have him give I.P. a tour."

"Good, Terry. I can hear a birdie in the stereo generator."

"What is that?"

I ignored him and continued, "Terry, our luggage was lost at O'Hare, or we would be dressed differently. As to the birdie, we will get to all of that."

"Why don't we brave our way back to the Playboy Hotel. If you could put I.P. and Larson together and then bring along the last six ARBs, we can start to get started."

Later that evening, I.P. and I were alone in our mega-tacky suite in the Playboy Hotel. I.P. started to explain the layout of the station. "Production is down the main hall on the left. It's a good size. There's a voice over booth sandwiched between the Control Room and Production. But before you get to the control room, there's a small office that's the Sales Manager's office. And then there's a larger sales office. The engineering shop is behind Production."

I.P. continued, "Down the left side of a hall is a huge windowed room—it would be perfect for research. And across the hall is a small office—no windows—just the thing you like to live in. A bat cave." He smirked. "And it's lined with shelves."

"Right across the hall from Reception is the Admin area and traffic. Cute girls. And all the Selectrics you'd ever need."

"OK, sounds like it's laid out like every other radio station we've ever seen, including that gray carpet! What about the engineering, I.P.?"



"Aw, Geoffrey, that place is a total mess. They're still in tubes! Could you believe how that guy was dressed? I know that I'm not exactly right out of G.Q., but My God!"

"So I.P., what did you like best—the red and brown checked sport coat, the green slacks, the Payless loafers or the paisley tie?"

"And this guy's rich?"

"Very rich, Ivan Paul."

"Well, if we get hired, we're going to have to rebuild that whole damn place."

"So, we need to talk, Pard. We did get hired today. Did you take notes?"

"Yeah. Did you?"

"Yeah. You go first, I.P."

"Wait, Geoff. What are they paying us?"

"Less than we're used to, but it's Chicago, the third market, absolutely the big leagues. And it's an FM in the middle of the dial, a Class B with a studio transmitter site."

"Geoff, what are they paying us?"

"I.P., it's not that bad. \$35,000 plus a car each, and an apartment."

"An apartment each, right? If Clancey's on her way, she won't want me there." I.P. knew about the trouble Clancey and I were having.

"Yes, two apartments."

"I've still got the XKE so I don't need a car."

The next morning, we were sitting in The Playboy coffee shop waiting for Terry. Our luggage had finally gotten delivered so I.P. was wearing a decent button down shirt and jeans. It was his day to crawl under consoles and behind racks. I was wearing a 3 piece dark blue suit with a red tie and a French cuff shirt.

Just then Terry walked in with his girlfriend, Rebecca. She pointed at me and said, "Terry, you should dress like that! Look how well he's dressed!"

I was slowly sinking into my chair. That's all I needed was for my new boss to be belittled by his girlfriend because of the way I dressed. Terry was wearing a purple blazer with red and green stripes—I call his jacket a blazer because of the brass buttons. His trousers were lavender and he was still wearing the down at the heels Payless loafers.

"You guys are all dressed this morning," Terry noticed.

"Thank you, Terry." I said. "Our luggage arrived last evening and, Rebecca, it is so nice to meet you. This is about the only thing that wasn't wrinkled this morning."

I.P. piped up with, "Let's order."

"Fellows, before we go any farther there is something I have to tell you. Today when I introduce you, I've got to introduce you as consultants." I.P. and I looked at each other, wondering what the hell?

Terry continued, "The P.D. I introduced you to yesterday has been with us for 25 years. I didn't have time to talk to Chaim yesterday. Just give me a little time to tell him."

"Alright, Terry, but we are on the payroll as of today?"

"Yes, Geoff. What do we need to talk about first?"

"We usually start with engineering. We start with the antenna and work our way down to the audio. Take it away, I.P."

"Terry, the antenna is fine. It's an ERI 3-bay and that's good. We are going to have to run new coax from the transmitters to the antenna. You have good RCA transmitters, but they are old and the power supplies need to be rebuilt. That's no big deal. But I don't know what else they'll need until I open them up and run some diagnostics.

"We also need to run new coax from the transmitters to the studios. Now that's the good news. We also need a new exciter and stereo generator.

"And now we get to the studios. WSDM is about three generations behind in technology, including the processing."

"OK guys, you'll get what ever you need. Are you ready to go over and make the announcement? By the way, Geoff said he heard a birdie. What is that?"

"We'll talk about that later," I.P. said.

"Sure, Terry. And we'll talk programming after I do some research...about ten days?"

We ordered and ate and then off we went to The Hancock Center, the Hawk blowing right through us. Michigan Avenue acts like a wind tunnel blowing right off the lake.

We were introduced around the station. WSDM had always been "The

Station with the Girls and All that Jazz', and the goddamn thing was a disaster with a few exceptions.

The receptionist was an older smart African American woman. Billing and Administration was run by a young woman named Mims and her assistant, Iggy. Mims looked a bit like Lauren Bacall; tall but not quite as slim. I had a feeling that she was very smart.

I'd found out from Terry that billing always got out 'on time', but I had a different timeline; mine was little tighter. I also had rules about aging accounts. At 30 and 60 days, accounts got a letter. At 90 days, they got a call. I knew that few agencies paid until 90 days, nevertheless they weren't exempt. I knew that I would have to talk to Mims about this, but not yet.

Iggy was a cute little thing with big black glasses. She was the only blond in the house, as opposed to Q-Rock where the women were all blond.

There was only one guy on the air and he was terrible; however, when I had a chance to talk to him it became obvious that he was brilliant. His name was Brian O'Neil. I.P. thought Larson could be trained to do engineering maintenance and could learn GEP (Good Engineering Practices). Another good exception was Billy Robbins, the sales manager. Billy's full name was William Rider-Robbins and he was good. He understood the importance of programming to sales and how great things happened when they worked together. I was delighted to have him.

All in all, there wasn't anything that could not be fixed. Before I.P. and I left, we went to the Security Office to have our pictures taken and our new ID cards laminated. Without ID, we couldn't get in or out of the building before 8:30 AM or after 5:30 PM.

Although I was hired with the title of Program Director, my real responsibilities were those of Station Manager; programming, engineering, admin, traffic and, to a certain extent, sales were all under my pervue. I was to work very closely with Terry.

## CHAPTER 57

# RIDING THE STORM OUT

There was one thing that I hadn't told I.P.; Terry had spiffed me an additional \$10K in trade. That was in addition to the salary, apartment and car.

I knew I.P. would be in the wind as soon as he had rebuilt WSDM and trained up Larson. He would go straight back to his first love...high powered AM stations. I.P. would be in Chicago maybe three or four months, max. I expected to operate as a line executive for at least two years.

I called Clancey after the 3<sup>rd</sup> day on the job and she was ready to pack up; we were moving to Chicago. Terry had not yet found us apartments or transportation so he put us up in The Delaware Hotel. He told us it was a theatrical hotel and only two blocks from The Hancock Center. I moved in and it was tacky, but sleazy in a different way from The Playboy. And this joint had a sort of kitchen with sitting room that doubled as a bedroom.

"How am I going to get the cats, the TV and all our clothes into the Bug, Geoff?"

I wasn't worried; Clancey was good at utilizing space. "The ZOO took it fairly well. I'm sure I can find a gig in Chicago after I find us an apartment."

Clance did manage to get everything into the Volkswagen, including Sun Tzu, Macho, Tortuga and Sam Spade, but she couldn't reach the passenger door from the driver's seat.

She estimated the 1800 mile trip would take about two days—Clance had stamina and could drive for 20 hours at a whack. But in the late afternoon of the first day, 40 or so miles out of Joplin, Missouri, Clancey spotted a dark grey line across the horizon to the west.

“My God, what is that?” she thought. “It looks like one of those blue Northers that Geoff told me about. Except it isn’t blue, it’s black, and it’s moving fast.”

It *was* a blue Norther, a real ice storm and it was moving right toward her out of the West. Within 20 minutes the Bug was encased in ice. Clancey was not one of those girls that panicked. She pulled over and chipped the ice from the driver’s side of the windshield and drove on until she spotted the first motel.

“Geoff, I’m outside of Joplin in the middle of an ice storm.”

“Hello, my Queen. Are you all right?”

“Yes, baby boy, I’m fine and so are the kitties. But I need to hang out here for a bit. I’ll be in a day late, but I’ll be there.”

“Clance, you don’t have to drive straight through; that’s a long run.”

“Don’t worry about it, sweet boy.

“Hey, I know you guys have been working on call letters and I was thinking about it during the drive. How about ‘W-L-U-P, The Loop’? You know, like the downtown area of Chicago where the trains turned around? Just think what we could do with that!”

“OK, Baby, I think that’s good. That’s a name that relates! Let me think about it some more and I’ll see you soon.”

“I love you, Darlin’!”

“I love you too, my Queen. Soon!” Things were back to normal between us.

“Wait, Clance, I’ll give you directions.”

“Don’t need ‘em, honey. All my love.” Click. And she was gone. What the fuck are you going to do with a woman like that?

Clance arrived about 6:00 PM in the evening. It was dark, of course; in late November the sun goes down around 4:00 PM in Chicago. Clance didn’t call for directions; she drove right to the hotel and called me from the lobby. She has that gift of knowing things, even things before they happen. She can also make things happen. Never play Backgammon with her. The dice always do what she wants them to do.

I helped the Queen unload the Bug, cats and all; then we ordered dinner. One of the great joys of Chicago is that you can have damned near anything delivered. While finishing the pizza, Sun Tzu, Macho and Sam Spade sniffed every corner of our small suite. Tortuga found the bathroom, snatched a towel and carefully dragged it to the one closet. She had begun to make a comfortable nest for her pending family.

"We're about to be parents, Geoff."

"You're pregnant?!"

"No, not me. Tortuga!"

After that little heart stopper, Clancey rolled up a big boy and sat me down on the bed. She told me about being encased in ice outside of Joplin, Missouri. After she chipped off enough ice to see through the driver's side window, she found a motel and stopped for a few hours. She used the down time to finish knitting me a thick, warm beautiful scarf. She also used the down time to come up with our new call letters.

By then, Clance and I were a team again. She was much better with words than I was and we'd been together long enough that I always listened to her. "So, WLUP; what do you think?"

"That'll work."

She went on to give me several variations and plays on "The Loop" that would shape our on air persona. "The Loop Troop"; news could be the 'Scoop from The Loop'..."

The main thing was everyone in our target audience could relate to it. I couldn't wait to go in and tell I.P. He would get it right away.

The next morning at 5AM, I wrapped up in all the clothing I could, including my new scarf, and ran toward The Hancock Center. Once again, I had to stop at Carton's to warm up. I was getting to know the cops and prostitutes by name.

The overnight woman called in sick and Chaim decided not to have anybody do the 2—6AM shift—he just let it go black. I was astounded!

There was not a soul in the facility. I picked a desk in the Sales Office and began to write an interim Format Guide. The night before, Clancey had sold me on "The Loop"; now I had to sell it to Terry. He probably would have accepted any calls I suggested, but I wanted him to like them.

Back at the hotel, Clance picked up the Sun Times and started looking

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for an apartment. She was not waiting around for the sales staff to find a trade out apartment. We needed a home big enough for our rapidly increasing feline family.

## CHAPTER 58

# TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS AND WORKING OVERTIME

The morning drive jock didn't show up until 6:20. Her name was Carole Ann. I decided right then she would be the first one I fired. They didn't call me 'Ken's Killer' for nothing.

I kept working on the interim Format Guide until I.P. showed up at 7:30. We secluded ourselves in the engineering space to talk things over. I.P.'s report was not pretty. AC was running with the audio, inducing hum and buzz into the signal that went up to the transmitter. It had to be rewired.

The cart machines were older than dirt. They had to be replaced. We already knew that the consoles were a disaster, not to mention the mics, amps and turntables. We were going all-cart so we needed a Dolby system to reduce noise. We weren't sure whether Terry had ever heard of noise reduction gear. We had to have processing that was actually from this decade. After we totaled every thing up, the number came to between \$60,000 and \$70,000 in capital.

I.P. gave me a look. "Do you think he'll buy this?"

"Pardner, how many times have we had to explain to owners and G.M.s that new gear is a tax write-off?"

"Yeah, but how many times has that worked?"

"It never worked. But you know it's true."

"Yes, I know. Still..."



We had an appointment with Terry at 9AM to go over my research and I.P.'s report on engineering. It didn't take me ten days after all. It only took four days. Terry showed up about 10AM.

"Terry, you offered that big room with all of the windows for my office, but I don't want it. I need that room for our research kids. It's perfect with that large built in shelf. I can put 10, 12 interns in there doing call-out research."

"Uh, Geoff, what's call-out research?"

"It's music research. We are going AOR. Before you say anything, I know ABC is doing AOR and NBC has announced they're gonna go CHR but they're lying. I know Spittman is going to go AOR as well. The one thing that I.P. and I have learned over the years is that we can always beat the network O&Os."

"But, uh..."

"Terry, we can win. I know that Ken Camden appraised the station at \$3 million, but that's just stick value. We can do better!"

"Well, I don't..."

I.P. pops in with, "We can smoke these fuckers, notwithstanding that little creep at NBC. He's way over-rated. G.C. can kick his ass, and I can out engineer the network dudes."

"You guys have a high opinion of yourselves. I only have 9 months to make this work—that's all my father gave me!"

"Shit a brick!" I.P. and I said together.

"Well, can you do it? Terry asked. I looked at I.P. He looked back with raised eyebrows.

"Fuckin' A douche bag, Bubba! But we've got to smoke!" I said.

I.P. spoke up, "The thing is we can't screw around. We've got to start now."

"He's right Terry. To do it, we have to get going now. No waiting around, making people feel good. Kick Chaim out of his office. I want the space. It's small with no windows; I like that, no distractions.

"And stand-by for a whole new staff. You only have a few keepers and only two of them are on the air and one of those doesn't belong there. He's a keeper, though; he's a good blade."

"Who do you mean?"

"O'Neil."

"Uh, what's a blade?"

"It's a production guy, Terry."

"This is a Union market, fellows. Production has to be done by the engineers."

"We've already talked to Larson and he's glad to have that off his plate. We made a deal, Terry. Larsen would rather have a little more time to ski than have to be in that production room, dubbing tunes to cart and putting promos and spots together. He's not about to report us to the union."

"OK, I have an agenda here and it says the first thing is engineering," Terry said. He was nervous, pacing. Things were moving very fast. His face was red, matching his curly hair and wispy red mustache.

"Why don't we get Robbins in here?" I suggested. "He has a big stake in this and we need his buy-in from the get go." Well, maybe my suggestion came out more like an order. I have a little problem about being in charge, especially when there's no time to fool around.

When Robbins got to Terry's office, Terry again asked us about engineering.

"Between \$60 and \$70 thousand," I.P. told him. Terry blanched.

"My God, that's all the money in the world!" Terry's voice was trembling.

"Terry, you said whatever we needed, and this station has been neglected for years. If you are to compete, you have to have something to compete with! And, Terry, that's what it costs. But remember that engineering equipment is a tax write-off! You get all that money back!"

"But, uh, Geoff, when I said that you could have everything you need, I thought maybe \$10,000—tops, \$15,000."

After a few minutes of silence and some meaningful looks between myself and I.P., I said to Terry, "Alright, give us 30 minutes."

I turned to Billy. "Billy, I know you wanted that space with the built-ins and all of the windows for sales, but I really need it for call-out research. It needs to be my 'War Room'. It's the only space we have that's big enough to hold all the interns. Do you have a problem with that?" After a short delay, Billy shrugged and agreed.

“One other thing. Programming will need to outline all the promotions which will include sales packages. Programming will also do some of the other sales packaging, but I’ll work closely with you.” I shook his hand, and then asked Terry if I could move in to my new office in the afternoon. I also told him that no one had done overnights and the morning drive lazy bitch hadn’t showed up until 6:20.

“I.P., let’s discuss the engineering.” I.P. and I wandered off to the engineering shop.

“Well, that flipped them the fuck out,” I.P. noted.

## CHAPTER 59

# DIRTY DEEDS DONE DIRT CHEAP— PART II

“Alright, Ivan Paul Freelay, how we gonna act?”

“Well, G.G.B.C., remember when I helped Marvin Reeves rebuild the NBC stations in the district?”

“Of course.”

“Well, here’s the thing. With NBC, you’re only allowed to use RCA gear and that’s not what we did. We used high-end gear and charged it to the TV station. It just so happened that Marvin had a desk full of TV purchase orders.

“I can rebuild those ancient boards with the amps and pre-amps we put into the FM and replace them with the RCA junk Marvin has on a shelf.”

“Can you pull that off?”

“I can pull that off.”

“OK, what else?”

“Here’s the list,” I.P. started reading, looking at me from under hooded eyes, larcenous grin in place. “Panasonic Technics variable speed turntable, processing gear, coax, cart machines, two MCI reel to reels, three Sennhausers, a Neumann mic and an Amber unit. Anything else you need?”

“Can you get one of Craig’s Tri-Band processors?”

“He signed a contract and can’t build any more of them, but yeah, I think I can come up with the right stuff.”

"OK, I'll need five playbacks and a record/playback unit."

"We'll have to buy those new and rebuild them."

"Fine."

"And you, Mr. Cliff, have two brand new Urei E.Q.s to throw into the pot."

"OK. What about an exciter and a stereo generator?"

"We'll have to buy them new. Then I'll modify them. Geoff, don't worry."

I.P. laid out some other things. "You know I've got to buy some PVC pipe to run the AC separate from the audio; I'll need coax and I've got to rebuild the power supplies on those RCA transmitters. And until I get inside those RCAs, I don't know what else I'll need to do."

"And we really need to get new control boards, but—look, I can rebuild these and make them work. Oh, and getting the tunes to cart? You're gonna need an Amber unit."

"Yeah, you already said that, I.P."

I.P. and I walked back into Terry's big windowed office. Of course, the first thing these two Southern boys noticed was soft snow falling. The second thing we noticed were big-eyed inquisitive looks from Terry and Billy.

Billy spoke first. "Geoffrey, what exactly do you mean about programming laying out sales packages?"

"Billy, I mentioned this to Terry but you and I have not really had a chance to talk much. Here's the thing. Every good promotion does four things; it raises your visibility in the marketplace, it helps quarter hour maintenance, it can be sold and it recycles audience. For all those things to happen, the promotion needs to be outlined by Programming. Of course, you and I will discuss every detail." William Ryder-Robbins just nodded his head.

"OK. So, now, Terry, I've got the list," I.P. started.

"And we think we can do it for around \$25 thousand," I finished. Terry gulped, walked around in a circle for a minute, muttering.

I.P. and I caught what he was saying. "My father is going to kill me." Then he looked at us and said, "OK. Let's go."

"Geoff, I've told Chaim you're in and offered him a sales position."

“So everything’s cool?”

“It’s fine. Come on, let’s take a look and I’ll give you the keys. Come with us, I.P.” We walked down the hall past reception to my new office. Unfortunately, the door was locked.

“Don’t you have the keys, Boss?”

“Sure, I have an extra set back in my desk. Just hold on a minute. You know that’s weird. Chaim said he would meet us here.”

It only took Terry a few moments to get my new office door open. The office came with extras. There Chaim was, swinging gently from the ceiling fan. He was an Orthodox Jew and always wore one of those prayer shawl things. He’d hung himself with it. Terry was stunned.

I.P., being I.P. full time, said, “I was afraid he was going to try and hang around.”

After the cops left and most everyone had settled down some, Robbins, I.P. and I took Terry out for drinks. I think the hardest part for Terry was phoning his father with the news but, like a trooper, he did it. Terry was continuing to surprise I.P. and me. He didn’t look smart and strong, but he was.

## CHAPTER 60

# MAMAS AND PAPAS

After I told Clance the day's happenings, we rolled up a big boy and kicked back on our little bed in that cold, miserable hotel. Then she told me her news. Clance, never being one to wait around, found us an apartment.

"Tell me about it."

"It's only five miles from The Hancock and only two blocks off Lake Shore Drive; two bedrooms, two baths and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. Wait, here's the best part...it's only \$350 a month."

"That sounds great, Baby."

"And Geoff, I bought some furniture. We can move in next week."

"Will they deliver the furniture that fast?" Just then I heard a little mew from the closet. Then I heard lots of little meows. Clance opened the closet door and gave me a big hug.

"Geoff, we're parents! Look! Four kittens! We now have eight cats!"

"Son-of-a-bitch. Let me take a look!" And there they were. Tortuga was curling around four small wriggling kittens; all of them white except one long haired black guy with white boots.

We left the closet door barely open so Tortuga could go in and out. The boys did not give her any trouble; they knew their lives were about to change, but it was up to Tortuga to raise the kittens.

Clance and I put all the covers we could find on top of our bed and snuggled to keep warm. Well, that's not all we did. We tried everything we could think of to keep the cold away.

After they had taken the crime scene tape down, I spent three days in my new office, commonly known now as the 'office of death', writing the Interim Format Guide. When it was complete, I called a staff meeting—not just the jocks, but everyone except the sales people.

It was time to lay out the new deal. Meanwhile, I.P. was laying out PVC to rewire the studios. I.P.'s best guess was a three month rebuild. That would give me time to find some real jocks and get some phone lines and interns to start the research.

We also needed to find an ad agency. Terry had us scheduled for an agency pitch right after the staff meeting.

The staff meeting was scheduled for 9:30 AM. I sent out the first "Loop Scoop" the day before. It was just a memo with a tricky name. The staff was curious; they kept asking me, again and again, what that meant. I wouldn't tell them. At the appointed time only half of the staff was in the room; O'Neil was there as well as Admin, Traffic and some of the jocks.

I.P. gently closed the door and locked it. I.P. was in attendance to explain what changes the jocks would be dealing with for the next three months regarding equipment. Of course, the real purpose was to familiarize the troops with the concept of a format, how the ARB works and what a format guide was all about.

After about 10 minutes people began to knock on the door. Staff started to look at us but we paid no attention. I.P. spoke up, "Usually, Geoff would give this part of the talk, but I'm so disappointed I've decided I should tell you myself how this works. By the way, most people call Geoff 'G.C.' and I'm addressed as 'I.P.'. And yes, we've heard all of the I.P. Freelay jokes.

"Now, when G.C. calls a meeting for 9:30 you are expected to be in your seats with your legal pad and writing instrument. The door is then locked and no one is allowed to enter. Are you getting the picture?

"If you have not noticed, both of us wear chronometers. They are Rolexes. Our business operates not in hours, not in minutes, but in seconds and parts of seconds. If you can't deal with that, you may now get up and put your resignations on G.C.'s desk.

"We are all sad about Chaim, but today is another day and we're here to build a world class Rocker. Again, if you can't live with that, we'll accept your resignations today."



I stood up and thanked I.P. “Well, there you have it. In order to build a world class station, the first thing you have to have is discipline and joy for your art. Now let’s go over the interim Format Guide. Has anyone ever used a Format Guide?” No hands were raised.

“Well, alright. Before I hand out the interim WSDM guide, I will give each of you a copy of the latest WIS format guide, just to familiarize yourselves with the concept. You will note that our guide is much more detailed than theirs. One other thing you will notice is that every jock is air checked and critiqued daily.

“Now, let’s learn about the ARB.” I made sure the traffic woman was in the meeting. She needed to understand how to load the log. I already had the pre-print logs made up—kind of a show and tell. The first thing I taught them was the ARB methodology concerning five minutes of listening in any quarter hour gave you credit for that quarter hour.

“What that means is if you hold the audience across :00, :15, :30 and :45 we get credit for all four quarter hours. It also means that there are only four places to run spots; i.e., *not* :00, :15, :30 and :45. Any questions?” Again, no hands were held up.

I saw only scowls on most faces. I passed out the pre-print logs and explained their function, again all scowls. “There’s one more thing you need to know, and that is that our audience will be in and out of the station on a regular basis. Very soon, we will be giving away something every hour. When the winners come into the station to pick up the item they’ve won, we want them to see us as being just like they are so they’ll be comfortable.

“Any requests for a tour—we’ll give it to them. So from now on, you will dress in jeans like our target—18 to 34 year olds. We have to be the street. Does everybody understand that?” Once again, all I saw looking back at me were scowls and confused faces; all except O’Neil.

After I wrapped up the meeting, I spent a few minutes debriefing with Terry. When I went back to my office, I found two resignation letters, one from the news woman and the other from the morning drive bitch. I thought, “Well, that’s a start.” I started planning how I would shuffle people around to cover the shifts.

During the few days I had been at the station, I realized more and more

that O'Neil was a diamond; a rough diamond, but a jewel none-the-less. I knew that O'Neil was the name of the ancient kings of Ireland. I had high hopes for this kid.

I called O'Neil into the 'office of death', and told him that we were going to need a few good jocks from medium and small markets that we can train up to major market standards. "Do you have any ideas?"

"Yeah, I do. Let me have a day or two."

Next I knocked on Billy Robbins' door and asked him if he could spare me a few minutes. I needed to talk to him along with Terry. As we walked into Terry's office, Terry quickly hid whatever was in his hand. "Terry, we need a word."

"We have a few minutes before our meeting with the ad agency. What do you want to talk with me about?"

"Oh, just one or two things. You know, we've been talking about new call letters. We have to shuck years of history associated with the old calls.

"Well, I think I've got them. W-L-U-P. Clancey came up with 'The Loop' on the way up from Texas. I believe that will work!" I laid out all the variations we could use with the calls that Clancey had laid out that first night in the cold suite. There was nodding of heads; WLUP it would be.

Billy said, "You know, my girlfriend mentioned those call letters a while ago." Once again, the Sales Manager bought in, and after a little discussion, so did Terry.

It was in this meeting that I also learned that our average rate was \$15! I damn near fainted! \$15 a holler in fucking Chicago? Terry also shared his thought that he and WSDM were a joke in the market. I thought, "Not for long, fuckers!"

"Terry," I said, "every body's going to find out that we've filed for new call letters and they're going to ask what they mean."

It didn't take Terry long. "We'll just tell them that it stands for my dad and uncle, 'Leonard und Phil'."

## CHAPTER 61

# TUMBLIN' DICE

I met Terry at the elevators and we rode down the four floors to get pitched by Bingham & Bingham. We were immediately ushered into a large conference room full of people.

Terry set us up for a visit to Ogilvy & Mather the next day; however, they are such a big shop I expected nothing from them for a little account like ours. I had no idea about Bingham & Bingham, but they were handy...only a few floors away.

Advertising agencies don't really make any money from radio stations. They do get raised visibility in the market place though, so they compete for us. After all, name recognition is a big deal in the business.

As we were shown to our chairs and offered coffee, tea or water, the 'face' stood up and welcomed us. The 'face' is the guy that makes the pitch and sometimes turns out to be your Account Executive.

This guy had one of those silly ass permanents that the Disco crowd wore. That put me off right away. The dude started with his pitch about the agency and then asked me to tell them what we needed. After glancing at Terry and getting the nod, I waded in.

I explained who our target was and how we were going to snag them. I couldn't leave out engineering because that was a major part of how we were going after 18 to 34 women. No AOR had ever done that before. None of the males got it, but from the back corner, a tall female with short kinky hair pops up and says, "You're certainly sure of yourself."

I continued, but again she said, "You're a guy. Regardless of all your

snazzy engineering hoo-hah, how are you really going to get females to listen to a hard rocker?"

At that point the perm guy stood up and said, "We will do some preliminary logos, then we can talk about copy. OK?"

Back up on the 37<sup>th</sup> floor, I made my way back to the production room. I.P. was working on that first. I.P. greeted me with, "Hey, Bubba, who ever wired this sucker was sniffing glue. They've got AC running with the audio and rat tails everywhere. This is the land of hum and buzz!"

"Why don't you say what you really mean, Mr. Freelay?"

"Goddamn, G.C., this is the number three market. I've seen better engineering in Saginaw."

"Has the new gear started to come in?"

"Yeah, some."

"Dime'."

"Coax is in; Craig's tri-band is here, but I've got to get to The District. I talked to Marvin; he has switched all the amps...and, oh yeah, the Amber unit is here and so is the Jap turntable. How are you coming with the call out?"

"Not for shit, Bubba; not for shit! Go ahead and fuel up the XKE and go to Washington. *'sta bueno?*"

I don't remember when it started, but at some point I started calling Terry 'Boss'. I might not have known when I started, but I knew why. Terry had trouble with his self esteem. Barbara, his assistant, also did the best she could to make him feel good about himself. I don't mean they were lovers or anything, but Barb became a fan of I.P. and me because we tried too. I found out later that Terry's father had teased him and mentally beaten him down for years.

I told Terry that I.P. needed to take a little trip to the nation's Capitol. "Boss, I.P. needs to drive to the District to pick up some equipment. He'll drive his XKE and pull a U-haul trailer back."

"Uh, Geoff, why does he need to go to Washington?"

"It's just some bargains he needs to pick up. You really don't need the details, do you?" I said with a wink. "The thing is we had to give our American Express cards back to The Camden Corp. and I.P. doesn't have any other credit card."

"I'll get you guys some Business American Express cards. In the meantime he can use my Visa."

"And Terry, don't touch that plant on I.P.'s desk. It's poison ivy!" That piece of news took I.P.'s trip to The District right out of Terry's mind.

"Look, here's the thing. Our job is to get the cash flow up and the overhead down. We don't need a News dude. That's not how we are going to handle our news obligation."

Terry looked at me a long time. It seemed to me he was turning over in his mind just who the fuck were we. After all, Chuckles O'Donovan had never brought any of these things up when he consulted the station for a year.

"What do you have in mind, Geoff?"

"We are going to break our contracts with AP and UPI. We don't need to spend that money. We are going to handle the news in a different manner. I've read the License Renewal and we only owe the FCC two minutes an hour."

I told the Boss how we'd dealt with the news in Norfolk and San Juan. The only difference in Chicago was the target audience. The news would be produced daily and run last in the stop-sets.

"Geoffrey, how do we break our contracts with AP and UPI?"

"We just don't pay them and eventually they will come get those noisy-ass machines."

"They could sue us."

"They never have. And Boss, there's something else. I need to hire some people. You know, some folks resigned."

"I thought you arranged that nicely, Geoff."

"Now, Boss, would I do that?"

"What do you purpose to pay them?"

"Well, I've also read the Union contracts. Because of our low gross income, the least we have to pay is \$250 a week. That's our starting pay. The ALTRA contracts are probably our best weapon."

"You have a strategy, don't you?" Terry asked. I didn't even answer. I just winked and went to my office and called Commander Bob. I told him to be in Chicago in two weeks and that he couldn't sell coke. Bob didn't even ask about the pay; he just said he would be here.

I asked O'Neil to come down to my office for a chat. He had just gotten off the air and was afraid that I was going to fire him; he had checked up on me and I.P.

He settled in to one of the chairs, looking apprehensive. I asked him for an update on any recommendations for other jocks. I knew that I might have to use The Commander on the air for awhile, but the real reason I brought Bob in was to dub the tunes. He knew how to do it. I didn't have to train him and I also knew he wouldn't last four months.

"I know a couple of good people," O'Neil said. "One is a woman. She worked with us at a small AOR outside of Detroit. And there's a guy in Santa Fe that knows more about rock music than..."

Just then there was a hasty and loud knock on my office door. Before O'Neil could move, the door burst open, and then slammed shut. The smartass woman from Bingham & Bingham was standing up against the door.

"You've got to help me. You got me into this mess!" O'Neil and I just sat there, not knowing what was happening.

"Aren't you the woman from the agency?" I asked.

"Yeah, and they're looking for me. They think I blew the account!"

"What's your name anyway?"

"Well, Mr. Cliff, my name is Weisman and because of you I'm going to get fired!"

"Because of you, your agency gets the gig. We just haven't told Perm Hair yet. Frankly, you were the only one in the meeting that wasn't clueless." Just then my phone rang and it was the receptionist.

"G.C., you have a visitor; a guy from the ad agency that you and Mr. Chess visited this morning."

"Janie, have him take a seat and tell him I'll be with him momentarily. Please get Terry on the phone."

"You're the boss." And Janie hung up. I don't think Janie trusted me yet, probably because of the resignations. Well, she hadn't seen anything yet.

"Would you hide in that room across the hall, Ms...uh..."

"Weisman, Mr. Cliff. Yes, I will." My phone rang and it was Terry.

"Boss", I started in, "I don't think we have to look any further than

Bingham & Bingham. Most of the people we met were turkeys, but I liked the tall smartass woman in the back of the room all dressed in black. She was the only one that got it. I would like for her to be the lead on the creative."

"You're sure?"

"Yeah. Olive Oil and Mother are too big. They won't pay attention to us."

"You call them Olive Oil and Mother?"

"Terry, almost everybody in the business calls them Olive Oil & Mother. I've made calls on those twerps, and believe me, we will not be on their radar. B&B on the other hand needs us."

"Janie, send the guy with the weird hair in, OK?" There was a knock on the door.

"Hello," I said. "I think we had a good meeting this morning. Ms. Weisman really impressed me. I would like for her to take the creative lead on our account. That OK with you?" I thought the guy was going to fall through his asshole.

"What?"

I repeated my request and he just nodded his head and left, a shaken man. I poked my head into what would become the War Room, the space that Billy had so graciously allowed me for research. "OK, uh, Ms. Weisman, you can come on out."

"Call me Connie."

"OK. Call me G.C."

When we were back in my office, I asked O'Neil to stick around and I told Weisman what had happened. "I don't know that I've done you any favors, but you are the lead on our account. You're not fired. Now was this whole drama just to get the business?"

"How old are you, Mr. Cliff?"

"Thirty one, my dear and, yes, I've been around the block."

"I can see that!"

"Well, then, call me when you have something for me to look at, alright?"

"Mr. O'Neil, you were saying?" I turned to O'Neil, dismissing the Bingham & Bingham wiscass.

"Uh, well, uh, G.C., another thing is that Tilly and Carol Jane are going to sue you. Well, actually they're going to sue you, Terry and the station."

"Well, that's just fuckin' peachy. On top of that Swarner and Spittman, the boy wonder, are announcing today that they are taking their FM AOR. I knew that the rumor they put out about going CHR was bullshit. NBC would never do that. The good news is it's automated."

"Now tell me why those women are going to sue us?"

"Sexual harassment."

"What?"

"They didn't like being air checked every day and told what they were doing wrong."

"Uh huh, and...?"

"G.C. they think you picked them out to get them to quit."

"I see. Actually I was going to try and keep Tilly but she'll need to quit if she's planning to sue."

"You know, we are going to be the 5<sup>th</sup> signal in the market playing the big records with the small holes. However WRXT is no worry. They really are a Progressive station. I mean, Christ, they let the jocks pick their own tunes and they just roll the spots whenever they feel like it. They will stay at their 1.8 and never do any better."

"ABC is always easy to beat. As soon as we scare them a bit, they'll change formats. And the rest of the bad news is that Spittman is going to spend a shit load of money the first three months they will be commercial free and the TV will start rolling the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January."

"Geoff, how do you know all of that?"

"I.P. and I are sneaks and we know a lot of people. That little make believe station out at Fox River is no problem. No signal, no programmer."

O'Neil rolled his large, sunken eyes. I don't think he believed a word; however, that's exactly what happened. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January when NBC's TV spots starting running, announcing 'AOR and commercial free for the first three months', the whispering began about I.P. and me. "How the fuck did they know that?"



## CHAPTER 62

# MIGHTY FINE HOUSE

I caught a cab to our new apartment on Gordon Terrace. The Doorman let me in and I took the elevator to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.

Clancey was a natural born nest maker, the mark of a Cancer and a good sign for a Pisces like me. Billy had come through with some of that \$10,000 in trade at a place called Chrome Yellow, an avante guard furniture store. Clance had done well picking out some pieces. She made a good home for us.

She always professed that she couldn't cook, but I knew better. All of those weeks we spent on Mona Island she came up with wonderful meals without much to work with. It was the same at 52 San Justo in Viejo San Juan. We shared the cooking not just because I liked to cook, but because it was the right thing to do.

After I hugged and kissed Clancey, I petted all of the cats except Sun Tzu—he was still mad at me because of all the little intruders. That's when I decided to start taking him to work with me. I'd done that at many other stations; it was only in Africa, the Philippines and the last NAB that I had to leave him home.

"Geoffrey, we need to talk." This was not a good sign. I'd been working 16 to 18 hours a day including weekends. Now that Clance had furnished the apartment and decorated it, my best guess was that she was bored. I knew what she wanted to do, jock at the station, but I also knew that I couldn't make it happen. Here's the bad part; she was the best person for the job!

I had been wrestling with this the whole time we were in Chicago. I needed her in afternoon drive. She was the best AOR jock in the city; what's more she was a killer promotions person.

One of the things I hadn't yet had a chance to mention to Terry, or any of the employees, was the principle of "secondary area of responsibility". I.P. and I had always employed this concept. It never made any sense to us that a jock could come in and work four hours and go home. Oh no!

Everyone had a "secondary area of responsibility" in addition to their shift, such as being the Music Director, the Promotions Director or overseeing Research. Keeping the head count low worked for us on a couple of levels. It kept the operating budget affordable and it kept all the jocks involved in everything the station was doing in order to win.

Clance had one rolled up and a bottle of Margaux breathing. "Geoffrey, did you hear me? We need to talk." I knew I was in trouble. If I admitted I really needed her, she would talk me into it and if I asked Terry, he would cave. I also knew that if I put Clance on the payroll I would lose the respect of the troops I had and the troops I would be bringing in.

I thought if I could put Clance and O'Neil together, I would have a brilliant promotions team, but I was afraid that everyone would be jealous and resent her. If they thought she would be treated better because she was my wife, it would undermine the discipline I had to have in place. To win in Chicago I would need all the help and luck I could muster in addition to an exceptional on air team. I just couldn't bring her in, all the while knowing she was the best person for the job. Talk about a rock and a hard place.

"OK, my Queen. Let's light that bad boy up and pour a glass and have that talk. You know, I've been thinking about what you could be doing while we're putting WLUP together. I'm going to need your input, but you could also be broadening your knowledge of the business at the same time."

"Geoffrey! That sounds like the start of a practiced speech. Is it?"

"Yes, Clance, it is. Listen to me. I can't bring you in at WLUP. It wouldn't work and it's against policy."

"So what is your suggestion, Mister—I—always—follow—the—rules—Cliff?"

“Alright, I’ve thought about it a lot. I need you on the air and I need you to help with promotions and...well, many things.”

“Great! That’s what I want too!”

“But wait. When I came home from the ‘Nam all I wanted to do was be in the Radio Business. I knew I had to know about all aspects of the business, not just jocking. I was clueless about sales.

“Your father is the best salesman I’ve ever run into. My God, from tanner and leather carrier to Executive V.P. of the Sports Division of Endicott- Johnson? You have his genes! I think you could learn about sales from one of the rep firms in town. What do you think?”

“That’s bullshit. Geoff, you really want me at WLUP?”

“Yes, my Baby, I do but I can’t.”

“Well, you can. But you’re not going to. So I’d better come up with another plan. Another glass of wine, asshole?”

Clance started working at Blair after the Holidays as a sales assistant and seemed to really take to the work. That ended that conversation for the moment, but I knew it wasn’t over.

## CHAPTER 63

# WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS

I.P., Marvin and Craig walked through the front door of the station, each one loaded down with gear. Janie, our receptionist, rang me.

“Your partner is back and I think they need help.”

“They?”

“Yes, Geoff. There are three of them. They are headed toward the Engineering shop.”

“I’ll be right there, Janie!” Sure enough, three of the top five competitive engineers were in the house. It doesn’t get any better than this! The Radio Gods were smiling on me!

“Hey, guys, Jeez Louise, am I glad to see you! How can I help?”

“Yo, Bubba! Get some of your hired hands to help us unload. Marvin will go down with you and show you where we parked.”

I.P. turned to Marvin and asked, “What floor?”

“Sixth.”

I rounded up O’Neil and Larson. We followed Marvin down to the XKE with the U-Haul trailer. The damn thing was stuffed with gear. Eventually we got it all unloaded and the A-team went to work.

“Now, Stick Man, these guys don’t have much time. I need you to turn this sucker off for a couple of days, OK?” So off I marched to Terry’s office just in time to find him wiping his nose and hiding his bottle of Blackberry Brandy in his bottom drawer. I still didn’t get it that he was hiding his cocaine and alcohol addictions. In fact, I was beginning to think he was the best G.M. I had ever worked with.

"Terry, I've got three of the best engineers in the business here and they brought the gear. The thing is they don't have much time and we can't wait until midnight to start working. We need to shut her down now."

"Jeez, Geoff! We've filed for the call letter change and done everything you've asked, and now you want me to shut down? Right now? In 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter?"

"Yes, sir, I know this is an important billing month but we're only charging an average of \$15 a spot! How much can this hurt? And it's the right thing to do." I thought if Terry agreed, this would be the first time something like this was ever done in Chicago. Moreover, it gave the record promoters another reason not to call on us and supply us with records. We were a joke in the radio community. Being off the air would be worth it, and it couldn't be much worse anyhow.

"We have I.P., Marvin Reeves and Craig all here to work. You know Craig, the guy that invented Tri-Band processing? They also have the Chief of The Big Eight on the phone. Boss, that's four out of the five best engineers in the states!"

"Well, what are they going to do?"

"I.P. is going to start rebuilding the boards. Marvin is going up to the antenna to see what's up with our 3 bay. Craig is going to work in the production room. My E.Q.s came in, so Craig is installing the Tri-Band, but to get this done we've got to shut her down for a bit. This also gives Marvin and I.P. a chance to rebuild the power supplies in our RCAs."

"OK, make some sort of announcement. And keep me informed. I'm sure I'll hear from my father. Aw, shit!" Terry looked up at me quickly, remembering something. "Geoff, there's another thing."

"What's that, Boss?"

"I got the settlement letter today about those two crazy women that sued us. We lost, of course, but it's not all that steep."

"Well, what would you expect from a 25-year-old female judge? Of course she was going to find in their favor. My god, everybody gets air checked everyday, all the time. How is this sexual harassment?"

"Yeah, I know, I know. But the fine won't kill us. OK. Shut her down."

In three days the guys had the coax run, the transmitters' power

supplies all set and the new stereo generator and modified exciter in. The engineers disbanded and we powered back up. I couldn't hear the birdie anymore.

Best of all, the production room was done so we could start dubbing tunes to cart. I had a preliminary playlist lined out, but I still didn't have the War Room up and running. We were only a week from Christmas, which meant no interns until after the holidays.

I had another problem. Our traffic woman just couldn't get it right. I had talked to her, I had written her up and she was still not paying attention. I decided to teach a lesson to all of the troops.

I went to see Mims; she was in charge of all admin. "Mims, take a seat. First, I want to tell you what a great job you're doing. After we get our new calls we may make a few changes in our billing procedures, but it will be no big deal. After we make the change over, I want to start having billing out within five days of the end of the broadcast month. Do you see any problem with that?"

"No, no problem."

"OK. But today's problem is traffic. I know she has a one year old baby and her husband is having a hard time finding work. Worse, it's Christmas. But I'm going to fire her.

"Mims, I know she's your employee but I'm not going to put you in that place. I will do it. She doesn't do her job for shit. She pays no attention at all. This is not rocket science; it's pre-print logs!"

"Geoffrey, I know you're right. I can't get her attention either. She continually screws up. She isn't even good at getting the clients their run times!"

"Mims, can Iggie run traffic for a few weeks?"

"Sure, and I've also got somebody else I've been looking at. Frankly, I was going to come see you about this after the Holidays. When are you going to let her go?"

"Two days before Christmas."

"Jesus, G.C., that's mean!"

"No, Mims, it's a lesson. We are serious and we are going to win and everybody needs to get the message. We do not fuck around!"

"You'll scare the shit out of everybody!"

*THE RADIO GYPSIES*

“That’s the point. Are you with me?”

“I’m with you.”

“Thanks. Listen, it’s late. Go home.”

## CHAPTER 64

# GOOD VIBRATIONS

“I’m home, my Darling!” It was a joy to walk into the apartment. The kittens were running loose and Sun Tzu had forgiven me. I got purrs and head bumps and ankle figure eights. Clance already had a bottle of wine open. I sat down on our big couch and Sun Tzu jumped into my lap.

I got a big hug from Clancey, welcoming me home. She fed me well. She had found this new place with incredible food to order in from. We had smoked quail for starters and it deliciously went on from there.

Later, Brian O’Neil showed up again at our apartment with no announcement. He had a habit of doing this. He had news.

“And, no, G.C. No plane ticket for Cindy Hayes or Irish. They prefer to drive here.”

“Why is that, O’Neil?”

“Well, I told them that you’re going to hire them, so they might as well drive in with their stuff; just clothes and records, mostly. They’ll stay with me for a while.”

The next morning I wrapped Tzu up in a blanket and took a taxi to the station at 5AM. Tzu was very excited! It was after all a new place. He rode on my left forearm as always, but as soon as we went through the glass doors of the station, he began to wriggle. He wanted down. It was a new place and he had work to do. Tail up, he sniffed every available corner. I unlocked my office door and Tzu zoomed in and checked it out to be sure it was safe. When he was done, he assumed his position in the doorway.

For the next hour, I made notes in my office. At 6AM no morning



person showed up. I began monitoring ABC, NBC and WRXT. I was surprised when O'Brien showed up at 6:30. My door was still open and the first thing O'Brien noticed was Tzu in the doorway. Tzu had already met O'Brien at our apartment, so he did figure eights around his ankles.

"Brought your cat, huh?" O'Brien pulled up one of the two chairs in my office and sat down. He told me he'd gotten a call from a guy doing mornings at ABC in Detroit. "He might like to talk."

O'Brien drifted back toward the production room, but over his shoulder he said, "Look, you've got to teach me how to use the new gear in the production room." We'd already talked about him being the permanent blade.

"OK. I.P. will be in sometime this morning. You've met him. You know how he works; makes up his own rules. He was probably here all night but he'll be in eventually and he'll run you through all the gear."

I pulled out the half-finished WLUP Format Guide and went to work. Later when Terry came in, I grabbed the opportunity to talk to him. I brought Tzu with me to his office so I could introduce them.

"Terry, you know we've got to fire most of these turkeys on the air. Our Union contract is an advantage; indeed, it's our best weapon. Because we bill so little, we don't have to pay more than \$250 a week while the other stations start at \$400. Our overhead is so low that we can use a 'scorched earth' strategy."

"Scorched earth strategy?"

"Yes, the same strategy that Alexander used against Napoleon, that Stalin used against Hitler and that Sherman used against the South."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that we keep our overhead low as our numbers go up. We keep our spot rates under the competitions' and hurt their cash flow. We'll starve them out. Eventually, they won't be able to compete!"

"The key, Terry, is getting our cume up. Just look at our ARB. Our cume is less than half of ABC's and NBC's. We're not going to have any trouble with our quarter-hour maintenance. Our challenge is we need to raise our cume. We've talked about this before."

"I get it."

"Next, I.P. and I have never had money to pay for big time jocks. What

we do is hire medium market and/or small market kids; we train them up and make them stars! I've got two jocks on the string. One of them is a woman. I know, we've got to have at least two women on the air as part of our license renewal, but I've only got one and I'm still looking for the other one. Just stay with me on this."

Terry understood the situation. He didn't mind when Sun Tzu jumped on his desk and gave everything a good sniff, paying particular attention to the drawers. Then he hopped down and gave the corners his attention. After all, it was Sun Tzu's job as he understood it and he was on duty. "My God, Geoff, it's a surprise a day with you, isn't it?"

The guy from Santa Fe really did know more about rock than anyone I had ever run into and he was good on the air. The next day Cindy Hayes showed up. I always put the new people on the air on the overnights so they could get used to the board and so I could hear them on the air.

Hayes sounded almost as good as Clancey. She had that big smokey voice and didn't try to be sexy, but she could rock. I hired them both.

The third guy—the one from Detroit—wouldn't be in until later. I knew he was interested, but I hadn't talked with him yet.

After the holidays, interns from Northwestern and Colombia College started showing up. I put Hayes in charge of research. She hated her secondary area of responsibility, but she liked her new air name "The Haze". O'Neil came up with "The Haze". Like Clancey, he was good with words. The dude from Santa Fe was Sean Ireland, so he was called "Irish". He became the music director.

My phone rang for the fiftieth time that morning, interrupting my work, yet again. "Geoffrey, there is a long haired midget in reception that claims he knows you," Janie announced.

"Is he dressed funny?"

"Do you mean is he in a flying suit with a crash helmet under his arm and does he call himself Commander Bob?"

"Send him in.

"Commander, how are you?"

"Sorry, Geoffrey. I would have been here sooner if I could. Where's I.P.?"

"He's around, but the production room is finished and the voice over

room is complete. The control room is almost done. Hold on just a moment, Commander.”

I asked Janie to send O’Neil and Irish in. We waited for a few minutes; then the boys knocked on my door. I introduced everyone, and then spelled out what the duties were.

The Commander was familiar with dubbing the tunes to cart. He had already used the E.Q.s and the Amber unit. He understood about getting the frequencies all up to the same level so they can go through the Tri-Band more easily.

When you try to push really good audio through ordinary processing, it’s like trying to push a hurricane through a keyhole. With Craig’s Tri-band and the Amber unit, everything got through and sounded great.

The Commander also knew how to use the Panasonic Technics variable speed turntable; a trick he’d learned at Q-Rock—making the other stations sound draggy without changing the music. Different format, same tactic.

And there was something else. When going to all-cart on an F’M there was always hiss, so we required a noise suppression unit. We chose a Dolby unit which we got from the same place we got everything else we couldn’t afford. I.P. would have to show the Commander how to use it; we didn’t have this at Q-Rock.

“Irish, would you please make out a playlist of 300 tunes to dub first. Commander, instruct Irish and O’Neil on the use of the Amber and the E.Q.s. I.P. will go over how to use the Dolby when he comes in.

“I’ll give you guys the rotations of the tunes. Irish, we’ll wait on the new tunes until we hit the air with the new calls. The calls should come through in early March. That’s only two or three weeks from now. Commander, we need this done well and quickly, but no South American marching powder! Got it?”

“G.C., how could you think such a thing?”

“Wait. Mr. Cliff, do you mean for us to change the integrity of the music?” asked Irish.

“I see, Irish, that you don’t approve and your face is all wrinkled up. Well, get over it. I don’t give a damn about the fucking music. All I care about it is garnering a large and demographically correct audience.

"Our deal is to win. That's our job. Do you guys realize we're selling spots for \$15 a holler! Now that's appalling. We don't change the integrity of the music. It's just a tool. We improve it. Fuck a bunch of integrity!"

Since this was the first day I brought Sun Tzu to work with me, there was much whispering in Admin and Traffic. "Do you think he's gay? I mean, he has a cat and he dresses...well, you know," Iggy speculated.

"Well, yeah, but he has a wife!" Mims countered.

"We could try to fuck him; that would settle it, huh?"

"Iggy, you are always wet."

"Well, you know what the guys say—'no waiting'. Did you get one of those books he was handing out?"

"Iggy, he's not gay, and yes I got the 'Art of War'."

"I got one too, but I can't make heads or tails of it!"

"Read it again."

"Mims, you mean you got it?"

"Yeah, I got it. But you know what? Most everybody else is clueless."

"Mims, his cat is beautiful, with those blue eyes, but I mean...the Art of War?"

"I'd heard of the book, Iggy. I looked it up. It was written two thousand years ago. This Sun Tzu was a brilliant General. Geoffrey Cliff knows some shit." And there was yet more angst in Sales.

"Terry, have you seen the cat?"

"Yes, Billy, I've met Sun Tzu."

"Are you going to let Geoff bring him to work?"

"I'm going to let him do whatever he wants, as long as the numbers go up."

"And did you get one of the books, too? I mean, he named that cat after the author of the book! 'If you sit by the bank long enough, the bodies of your enemies will float by.' What does that mean, Terry?"

"It means I'm going to let him do whatever he wants, as long as the numbers go up. Have you ever seen anything like his Format Guide? Or have you listened to our signal lately? Oh, and that quote from the book? It means 'to have patience'."

"Yes, I've listened. It's the best sounding station in the market but is that a really big deal? Sales packages aren't sold on the sound of the signal."

"I don't know, but Geoff tells me it's important. I don't know how many times he's said 'everything else being equal, he who has the best signal wins!' That's Gordon McLendon's line, you know."

The interns arrived and the War Room was working. We couldn't play the hooks of the tunes down the phone lines; we just couldn't afford the cart machines or the personnel to make that work.

What we did get from the research was which bands worked for males and/or females, and what age groups they appealed to. The qualifier, to make sure we were talking to the correct demographic/psychographic, was "Do you listen to WSDM?" We used this same ploy after we changed the call letters. If they didn't know the station, we asked them, "Would you please listen to our station for two weeks and I will call you back?"

This worked for us on several levels. It qualified another interviewee and we also got new people to tune in. It didn't work every time but it worked enough. We would use this line every day that research was done. This was over 2,000 personal invitations to listen each week.

We didn't do just music research. We also ran lifestyle studies and researched the competition to find holes in their programming that we could take advantage of. We did some other studies as well. "The Haze" was doing a great job and she was beginning to understand the value of this work.

Finally, Commander Bob got the tunes committed to cart. He mastered the new production room. One of the most difficult things was teaching his interns to erase the carts and roll them until just past the splice. The carts were going to be re-used and if someone recorded over a splice, it made a hiccup on whatever you were producing. And that turned off a portion of the audience. That hiccup could screw up our Quarter-hour maintenance; in my world that's unforgivable. Recording always had to start past the splice.

O'Neil knocked on my door. I was busy so I said 'Come in' louder than usual.

"G.C., you know that guy we talked about for Morning Drive?"

"Yeah?"

"Remember he's currently doing mornings for ABC in Detroit and he doesn't like it?"

"Abrams hired him?"

"Yep."

"OK, when's he flying down?"

"He's in reception. Can I bring him in?"

"Absolutely." The guy O'Neil brought in had a wonderful voice and he was a blond Adonis. I'm thinking, what the fuck? This dude has to be gay, but what do I care? Damn. I wonder if he's ever read a book?

"Mr. Cliff, thank you for seeing me. That's very kind of you!"

"Sit down, Brian, and you too, Tommy."

"You know my name, sir?"

"Yes, Mr. Murray, it's my job. Why do you want to come to work for less money and at a station that's number 73 out of 85 signals in this market?"

"Sir, I know O'Neil and he says you know what you're doing. The other thing is I know that Abram hates your guts and that always means he's afraid so you must be good!"

"Alright, Tommy, you've got mornings for the moment. Does that fill us out, O'Neil?"

"That gives us the minimum. If you're going to replace me in mid-days, we've got one more jock to find."

Three days later, only two days from my birthday and four days from our call letter change, a small fuzzy man walked into my office.

"Hello, Geoff. I'm Leslie Spacey and I'm you're new mid-day jock."

"Well, Les, you get tired of living in La Jolla?"

"OK, you got me. But I'm from Chicago; my Mom lives here and she's not well. And frankly, I'm tired of working for the Pistol. He's more interested in 'ludes than he is in running a good station. So here I am. Tight board; no drifter."

"Spacey, how did you get into my office without going through my Bull dog, Janie?"

"I waited in the Stairwell to Heaven until the Bull Dog went to the john."

"What the hell is the Stairwell to Heaven?"

"Try to keep up, Geoffrey. Everybody knows how you feel about drugs, so they go into the Stairwell to Heaven. They snort up or smoke a joint."

"If it were me, I wouldn't fuck with it. You'd lose half your staff. This is the '70s. Nobody is going to jeopardize the license. Just leave it alone. Now, I've given you a clue; how about mid-days?"

"I heard you on the air when I.P. and I were doing *The Ocean* in San Diego. You got the gig. Start Monday?"

Two days before call letter change—my birthday—I got on a plane to Dallas. PAMs had gone dark. Now I went to JAMs. I needed to produce the distinctive 'swoosh' sound that Clancey came up with to identify *The Loop*. FM stereo was still pretty new but I wanted to use the concept to pan from side to side, from speaker to speaker, to sound like a loop. I had known John Wolfrets since he was the dub boy at PAMs and he got it right away. John is brilliant. It only took one night and I was back on the plane to Chicago the next morning.

"Clance, I'm home!"

"Hi, Baby, how did it go?"

"Check this out and tell me what you think." I played the tape.

"Sounds like a loop to me! Happy Birthday!" And she brought out my now-traditional chocolate cake with strawberries. It was the fourth one, one for each birthday we'd been together. And later I got my birthday present in our big canopied water bed. I was rollin' in my sweet baby's arms.

## CHAPTER 65

# START ME UP

WLUP signed on March 14<sup>th</sup>, 1977. I had briefed the whole staff on the new Format Guide—not just the jocks but sales, admin, everybody. I wanted everyone involved in the station. It gets better cooperation and a winning facility. The idea is for the staff to feel that there are no secrets.

The day we signed on, I sent out the intimidation letters. The new Loop logo looked great on the letterhead and I used the same couplet as always—“on the way to ruin your day”—signed, Geoffrey Cliff. It went to every GM and Program Director that I felt were competitors. Eventually, I received some responses. ABC wrote “Let the games begin”. I got pretty much the same thing from CBS, but from NBC I received a very gentlemanly response.

Something that I learned from Ken by way of McLendon was how to write a memo or in our case a “Loop Scoop”. Never just send out a memo. Call a meeting, hand out the memo, tell your people what the memo says and then have them read the memo. Then go back over the memo paragraph by paragraph, explaining exactly what it’s meant to say. You ask if there are any questions. If not, you ask a few questions to make sure the memo is understood. The whole point is to prevent confusion.

At those meetings we went around the room and heard from everybody. Every jock gave their input and they were free to say anything with no consequences.

One memo was confusing to most of the jocks. Since we were an all-cart operation, at the end of each jock’s shift, they had to clean the heads



of the cart machines. There was always alcohol and Q-tips in the control room. Not one of my on air people had ever heard of such a thing, so we covered it in a meeting.

That memo also included a part for Larsen, our engineer, to run tones through the recording gear every Sunday night, and realign the heads to be sure we were completely set up and correct. The staff began to get it—if it is not exactly right, it is wrong. And we were serious about winning.

But the station's music sucked. We hadn't finished with our music research. The other problem was me. I wanted women as well as men. AORs usually only attract 18 to 24 males and, to a lesser extent, 25 to 34 males. My target was 18 to 34 males *and* females.

I.P. had designed the engineering to accomplish that. The Fletcher-Munson curve was discovered by AT&T back in the '40s. Munson had a deaf child. He and his partner Fletcher, trying to get Munson's little girl to hear, discovered that there was a difference between male and female hearing.

As a result, they found that, as a general rule, women can hear the high end of the spectrum better than men; that's why women hate tunes like 'Cat Scratch Fever'. The high end drives them crazy. My problem was I tried to day-part those kinds of tunes out of mid-day. Big fucking mistake. No need to! I.P. had already handled that with the engineering.

People are very sensitive in their hearing at 400 cycles, so I.P. rolled that off a bit. By the way, 400 cycles is the old telephone ring. Most people's hearing rolled off some at 5-6,000 cycles. I.P. would boost there and then roll everything off at 12 KC. That meant I could roll 'Cat Scratch Fever' in mid-days and not blow off my females. So much for Janis Ian!

With putting the day-parting in, I had blown my males out in midday and I didn't get them back in afternoon drive. O'Neil and Irish tried to warn me, but I wasn't listening. After all, I was the big time consultant and these guys were just medium market jocks. What the fuck could they know? Well, as it turns out, one hell of a lot!

Otherwise the station sounded good. Production was better than anyone else's in the market. O'Neil also made the 60-second news blimps fly by, using music to illustrate the stories, with great creativity. I just left him alone to pick the stories.

Here's an example of an early news blimp: They were going to build a hotel in Oahu on what we would call old-growth forest, and the native Hawaiians were protesting. O'Neil used Joni Mitchell's line "They paved paradise and put up a parking lot" interspersed in the story, pink hotel and all.

O'Neil was also very good with the promos. I picked the subject matter and then just left him to create them.

People listen to the radio for the most part by themselves. They're looking for a friend, company. Our job was to be their friend, so we never mentioned radio things like car machines, earphones, mics, any of that. We did theater of the mind; we did not want to change whatever it was they imagined when listening.

As a kid when I listened to KLIF I saw in my mind the bands on stage playing those tunes. Most people never thought of a disk jockey sitting at a console playing records and I did not want to disabuse them.

We practiced inclusion. We wanted listeners to think of us as their friends and part of their family. One of the ways we did it took place at the shift change. This was very different from the way we did it at Q-rock or at our Top40s. With those stations, we didn't say a word; another jock just came on.

At The Loop, the jock that was ending his shift did the basics and the tease—three acts that were coming up like "Stones, Styx and Jackson Browne coming up". Then he rolled the two spots and came back with the jock that's taking over. They chat for :60-seconds about the station promotions, their lives, an upcoming concert—whatever. Then the "swoosh" sound ID and the tune. The listener doesn't know there's been a shift change until the next stop set, but they do feel like they've had a glimpse into the station and that they're part of it.

Back in December, just a few days after Clancey had gotten into town, Chicago was struck mute by the unexpected and sudden death of Mayor Richard J. Daley, mayor for the last 21 years. He had suffered a massive heart attack and died at the age of 74. Daley was an icon. He *was* Chicago. The City of the Big Shoulders stopped working for days. The city was in shock.

Firesign Theater is a quirky radio comedy act that spoofs anything and

everything. Nothing is sacred to them. Still, when we invited them to appear live on the morning show about two weeks after signing on as *The Loop*, no one expected what came next.

Proctor, Bergman, Ossman and Austin wanted to run the show by themselves so we turned the control room over to them. O'Neil, Tommy and I were in the production room listening in.

They proceeded to raise Mayor Daley from the dead so they could interview him, and they did a perfect imitation of his voice.

"Mayor Daley, what is it like to be dead? And, by the way, we're glad to have you back. We've got a limousine waiting right here to take you to City Hall."

"Why, thank you, boys! Got a cigar and some scotch? I've been missing them!"

"Sure. Sure, here you go!" They were on a roll and unstoppable. O'Neil and Tommy were rolling on the floor. I was about to have my own heart attack.

"I've got to stop this!" I yelled.

O'Neil held me back, "No! You can't stop them. They've already raised him from the dead!" He couldn't hold me for long because he was laughing so hard.

I could only imagine what would happen next. Daley was the biggest thing there ever was in Chicago, and I had just launched a new radio station! Would the FCC be calling me? Would the papers get a hold of this? And what about TV? What about Daley's well connected sons? Would they be looking for me? It was in super-bad taste and I felt caught but I couldn't stop laughing either!

Firesign Theater held the control room hostage for over two hours. They knew a lot about Chicago.

"Mayor, when will you be fixing 'The Eisenhower?'"

"Well, I got Lakeshore Drive fixed, didn't I?"

"Yes, Mayor, and how about them Bears?"

Everyone thought it was funny. It was the first big audience jolt. Everyone was talking about Firesign Theater and *The Loop*, and the day Mayor Daley was resurrected!

## CHAPTER 66

# ROLL UP ANOTHER ONE, JUST LIKE THE OTHER ONE

One afternoon I clicked on the station as I walked in from lunch. I heard the back end of a stop set during Spacey's show. "Bear Whiz Beer; it's Yellow." I recognized the 'spot' from a Firesign Theater album.

I called Spacey and told him to see me after his shift. I think he thought I was going to fire him. But instead, I said, "That Bear Whiz spot was pretty funny!"

"You liked that, Geoff? Good."

"Yeah, I did. Listen, anytime you have a hole in a stop set, go ahead and run something like that."

So Proctor and Bergman's humor became part of our signature sound. For those who knew Firesign Theater and loved them, it was an inside joke. For others, they probably didn't even realize some of the made up spots weren't real.

We also used drop-ins from Monty Python. 'I'm sorry. You'll have to be shot.' Then the swoosh and into the next tune. For most of our listeners, it was part of the subtle and constant off the wall things that the station offered up.

During our first book all I wanted to accomplish was to sell our basic identifier "The Loop". Our calls were WLUP, but we used "The Loop" almost exclusively to I.D. the station.

I stole a promo Buzzy had used to sell his identifier for 13Q. I did the

voice over using my best Jack McCoy voice; after that I just let O'Neil loose on the rest of the promos.

Here's an example: 'Now let's write this down together...W. I. U. P. The Loop.'

We were the only station in the market to use a name as our main identifier; everybody else just used call letters like they had been doing for years.

Our research told us that over three quarters of our target audience smoked pot and the rest approved of pot. I'm sure our competition knew this too, but they had lawyers while I had a smart G.M./owner and an even smarter Sales Manager.

So we ran a promotion during the ARB, again strictly to sell our I.D. It was 'Send us a picture of yourself and our name! You could have \$5,000 and tickets for two to Jamaica during harvest time! Simply send us a picture of yourself and our name. We want to share these things with you!'

We never used the nasty word 'contest'. The target audience hated 'contests', but they loved for us to 'share' things with them.

Then several things happened at almost the same time. The promos for selling our name had been running for only two days when we had a walk in. It was the U.S. distributor for Job Rolling papers. It just so happened he was headquartered in Chicago. He wanted to talk to Billy, our Sales Manager. No one in town would sell him time and here we were with the right audience and the right attitude. Billy excused himself for a moment; he just told the guy that he would be right back and to make himself at home.

Billy hurried into my office and told me what was going on and did I have somebody to show him around? I told him absolutely! I put O'Neil on the case and Billy and I hustled to Terry's office.

"The guy wants a 52 week contract, Terry," was Billy's opening salvo. I nodded in the affirmative. Terry asked, "What's the rate?" Billy said he had quoted \$60 for a :30-second spot, 15 spots a day. Terry didn't even take a deep breath; he just said, "Write it up and fire that local rep firm; find us a real National Rep."

This was a big break through. Terry's father had hired this old woman who had sold radio in Chicago forever to handle sales for what used to be

WSDM, the Jazz station with all those girls. Well, fuck it. We weren't that station anymore. We no longer sold spots for \$15 dollars a holler!

When the Job Rolling Paper spots hit the air, it not only flipped out the competition; it flipped out the record hypers. The day the spots hit the air CBS Records came over with the entire catalog we had asked for weeks before, and also a huge load of comps to give away. We had finally gotten their attention.

The only reason the hypers showed up at WLUP before was to buy coke from Commander Bob. In the next few days all of the labels showed up, including the Indies. Our T-shirts came in so we had something to 'share' every hour.

It was then that the entries began to come in, bags full of them. Many of the entries were XXX-rated. Janie was overwhelmed with bags of mail; many of the entries shocked her when she pawed through the bags. With the help of Xerox, young women could put their faces next to their breasts, or worse, their pussies. I couldn't believe it! Janie couldn't believe it!

Some of the entries were so big they had to be hand delivered. One of them was a 5' x 4' hooked rug. It was very beautiful and Terry thought it should have won, but there were more entries to review!

Billy sold the Art Show—a display of our best promotion entries—to a large bar. It took two days to put up the entries. We were going to announce the winner the night of the Show.

We ran promos for a week prior to the Art Show. Remember the promo rule: tell them what you're going to do, do what you're going to do, tell them what you've done.

Several years earlier, Lord Kenneth had sent I.P. and me to L.A. to consult an AM that only covered South Central and East Los Angeles. We had driven the signal as we always did, and we knew what the coverage was, so we told them to go R&B.

The G.M. and P.D. didn't take our advice. "Oh, no, no, no," they said, "we want to play those big records with the little holes and here's how we want to do it." They went on to explain the format that they wanted us to put in place. Their idea was to play three tunes in a row, then do a stop-set. Then another three tunes.

That was it! I.P. and I called Ken and told him what these two Yahoos wanted to do. Ken told us to document our recommendations on paper, get our money and come home.

Meanwhile, Claude Hall quit Billboard so Vox Jox no longer existed. The turkey P.D. that came up with that brilliant format in LA, as a result of his brilliant success, needed a job, so he started up an industry tabloid. The truth is he did a great job with his tabloid. At the time it was the only radio and records outlet.

The guy that wrote the AOR section seemed like a good guy. Once our promotion hit the air, he called me up. He was intrigued by our promotion—sending a couple of people to Jamaica at harvest time. Using pot as a promotional vehicle was very edgy and he wanted to know all about it. I made the mistake of also mentioning the pornographic entries. He was very interested and asked for a few of those naughty photos. Like an idiot, I sent them.

Holy Shit! I knew better. I knew not to trust a journalist. Even the private and personal letters I sent to Claude sometimes got into Vox Jox if he thought there was something juicy in them.

In '72 when we started doing call-out research, I wrote Claude a very private letter telling him about a skinny girl I was dating because she ran the IBM mainframe at the Army Base in the Norfolk area. Claude put the story in Vox Jox and jeez, I got all kinds of letters calling me a misogynist and worse. Claude got letters as well and, of course, he printed them too. Knowing Claude and his sense of humor, I can just see him chuckling.

So seeing the softer porn pictures in the AOR section of the industry paper should have come as no surprise. But it was embarrassing, none-the-less. I had already learned this lesson once, but I needed to learn it yet again!

On the night of the Art Show, the joint was swamped. The Loop staff got free drinks, but everybody else had to pay. The joint made a fortune! The Art Show was a smash hit. We picked a winner at the showing, a real artist named Ed Valentine. He had submitted an incredible pencil drawing with strange critters on the beach and a stoned guy under a palm tree so we sent a Ed and his wife, a very nice young couple, to the Caribbean.

Three of the interns we got to man the research phones were very special. Two of them were young men, one was half Italian and half Dutch; the other was Greek with an unpronounceable name. They were from Columbia College.

The other exceptional intern was from Northwestern. When she walked in, every swinging dick in the station got a boner! My God, she was gorgeous. Trinny Monticello was Sicilian but with light brown hair, blue eyes and an amazing butt. She must have had some Anglo-Norman in her blood, like Barbara.

I thought, "Geoffrey Cliff, don't even look. You are in love with the most beautiful woman in the world and the smartest; keep your eyes to the front and your thoughts to yourself."

Little did I know that Mims had her eyes on this new intern herself! Further, Mims had first choice. She needed a traffic person. Iggie had been doing traffic since I fired 'the twit' on Christmas Eve. Mims snapped up the little Sicilian in a heart beat.

So Trinny Monticello became the traffic person. At this time I didn't know that both Mims and Iggie were believed to be bi-sexual. I didn't even know what bi-sexual was. I later learned that it was just station gossip.

Another thing that happened was that the production load became too much for O'Neil. I needed to get him some relief. A few days later a smooth dude came sliding into my office; a slick little fellow named Fitzgibbons. Yes, yet another Irishman.

The first thing I noticed was his stainless steel Rolex; the next thing was his Gucci's without sox. His jeans were pressed and his buttoned down white shirt was custom made. I hired him. He had been to the same kinds of schools that I had attended. The difference was I went to Military School in Texas and he went to Prep School in Switzerland. He had too much money and a BMW.

Anyway, I hired the guy and he was good. I liked his work and that was good enough for me, until I heard a spot dubbed over a splice. I went ballistic. OK, I was faking it to teach the lesson.

Anyway, I took the offending cart out of the Control Room and threw it against the production room wall. Basically, I had a fit. They got the message. Do not fuck up!



Job Rolling Papers' sales were way up and the distributor came back to us with an idea to produce a carburetor in the shape of the Loop logo. I was excited by the idea so I went to Terry.

"I dunno, G.C. Let me think about this."

"Terry, they'd be great giveaways. We don't have to pay a thing for them. And carburetors are totally legal."

"G.C., I said let me think about it." Terry's usual thing was to not make quick decisions.

"He'll fret for a while but he'll say yes," I thought. I told the distributor to wait until I got back to him with an answer. In my mind, giving away a t-shirt an hour cost us money; giving away a free carburetor saved us money and was way cool to boot.

For the uninitiated, a carburetor is a glass pipe that cools the smoke from a joint as it travels along. You light up the joint and suck it right through, making for a smoother smoke. A carburetor with the glass in the shape of a loop logo would be highly prized, indeed!

The reason that Terry and I made such a good team was that I tended to overreact and Terry would pull me back from the edge. Like with the carburetors. Terry knew that was over the line, so he pulled me back and we told the distributor 'No go'. That's the way we worked. I pushed. He pulled. And we stayed right on target.

## CHAPTER 67

# SHE DON'T LIE, COCAINE

There were only a few days left of the Spring ARB. It ended in mid-May and, like every other programmer, I had the post book sweats and shakes. Clancey had quit her job at Blair because she was bored stiff. Policy and politics there meant she could never move up into sales. She was stuck in a clerical role and she was much too smart for that.

Next, she got a job with ARB. Her job there was to handle all the ARB station complaints. The complaints were always the same: the book must be wrong—our station couldn't have done so poorly!

So she walked them through the mechanicals—large, multi page computer print outs with every diary entry listed. ARB began releasing the mechanicals to discourage PDs from going up to Beltsville to look at the actual diaries. Some PDs continued to go because otherwise you couldn't see the editing errors that put the listening credit in the wrong column.

When I got back to the apartment, my baby had a fat boy rolled up; a '64 Margaux breathing; smoked Quail, a Caesar salad, Filet Mignon with asparagus on toast and hollandaise sauce. God, I love this woman.

Later in the evening several of the staff came tumbling into the apartment. The kittens were old enough to be adopted so when O'Neil asked if he could have one of the pure white kittens, of course we said yes. He named his kitten "Buzzy".

"Guys, we're having a hard time figuring out a name for this little cutie," Clance said, holding up her favorite kitten. "Here we have a long haired black kitty with white paws. Can anyone help figure out what to call him?"

O'Neil immediately offered up "Billy White Shoes Johnson. He's a wide receiver with the Chicago Bears and the only player that wears white shoes."

"That's it!" Clancey yelled. "Oh, that's perfect, O'Neil! The perfect name for a perfectly beautiful kitten!"

Terry still had not found us a car, but I began to understand that it made no sense to even own a car if you lived on Lake Shore Drive. That first winter did in Clancey's Volkswagen; the salt rusted out the floorboard so we bought a Celica coupe so Clancey could get around anywhere she wanted.

For me, a taxi was less expensive than holding on to a parking spot at The John Hand Job (which is what most of the people that work there called it) on top of the parking fee at the apartment.

The Book came out and it was a disaster. Again, a 1.2. Still 73rd out of 85 signals. I thought about slitting my wrists, but instead I booked a flight into Washington National and a room at The Mayflower, my favorite hotel in the District.

The next day I took a taxi over to Beltsville. I wanted a look at those ARB diaries in person.

As I was walking into the Beltsville facility I ran into Kevin Metheny. Kevin was the son of Terrell, one of the great P.D.s of our time. Kevin and I ended up next to each other in those nasty cubicles. We both were going through plastic trays full of the diaries. He could hear me groaning, and I could hear him piss and moan.

We also chatted about our stations. Kevin had to deal with Howard Stern in New York and Howard hated him, so Kevin kept his mouth shut and hoped somebody with enough clout could eventually fire the fucker. No such luck. Stern was too good on the air to fire. The rest of the story was he made the station way too much money!

I was finding so many fuck ups, I couldn't believe it! Every fuck up I found, I just threw on the floor. After four hours my floor was littered with diaries. I threw a fit over every mistake I found! I noted each one on my legal pad; I wanted my record to be evidence when I demanded that ARB reissue the book.

The President of ARB Radio, Rick the Dick, hated me because I called

him on every mistake I caught and over the years I caught many mistakes. Rick loved me more than ever after this incident. Kevin also threw a fit and didn't get any farther with Rick than I did.

When I reported back to Terry, I told him how many mistakes I'd found at Beltsville. The truth was if we had gotten all of the credit we had earned, the station would have beaten some of our competitors.

The shame was we didn't get the credit we deserved and couldn't get the book reissued. Part of the problem at Arbitron was the turn-over. The ladies that checked the diaries were mostly immigrants. English was not their first language; as a result, they made many, serious fuck ups.

The Ladies of Arbitron were confused by our name "The Loop" or WLUP. There was a Fine Arts station with calls that were similar to ours; as a result, they red lined our identifier and gave the credit to the Fine Arts station. At least they were familiar with those calls; ours were totally new to them.

No one at ARB had given them a heads up that we had changed calls and I.D. After my raving, they literally threw me out of Arbitron. It wasn't the first time. ARB and Rick the Dick denied everything, even after I showed him all of the mistakes!

I was so bummed that I told Terry it was time to start negotiating the sale of The Loop.

"Terry, ABC FM spent \$750,000 on this Spring book including TV spots and giveaways. Spittman at NBC spent over a million bucks, if you count going commercial free for the first three months.

"This is going to be very expensive and very difficult. Maybe we should start negotiating the sale of the station."

"Not yet. I've looked through your legal pad."

"Well, Terry, according to the book, it's our cume. Even taking all the errors into account, cume is still our biggest problem. Boss, as a programmer, I've done everything I can to raise the visibility. The truth is programming can't really affect cume much. Our quarter hour maintenance is great, but you have to have the cume in order to make hay out of our efficiency."

"We've got to do TV," Terry realized out loud. Terry had more guts than I did. He calmed me down and ponied up \$100K for TV during the

summer book. It was up to me to come up with a promotion to hold the audience through the summer. Fuck me with a bilge pump!

I.P. was in the wind. I knew he was going to leave; it was just a matter of when and when was now. He was going off once again to his first love—super high power AMs. He'd taught Larson everything he needed to know to maintain the equipment. The maintenance rules were in place from the beginning for the jocks and for Larson and by now they were ingrained habit.

One afternoon, Commander Bob was filling in for Spacey in middays. Spacey had taken a day off to take his sick mother to the doctor. I was in my office; all the other troops were out having lunch. Commander Bob hadn't been on the air for twenty minutes before he came running in to my office. "G.C.! G.C.! My eye is frozen open! I've frozen my eye open! I can't see! I can't read! You're gonna have to take the board! There's no one else here!"

I'm thinking, "OK, it's time to fire Commander Bob. My God, I've never jocked AOR, but it's my format so I guess I'd better give it a shot. Shit. What choice do I have? Ah, that's why The Commander is rolling The Pirate from the Emerson Lake & Palmer album. He had to have along cut to have time to get to my office."

"What?" I yelled. "What the fuck is going on with you?"

"G.C., I was gonna take a little snort and I missed my nose. The coke's in my eye! I can't see and I can't run the board. You gotta take it." Commander was twitchy and giggling and upset all at the same time. He followed me, running down the hall to the control room. I sat down at the board, knowing I had to get that piece of shit album off the air. I put in a cart from the format and turned to Bob.

"Show me what's in your pockets." I was steaming. The Commander pulled out a big roll of cash along with a vial of cocaine. I'd known he would fuck up sooner or later; it was only a matter of time.

I fired him on the spot. Before Job Rolling Papers started advertising with us, the only reason the record hypers came around at all, I believed, was to buy coke from Commander Bob, and now I had the proof.

He just picked up his money and his coke, put on his coat and flight helmet and said, "See you next time, Geoff." Many of the record hypers were down hearted. They'd lost their dealer.

Meanwhile, Irish, Tommy and O'Neil were having lunch together. When they heard The Pirate roll, they knew something was wrong. It was not on cart. It had to be rolling on the one turntable in the control room. Then they heard me talk at the :21 stop set.

"My God, he's awful!" Irish said.

"Stay here, guys. I'll go relieve him," O'Neil said. They were eating in the coffee shop on the first floor of The Hancock so it only took O'Neil ten minutes to get me off the board.

I explained to him what The Commander had done and that he was in the wind, never to darken our doorstep again. That was the only time I was on the air at The Loop except for promos, and not for many of those.

I mentioned that Irish was the Music Director. Between books we ran about 400 tunes; in other words, we loosened up a bit. Two weeks before the book we tightened the playlist back down to 300 tunes. There were 19 As; 29 Bs; 5 Cs (Hitbounds); around 100 re-currents that had a lunar rotation; and 150—250 oldies that were divided into categories.

D4s were the top oldies; D3s were the hard rock like Hendrix. We dropped the D1 and D2 categories when we realized that the engineering replaced the need to daypart for women.

We did our music very differently from other AORs. Irish had every tune on a card. For each shift, he would hand out a set number of cards that would cover the shift plus six extras. Every time you played a tune, you put your initials in one of the little boxes on the card. That way, the rotation stayed accurate with maximum separation. The jocks thought the regulation was a bit harsh. The other PDs and jocks in the market referred to me as the Program Dictator.

Thursday was "record day". On Thursdays, Irish and I would go behind closed doors with all the records he selected from the prior week's offerings. We hung a sign on the door which read "Enter and You Will Die" because we didn't want to be interrupted.

Occasionally we would invite one or two jocks in to hear a record and get their feedback, and from time to time a record promoter would slip a record under the door with one or two tunes marked for us to listen to and we would.

The outcome of Record Day was the new playlist for the coming week.

We also listened to the current As and Bs and decided if they needed to move up or down.

My favorite record promoter, Gary Smallmon, was so little that he was referred to in the industry as the 'portable promoter'. You could fit him in a suitcase. He was a handsome guy and he didn't lie; that was unusual for a record hyper. He worked for Epic.

Everybody suspected that the ABC PD took payola—golf clubs, trips and occasionally cash. They also knew that I didn't take anything at any time, so they would go to Irish. "Hey, Irish, you've got to get Geoff to play this tune for me." Irish always said he would do his best.

Irish would report on what was going on with the promoters sometimes. Once he even took me out to the Stairwell to Heaven and offered me the biggest bud of pot I'd ever seen. "You don't have to do anything for this. It's just a gift, honest, from the portable promoter." I didn't take the bud but Haze and Irish brought it to the apartment a few nights later and we all smoked it.

It was time to turn my attention to the summer book. The Haze had completed the initial music research. O'Neil continued to show his genius. And Irish was the best Music Director I'd ever met.

The Haze was a hit. Her numbers were incredible, even with all of the fuck ups at Arbitron. And Spacey in mid-days was good. But I needed to make changes in Morning drive—it was a let down. And I needed to get O'Neil out of afternoon drive; he was filling in until we could find someone and he wasn't that good a jock but he was a kick ass blade!

I got in a tape from a kid in Texas with a soft voice. I thought he'd make a good morning drive jock. But before he came, Marley from St. Croix dropped in.

Janie buzzed me with "Geoff, there's a woman here says you know her from St. Croix."

"Marley?"

"Yes, sir."

"I'll be right there!" I gave Marley a big hug. She found me in Chicago and I had an opening. And she was female! I asked her to come back to my office.

"So, Marley, you didn't believe me when I said I was going to Chicago.

You just thought I wanted to get into your pants, didn't you?" She gave me a wide, blue eyed look.

"You know, I really thought you were good on the Magic Christian and I really did want you for the Reef. And I think you might even be good enough for Chicago. Do you want to work for me and be the other half of morning drive?"

"Yes!" she said.

Before I put her on the air, O'Neal came into my office and sat down. This was one of those times when I knew I was going to get a lecture from him. "G.C., here's the thing we need to do. The guy that you've got doing overnights is a terrible disk jockey. I know that, and I know that's why you've got him on overnights.

"The thing is this. He's a great stand up comic! He's funny! Now, what I want to ask you is this. Is Marley a good jock? Can she run the board? And can she keep the overnight guy in line?"

"Well, yeah. She runs a tight board. And she's mean and scary, so I think, yeah, she can probably keep this guy in line."

"Well, forget that guy down in Texas. You've got a morning team!"

I moved Tommy to afternoons where he was great. The Irish's numbers were really good from 6-10PM; The Haze's numbers were great from 10P-2AM. That was the line up for the summer book and everyone was in place.

I knew I still had to do something about the weekends. The Spring book showed how weak the weekends were. I called Irish into my office and told him that I wanted to do a special show for the weekends. "I want to do a show that we could promote all week, Irish, and recycle audience into the weekends. Irish, you're the only one who could do it. We could call it 'Roots of Rock'".

"Tell me more, Geoff."

"It would be 90-second segments explaining how and where a selected set of artists and tunes came from. Each weekend we cover a different artist or two."

"I like it, G.C.," Irish responded. "Let's do it!"

Irish put his heart into every special and they were wonderful—full of artist insight, creative artfulness, and precise execution. O'Neil took pity



on Irish and helped him with the blade work. There was a lot of production value that went into the *Roots of Rock*, and it sounded terrific.

Three months later, Norm Patiz from Westwood One, a top syndicator, called me up and offered to buy the rights to '*Roots of Rock*'. I met Norm when I bought his *Motown Story*, a syndicated package for WBMJ in Puerto Rico.

Being a complete moron and thinking that the syndicator might screw up the concept, I said no. If I had done it, I'd probably be a rich man, but I just couldn't let go of control of a product that we were all so proud of.

The other thing I did to prop up the weekends concerned the religious programming that I owed the FCC, one hour a week. I called in Frank, my best intern, and laid out what I wanted him to do. He was very smart and put together the spiritual show called '*Heaven Is In Your Mind*'.

Each week, he would read versus from the Bible or the Koran or the Torah and other religious writings. Then in between, he played tunes that illustrated the messages. Frank asked if John, his friend and co-intern, could help him. I said yes.

The production load was so heavy for the station that the production room was running 24/7. Frank and John had to get up early Sunday mornings and produce "*Heaven is in Your Mind*" so it could roll at 8AM. I stole the name from a competitor in Dallas, but Frank did it better than it had ever been done there.

Frank and I became friends. He and his wife, Mart, were invited over from time to time. His wife was very witchy—like mine. Frank and I would roll one up and watch Clancey and Mart play Backgammon. We knew who ever got the first roll of the dice would win. It was amazing to watch them control the dice. Damn, were we glad to have married these women!

There was one other thing we needed to do before we were completely ready for the summer book. We instituted The Listener Advisory Group. LAG met every week so that the listeners could tell us what they would like and how we could change the station for the better. We changed the Advisory Group out every month to get as many different listeners involved as possible.

The listeners always said that we played too many commercials. What a surprise, but we also heard first hand what they were doing, and what they were thinking about, so we stayed on track with lifestyle trends.

Our way of dealing with the ‘too many spots’ complaint was to run ‘commercial free’ between 10PM and 2AM. Billy Robbins sold our ‘commercial free’ hours to Coca Cola. At the top and bottom of every hour, we punched off a cart of Leslie with the big voice saying ‘This Commercial Free Hour is a service of Coca Cola’. I’ve already mentioned that our sales manager was brilliant.

Once he heard this on the air, our Job Rolling Papers client demanded that he be included. We sold him the second and fourth hours; Coke kept the first and third hours. We promoted the hell out of ‘commercial free’.

In the late summer of 1977, Radio & Records held a convention in Dallas. At the Awards Dinner, I was seated at a table with a program director from Washington, DC and some other people I don’t remember.

They started carrying on about the porno that had ended up in R&R from our Loop launch promotion. I tried to explain that I never expected any porno from the listeners and I certainly never intended any of it to end up in print.

“One of R&R’s writers asked me to send some samples; it never occurred to me they would print them!”

I ate my dinner; told them both “fuck you very much” and left. I went to bed and flew home the next morning. I’d had enough of that bullshit.

One afternoon before his shift, Tommy came into my office. “The guys at ABC called me.”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah. They’d like me to go to work for them. They offered me \$600 a week.”

“What’d you tell them?” My heart was thudding. I didn’t want to lose him and I knew I couldn’t get money to match their price.

“I’m not leaving, Geoff. I’m not going to go to work for anybody but you.” I was so relieved! I got up and gave him a big hug. We both wiped our eyes.

I worked hard to give the jocks job satisfaction. Clancey had a rule. “Geoff, your job is to give everyone job satisfaction. It’s more important than pay.”

Every one of my Loop Troop was different and required a different kind of support. They all knew they could come to me to talk over any problems they were having.

O'Neil needed to hear how good he was. He was also the guy that straightened me out. O'Neil would tell me what was going on, all the gossip and who needed what. He also told me when I was fucking up with the programming or how I was handling people. The man was not only brilliant, he was fearless.

With Irish and The Haze working evenings, no one was surprised when they took up together. The Haze was in my office at least once a week, complaining about Irish's infidelities. Irish would also come into my office and tell me his troubles with The Haze.

"Haze, there is a great deal of pressure on the Irishman", I said. "You know that and I know that. You also know that he loves you very much and he always comes home to you at night." Haze nodded through shiny eyes.

"If you love him too, do your best to overlook his boyish activities and give him your best support." And then I reminded Haze how often she got hit on.

All the while I'm thinking, "Good god, I have to talk to Irish. He can't keep doing this to The Haze. He will lose her, and one of them will leave, and I don't want any disruptions in the air staff!" I knew that if I lost one of them, I might lose O'Neil too, because they were all so close to each other and loyal. Frankly, I couldn't lose any of them.

I would tell The Haze that I would tell Irish to keep his zipper zipped. But so many women hit on my male jocks and so many men hit on my female jocks, that there was a great deal of sexual pressure on everyone.

We'd sold a Friday night Happy Hour that rotated through twenty some odd bars. For the Loop staff, the drinks were free. A thousand or so listeners would show up at these events. That was the time our folks got the most pressure.

Sun Tzu had been coming to work with me for several months; still, not everyone understood it. "Do you think he's gay?" was one of the standard questions. Mims always came to my rescue and let everyone know that I couldn't be gay. She reminded everyone of Clancey's red-headed classic beauty.

Sun Tzu had his own ideas about who was good and who needed to be watched. Tzu liked Janie, the receptionist; he liked Mims and Iggie; he really liked the new intern from Northwestern that Mims was training to do Traffic. He also liked Irish, The Haze and O'Neil, but Tzu definitely did not like Fitzgibbons, the rich kid I had hired to help O'Neil in production. And he didn't like the male half of the morning show.

The production load had grown so much that we ran 24/7. I needed Fitzgibbons, but Sun Tzu followed him around all day, growling. Tzu would even stand in front of the production room door and not let him in!

One afternoon, Fitzgibbons tried to kick Sun Tzu. He missed, but I saw it. I grabbed the little fucker and told him that if I ever saw that again or if Sun Tzu was hurt in any manner I would take his head off and shit in his neck. The word got around and Mims and Iggie took over. If I wasn't in my office, Tzu began to hang out in their office.

## CHAPTER 68

# LOVELY RITA, METER MAID

“Weisman, we’re killer at quarter hour maintenance but I’ve got to get my cume up and only TV will do that. I don’t have much money; I only have \$100 grand.

“Terry doesn’t know that I’m down here. He thinks the meeting is tomorrow. I wanted to give you a heads up. I need to stretch this money out as far as I can. It’s the summer book, so the O&Os aren’t going to spend a shit load. We need to do a sneak attack. I would have given you more time, but I didn’t know a thing until today. Help me?”

“Cliff, you are a piece of work. I’ll do the best I can. Your jocks are fairly good looking. . . I’ll have something by tomorrow. Maybe. Now go away.”

“Jeez, Weisman, you’re so polite. Tomorrow!”

“Wait, Cliff. You’ve only got \$100,000? Do you realize that in this market it costs \$40,000 just to turn on the cameras?”

“Fucked again!”

“Maybe not. We’ll try and run a guerilla operation. Before you and the Boss come down in the morning, call me!”

She called me the next morning. “Cliff, we’re coming up.”

“Who’s coming up?”

“Never mind, we’re coming up!”

Ten minutes later, Janie called to announce ‘Weisman and friend’ were here to see me. Terry was sitting in my office. We were both waiting to find out what our \$100 grand would buy us. Sun Tzu was sleeping in the corner.

As was her way, Weisman burst into my office. “Alright, Terry, make your self disappear. You don’t want to hear any of this.” Terry looked around for a moment; I shrugged. Then he shook his head and slinked out.

“Geoffrey, this is Jason. He’s one of the best Director/Producers of commercials in town and he’s an old friend.”

“Hey, that’s the first time you’ve used my first name!”

“Yeah, well, don’t get excited. Here’s what we are going to do. We are ditching the Union. Jason is going to do the lighting and handle the camera. I’m going to do the make up.”

The shoot took all day. We did portrait shots. Weisman’s copy was brilliant. She even furnished the costumes. They were only grey turtle neck sweaters, but they worked like a charm.

After the shoot I slipped Weisman and Jason \$5k. I don’t know how they split it up, but that’s all they asked for. Jason did the post himself and Weisman did the buying. We ran only :20s and :10s. The spots did their job. Our cume jumped from 250,000 to 750,000!

The summer promotion was one of the dumbest I’d ever run and that includes ‘A Bic Pen’. Some guy had come to Terry with a truck load of boxes labeled ‘ESP Game’. Terry called me in and asked if I could use them. I excused myself and walked over to Billy’s office.

“Brother Robbins, here’s the deal.” I explained the situation and set Billy on to the guy with all of the games. We both went back to Terry’s office and Billy went to work on the dude. Terry kept looking from Billy to me, but stayed silent. The outcome was we got 400 games for giveaway and a \$4,000 contract.

And so the summer promotion was Test Your ESP. Here’s how it went: we ran a recorded promo at :02; the :06 was a verbal liner ‘Test our ESP, coming up in minutes’. The same liner aired at the start of the :21 stop set and another recorded promo ran at the :36 stop set. Going into the :51 stop set, we asked for a caller—could be the tenth or third or whatever.

The jock would put the listener on the air after the spots and ask the caller if they could identify what was on the card he was holding.

“I’m going to concentrate very hard; you do the same.” The symbol

could be a star, circle, house, man, square—it didn't matter. The listener always won. They were told if they had guessed correctly or not, but regardless, everyone got the game and a t-shirt.

OK, it was dumb, but it worked. We smoked ABC and WRXT. The Fox River AOR wasn't even in the running; now we only had to beat Spittman's NBC AOR.

Now that the record companies were paying attention to us, we continued to give something away every hour, either an album or a Loop t-shirt. Alright, we 'shared' an album or a t-shirt. God forbid we should have a contest.

## CHAPTER 69

# SAID THE BEGGAR TO THE THIEF

"Terry, I talked to Ken Camden last night. He knows that your father is already talking to a buyer and he suggests that we delay.

"Look, Terry, give me time to take down NBC. We can smoke them! Just give me the time and I'll make you and your father a bunch more money, OK?"

"Geoff, how much more time do you need?"

"At least another book, Terry."

"Will you need much more money?"

"I'll just need some trade.

"The ABC group has tried to hire me again. That little twerp that's the G.M. of the FM has offered me twice what you're paying me. But as soon as I told him that I would need control of engineering, promotion and music, he started crawl-daddyding like nobody's business. So don't worry." Terry upped my pay by \$10,000 anyhow.

I started walking down the hall toward the control room and Leslie accosted me.

"G.C., I know you're looking for a fall promotion. I think I have an idea."

"Les, we have a jock meeting next Monday, can you bring it up then?"

"Certainly!"

"I only want everybody to have a chance to have their say."

"OK, I'll wait." I thought it over for about a second.

"Naw, don't wait. Come on down to my office and tell me what you've



got in mind." I was curious. Spacey was always full of surprises; you never knew what was in that fuzzy man's mind.

"Sit down, Les. Now, what's up?"

"Geoff, when I worked with the Pistol, he ran a promotion called 'The Magical Mystery Tour'. The way it worked was to have listeners just write down the name of every Beatles' tune we played. You might make something out of that."

Damn straight, I could make something out of that! As soon as Les left, I pulled my yellow legal pad closer. I admit it; I had my pens and pencils lined up on my desk, but wait, it gets worse. I smoked and even my butts were lined up in my cut glass ash tray. My whole staff fucked with me about my compulsion for exactness.

I took about an hour to line out the fall promotion. It was a killer-diller. On the other hand I had to go through the bullshit jock meeting and create buy in. Not all jock meetings were bullshit, sometimes I actually learned something. Well, mostly O'Neil had something worthwhile to say, but occasionally one of the other dudes or dudettes said something of importance too.

I knocked on Terry's door and told him I had the fall promotion. "Let's get Billy in and line it out. I stole this whole thing from the Pistol in San Diego."

"Geoff, who or what is Pistol?"

"He's a P.D. in San Diego. Les gave me the idea. The Pistol is clueless as to how to run a promotion. He missed more than half of the promotion. Can we get Billy in here?"

"Sure, hold on."

There was a tentative knock on the door and Billy stepped in. In only a few minutes I outlined the promotion. It was really simple; all one had to do was write down every Beatles song played on The Loop. You could pick up your official WLUP entry folder at any of the White Hen Pantry stores or something like them.

Billy's outfit would sell the stores a sales package; the stores would then get a certain number of promos in addition to the spots they bought. The Official WLUP folders looked amazingly like an ARB diary. Of course I had to clear the folder with Arbitron, both by phone and by registered letter. Our average rate now was \$120 for a :30-second spot.

We got high visibility with the folder by distributing them in several retail locations. That took care of the *cume* part. Billy and his staff made money by selling the opportunity to be an official location to distribute the folders to 500 White Hen Pantry stores and other multiple location clients. Altogether, we had about 1200 outlets. That was the 'saleable' part.

We had two stand ups for counter space. There was the "Get your Official Loop Beatles Guide" sign and then there was the guide holder with the same signage, 'Win \$5000 and 2 MGBs', and pictures. At the bottom in small print was 'Official Rules are in your guide.'

The quarter hour maintenance was incredible. We had thousands of listeners writing down every Beatles tune we played between 6AM to 12AM. And if you missed a song, we pointed you to another daypart where we 'reviewed' the prior songs. There was the audience recycling.

By the end of the contest we had received some 300,000 entries. We were up 48 hours straight going through the entries. Over 500 of them were correct.

The rules said if there was a tie we would have a drawing. So we had a drawing and a lucky young woman got two 2 MGBs and \$5,000.

One more thing we did before the Fall book was underway was to institute the Teen Scam as soon as school started. No matter what agency buyers say, the first thing they look at is your 12+ number. The Loop needed to increase the 12+, so we advertised a competition in every high school newspaper. The best article appearing in a school newspaper about Rock Radio would get an endowment of \$5,000 for their paper. And, oh yeah, The Loop would be open for tours so junior reporters could see how a Rock station worked. We were swamped with high schoolers. Our Teen numbers jumped 40%.

When it was time for the book results to come out, Kathy, the office manager at the Chicago ARB office, called me up and said, "Before anybody else knows, you should get the news. Come on over!"

Billy and I went over to ARB and got the early numbers. I checked them carefully. Our 12+ was a 2.7. This was great news, but what made me happiest was the even balance between males and females. I had a 10.7 18-34 males; I had a 10.2 18-34 females! I knew I could do it—thank you, I.P.!

When we got back to the Handjob, we were whooping and hollering. Our little FM had won; we beat all of the big boys!

Clancey had goodies laid out when I got home. I was higher than a kite.

“My God, Clancey, we smoked the big boys! We beat ABC again and we finally beat NBC 2.7 to 2.5! And, baby girl, it only took seven months from sign on! Fuck’ em; we won! WLUP is now the number one AOR in Chicago!”

“I’m so happy for you, Geoff.” She was trying hard, but I knew something was wrong—the same dilemma was always there, just below the surface.

The value of the station had jumped from \$3 million to \$9 million. I got on the phone to Kenneth Camden and told him the story. He already knew it and had been on the phone to Terry’s dad. Terry’s father told Ken that he had already made a deal for \$5.2 million, and he felt that he could not back out of it.

Even with the offer on the table, it would still be several months before the station actually closed and changed owners. I wanted to stay on; Terry and I were a good team and we knew it. Also, there was a slim chance that Terry’s father just might change his mind. Terry told me that several of his father’s friends begged him not to sell. He now had a machine for minting money!

I liked Terry’s father. Early on, I’d complimented him on a grey suede jacket he was wearing. He told me if I got him to number one, he’d give me that jacket. When I saw him that December, he took off the jacket and gave it to me, a wide grin on his face.

## CHAPTER 70

# AMERICAN GIRL

“Geoff, I’ve decided to do afternoons for Tueber in Columbus. I’ll be back on the week-ends.”

“Queenly One, you’ve worked at Blair and now you work at ARB as the expert so think about all that you’ve learned! What the fuck?...over?”

“I’m bored with all this bullshit. I want to be back on the air, goddamn it!”

“Clance, could you give me a few minutes to digest all of this?”

“You already know I’m really tired of working for these jerks. You know, ‘fools to the right of me, jokers on the left and here I am, stuck in the middle without a radio station, GEOFFREY!”

“Look, I’ve been getting phone calls from J.D Gaston who owns a Class C in Tucson. He wants me to consult his rocker out there and I keep telling him that I have my hands full with The Loop. But you know what, Clance?”

“What, GEOFFREY?” She was angry and trying to hide it while I was dancing as fast as I could go. This is a woman who would not be denied.

“The old consultancy is still alive. How would you feel about taking on that station as a line exec and programming it through at least one book?” She’s just looking at me with those narrowed eyes and that half smirk. It made the hair on the back of my neck stand up; I’d been there before. But I think maybe she was intrigued.

“Look, he had that blond curly headed dude that programs KLOS out in Los Angeles consulting the station and he’s never gotten it above a 4.2.

I know you can do better than that. J.D. is really hard to deal with—he's cheap and he lies—but here's what we can do. I'll call him and tell him that we'll take the gig. We'll have him come up here for a two day seminar."

"He would let me have a free hand?"

"Yes, or you won't take the gig. Is that good enough?"

"I would be the PD and on the air?"

"Yes."

"That's good enough!"

"OK, we'll draw up a letter of agreement for him to sign."

I called J.D. the next day and invited him to stay with us in Chicago for a couple of days. I did tell him straight up that the two days would be a Seminar on how to program a radio station. Unbelievably, he came! J.D. arrived the next day. He really had to be in trouble!

Early on in Chicago I discovered Sam's Fine Wines two blocks from The Hand Job. Sam's was half a block down Oak Street. Sam and I hit it off right away. His was a high end wine shop and it so happened I knew a little about fine wines. A couple of weeks before J.D. showed up, Sam put two cases of '64 Margaux and a case of '70 Margaux away for us. Margaux is Clancey's favorite wine. He also set aside two cases of St. Julien and two of Beychevelle.

We put these in our little wine cellar—our 2<sup>nd</sup> bedroom with no heat and an open window to keep it cool. It's hard to have much of a cellar on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of an apartment building, but one does what one can.

J.D. was clueless as to programming a station, but he damned sure liked our St. Julien! We spent four days with him explaining how things worked. J.D. sat in Clancey's big wicker rocking chair with his back to the windows which looked out over the tennis courts, always with a glass of our very expensive St. Julien. Clance and I sat on our faux suede sofa.

We gave J.D. a legal pad and a pen so he could take notes. We took him through the ARB methodology and explained how it related to format structure. We explained demographics and psychographics and how they related to station content. Both Clance and I suspected that this went way over his head; he made no notes, but he did agree to give Clance a free hand and he met our price, including an apartment and a car.

We signed the agreement and he finally left.

For the Winter '77-'78 book, I gave away a huge stereo system plus a complete record library; 'All you need to do is write down the components in your diary'. Since there was an offer on the station, we decided not to spend money on TV. We pulled a 2.8.

## CHAPTER 71

# LONG COOL WOMAN

Clance did not go to Tucson until the end of January, '78. That winter was not like anything I had ever experienced. I had been in and out of Saginaw and Detroit during the winter of '73. That was the worst winter I'd ever lived through until Chicago. I thought '76-'77 was bad but it was nothing compared to '77-'78.

Terry had finally come up with a car for us, a new Mercury 2 door hardtop, black with a red interior. Clance and I called it 'Capricorn, the Pimp-Mobile'. On New Year's Eve it snowed six feet. The Mercury was in the garage and we didn't get the damned thing out until March!

It continued to snow all through January, but we finally got Clance off to Tucson. She had only two months until the spring ARB. I thought she would get her numbers up, but this was her first consulting job on her own. Lesson number one: never under-estimate Clancey Cliff. I was left behind, neck deep in snow.

A few days later, I got a letter.

*So I get on an air plane to Dallas, then another to Tucson. The whole trip I'm trying to think of new call letters that will work with a new name for a Tucson station. I know you programmed an AM in Tucson some years ago, but this is a new era. FM is King. I need an Identifier that will work with a rocker and it has to be cool, and it has to work with the call letters...I did it for you in Chicago so I know I can do it in Tucson! KLMT, The Limit, might work.*

*As in 'Take it to The Limit One More Time'. After all, it's our song, and The Eagles are way cool! Okay, I'll think about it.*

*The Tucson Airport isn't much but it looks like we can land without skidding off the runway. At least it isn't Washington National. My God, every time I land there I think I'll end up in a building or in the water. It looks like the worst that can happen here is I'll end up with a butt full of cactus stickers! Well, at least it's not iced over.*

*This whole place looks like it's under construction. It's all dust and dirt, and there you sit in our apartment, eating anything you want and watching cable. And here I am in the middle of a fucking desert, the temperature somewhere around 80 degrees in January...*

"Are you Ms. Cliff?" asked a small Mexican kid.

"Yeah, are you Ms. Cliff?" asked a much larger and more handsome Mexican kid. "We're here to pick you up. They said that we would know you right away. They said you were tall and red headed. So it's got to be you? Right?"

"Here's your car, Mrs. Cliff. Ain't it something? Want me to drive? Watch this!" The larger Mexican boy fired up the '63 Chevy. The car sounded great, and then it started to jump. The front end left the ground over and over.

"Stop that! Are you crazy?" asked Clance.

"No m'am, it's a low rider!"

"Are you kidding? This is my apartment? I can't even get my radio gear in this little space. What's J.D.'s phone number?"

Knowing J.D. as I did, I should have known he would do his best to cheap out. He gave Clance a '63 Chevy low rider to drive and an apartment about the size of our second bedroom. Clancey didn't bitch; she just moved in and went to work in her Chevy hotrod!

When Clance got J.D. on the phone, a new apartment was agreed to. In the meantime, he moved Clance into a hotel suite.

The smaller Mexican kid, Beto, showed her how to drive the low rider. Chuey became her guide around Tucson. Clance liked to drive, so Chuey was the navigator.



The thing about Clance's driving was that she only had two speeds, on and off, just like I.P.! 'On' was as fast as it would go and 'off' was stop. Chuey begged to be replaced—he was scared shitless and started using his seat belt. At 110 mph Chuey's asshole kept pulling rips in the roll-and-tuck upholstery.

Clance walked into the station the first day and found her office. She sat thinking about new call letters for at least two hours and decided on KII.O. 'Kilo' would be the basic identifier. '2.2 pounds of hot rock'.

Chicago was almost at a standstill from all the snow, but The Loop was flying high. Terry was no longer a joke; he was now *the* Chicago radio stud. Our Mediastat was showing us the #1 AOR in the market and all I'm thinking about is, "How do I get my wife back home?" I missed her terribly. Now I knew how she felt while I was putting in 16 to 18 hours a day 24/7 and she was alone.

"Fuck a bunch of Tucson," I thought. "I mean, I've been there, done that! Remember The Unusual 58? Alright, should I let her figure it out or should I help? Jeez Louise, don't be a fool, Geoff. She named The Loop. The best thing to do is just let her call all of her own shots. For Christ sakes, she called most of my shots and she was always right!"

So to get her home, I formed a plan. All the time in Chicago when Clance was home I kept getting hit on. I would make her jealous. I would take some of the girls up on their offers. OK, men are dumb and mostly don't understand women. Have I mentioned that women know a lot more about gender relations than men?

Clancey called one night and said, "I've got a logo and applied for great calls, Geoff. But now I need a real staff. You know lots of young jocks. Can you help me out?"

"Hi, Baby Girl! I miss you already!"

"Well, I've heard you already have some new friends. The Haze does stay in touch."

I thought, "Oh fuck, I'm already busted!" It pissed me off that she wanted to leave me so here was a way to pay her back, but I didn't *really* want to get caught. What I wanted was for her to miss me and want to come home!

"Oh, my Darling, you know how they gossip at the station. Now, for some staff members..." Change the subject immediately, I thought.

"How about you sending Frank, your intern? He's smart; he's a good jock and a damn good blade."

"OK, I will. And I'll also send his Greek sidekick. He's good too. And call Tommy Thompson. He's the PD at KILPN in El Paso. He's got a kick ass afternoon driver named Oz Garza. And he'll know some other really good people."

"OK, sounds good."

"Also call Right-On at The Q. He was in Tucson before. He's getting a little long in the tooth but he can rock! Both of them will come to KILO."

"OK, Geoff. Now how about telling me about your new friends?"

There was a cutting edge in Clancey's voice. I'm thinking this jealousy strategy isn't working. I'm fucked!

Clancey continued, "For example, why don't you tell me about Barbara?"

"Oh, darling, she's just cuts my hair!"

"At our apartment...in her nightie? And then I believe there's a Michelle. You know, the marketing director at Jovan Cosmetics?"

"Clance, she's a client!" I'm sweating like crazy and realizing I was totally caught and there was no way out. Worse, Clancey wasn't finished.

"Further, Mr. Cliff, what about the model and the girl that can throw her hip out of place? I'll bet they're a lot of fun."

"Baby, I really can't wait for you to come home. Just do a great job at KILO. I know you're operating as a line exec through this book, but then you can come home."

"Un huh. Watch yourself, mister."

"Listen, use the old stereo contest and you'll kill 'em. You know, that promotion does everything you want it to do. It raises your visibility; it's a great quarter hour maintenance vehicle; you can recycle the audience and it's easy to sell."

"Are you done, Geoff?"

"Yes."

"Then fix your problem and call me at 9PM each night. I may or may not be in, but you call. Goodbye." Click.

I rolled over on the waterbed and the beautiful Michelle slipped those

wet lips over my erection. Believe me, I did not have a woody while I was talking to Clance, but it didn't take the Jovan marketing director long to fix that. Through that whole phone call with Clance, Michelle had been masturbating.

Oz, now one of Clance's new jocks, showed up within two weeks. He was as excited as Clance about the new station, the call letters, everything. He knew a lot of people in the Southwest. One of them was the artist that designed the Eagles album covers. "Hey, would you like me to call him about doing a logo for KII.O?" Oz asked Clance.

"Let me call him," Clance said. "Tell him who I am and to expect my call."

The next morning she called the artist and talked with him about doing the station's logo. "This station is going to be a phenomenon and it needs a phenomenal logo. Let me get with you to talk about it, OK? If you like what I'm planning, I want you to design the logo."

I have no idea how she did it or what she said, but the artist bought in and even did it for no charge! I guess I don't want to know how she did it. My logo for The Loop was hot shit, but, my God, the logo for her station in Tucson was incredible!

By March Clance had her crew put together and the promos were running for the stereo promotion. It was close to the same methodology we used with the Beatles contest: 'Pick up your official guide at the 7-11 store and other outlets. Write down the stereo components that we announce every hour and, when we give you the secret phone number, just call and read off the components from your guide. You may own the hottest sound system in town! Oh, by the way, if you miss a piece of gear don't worry. We'll be reviewing for you.' Clance was recycling audience to other day parts just as I'd taught her.

Clance and I continued to talk at least every other night. She was totally focused on making the Tucson station rock. As far as she was concerned, if I wanted to screw around, too bad. She had something to prove.

One night, the overnight jock on KII.O passed out on ludes and for about 30 minutes all the listeners heard was the pit-tschh, pit-tschh of the needle hitting the end of a Beatles album.

Clance got a call from J.D., climbed into her jeans and drove to the

station as quickly as she could. By the time she got there, Oz had already broken the big glass door leading into the control room, pushed the comatose jock out of the way and put on a Pink Floyd's Dark Side of the Moon.

"Oz, what's going on?"

"The control room door was locked and I knew I needed to do something so I grabbed a towel and put my fist through that door." Clance knew he was hurt.

"Let's get you to the emergency room. Frank is on his way in. The album will last long enough for him to get here."

J.D. wanted to subtract the cost of a new door from Oz's paycheck but Clance would not allow it. "If you want to subtract something, take it from the jock that passed out. Oh. Too bad. He's fired."

There was a problem with KILQ's FM antenna. The antenna was located at the top of one of the mountains just outside of Tucson. The mountain wasn't that high, but it was high enough so that you didn't need a full 1500' stick, and it was where all the other radio stations' antennas were, up a winding narrow dirt road with plenty of switchbacks.

Clance called I.P. to help with the antenna; he called Tom Sillerman—reportedly the best FM antenna guy I.P. knew. His company, ERI, had built the six-bay in the first place. Clance was always curious about what made things work, so when Sillerman got to town, she rode in the jeep up that scary road with her Chief Keith and Sillerman. At night the road was even scarier. When they got to the transmitter shack, everyone jumped out onto solid ground before the jeep's dust settled.

Sillerman did climb up that sucker and tuned the antenna. Whatever the problem was, it was now taken care of. Going down that road, once the sun came up, was a much easier trip.

As The Haze was ratting me out, Frank was feeding me what was going on with Clance. She was getting her own back. There were plenty of opportunities but not much time, so she was selective. As I say, men are dumb. Never try to out smart your wife.

Back at the station, Clance reported to the staff that the antenna problem was fixed. The reports I got back from the station were that this six-foot red head with long curly hair, a flinty gaze and steel in her voice scared the shit out of all the Mexicans on her staff.

Only Frank and John knew who she was. They did make it a point to explain to the other troopers that she really was a good person. I think Clance may have noticed it too and tried to soften her image. After all, she's the one that taught me to understand each trooper and know what they needed. But she was in a different culture and it took a while to really understand it.

The stereo promotion really started a buzz. Pat Goff, the guy that ran the top electronics retail store in town, lined up the stereo components that everyone lusted after and few could afford. The listeners wanted this prize badly and everyone was playing along with the game. Goff had in store traffic like never before, everyone trooping through to see the stereo components that they were trying to win.

The music was right on the money; the jocks were trained; the sound wasn't bad; the promotion was hot...and the book was underway!

## CHAPTER 72

# YOU SAY IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY

My troops gave me a party for my birthday. It wasn't unusual for them to roll into my apartment without notice. They all came in hooting and hollering. Iggie had a hand full of joints.

Iggie was one of those people that had no idea of personal space. She would get within two inches of your face and talk to you. As you tried to move back, she would move with you. It was disconcerting.

The Haze proudly presented the traditional birthday cake—dark chocolate cake and frosting with strawberries. I was amazed, but later found out that Clancey had called The Haze and asked her to bake it for me.

When I offered to get some wine from our little cellar, out popped bottles of Margaux, gifts from the troops. Trinny had been married that fall to a large Irish barkeep and she brought the hard liquor. O'Neil was the bartender. When everyone had a glass, and Iggie had passed out all the joints, O'Neil turned to Irish—the designated gift giver.

The best present the guys got me was a plaque from Led Zeppelin. The band thought it was cool to have The Stairwell to Heaven!

The Loop Troop had gotten me a beautifully carved Peruvian gourd. They thought it was a great joke thinking that I wouldn't know that Peru was the source of blue flake coke and that I didn't know about the Stairwell to Heaven.

Only Spacey knew for sure that I knew and apparently he never let on. Of course I knew about the Stairwell to Heaven—had known for over a year.

The door to the stairwell was just *outside* the front door of the station. When I say The Loop Troop was flying high, I wasn't kidding. I knew my guys were going out to the stairwell to snort up or smoke a joint. I also knew it was not in the station's or my best interest to bag any of my people on this. They all knew that I would fire anyone I caught doing drugs *inside* the station.

The Loop's crew was the best in the market, even if they had all come from medium market stations. These people were good; several of them were brilliant like O'Neil and Irish and I didn't want to lose any of them.

Two days later was The Loop's First Birthday Party. We invited listeners to a free concert with Van Halen at a venue that held 2,000 but there were more people than we could fit. Van Halen had just released their first album and they did the show for free because it gave them a lot of exposure.

I sat up in the second tier and just watched everyone have a great time. They put on their usual amazing show—David Lee Roth sprayed the first few rows with champagne, making it look like an ejaculation. Eddie and Alex had a great time too—they were glad to be there.

The jocks were stars. They were all there; we'd put a tape together with Irish which ran on the air and in the venue when Van Halen wasn't playing. Van Halen did three sets. Phil had given Terry nine months to make the radio station work. We had done it!

I was hit on so many times I couldn't believe it. There was a model that was two inches taller than me. The girl who could throw her hip out of place was there. She hit on me, O'Neil and Fitzgibbons. Fitzgibbons is the only one who took her up on it.

Fitzgibbons was at the party with his girlfriend, a beautiful Eurasian. The next night, Fitzgibbons' girlfriend set his clothes on fire and started throwing them out of his fourth floor apartment window. To cap it off, she set the interior of his BMW 5 Series on fire. I think you could say she was pissed.

## CHAPTER 73

# ONE TOKE OVER THE LINE

Clance decided to stay in Tucson at least until the spring ARB came out. She did not just use the Stereo promotion during the spring book; she also used two other Loop promotions; the Teen Scam and the Listener Advisory Group.

I.P. did the best he could for Clance's sound in Tucson, but J.D. was a total cheap skate and wouldn't come up with any money. I begged I.P. to help her and he did it even though he wanted nothing to do with J.D.

Tucson's ARB came out in late June. Clancey had taken KILQ from a 4.2 to a 10.4 in two months! The Top40 in town that had dominated the ratings for years also scored a 10.4. This was the first time anyone had even come close to their numbers.

Revenues went through the roof and Clance went to Beltsville to look over the diaries. You always learned something from these trips; you just didn't always know what it was going to be. This time, it was "Catch Your Competition Cheating". Number one in the market is not a bad place to be. Tied for Number 1 isn't bad either, unless the other guy didn't deserve to be there.

On the border, the Mexican stations all used phrases for their identifiers. Some of the most popular Mexican stations across from Tucson were Radio Fiesta, Radio Rancherita, and La Grande Cadena. Arbitron didn't recognize, measure or list the Mexican stations, so there was no one to catch the sleazy competitor when they listed all of these phrases as their own. Until now.



For years, any listening reported to those Mexican stations went to the Top40, KILO's competitor! There must have been five or six rating points of listening that were mistakenly applied to the old time Top40 on the US side of the border.

Clance was livid! She got back to Tucson and called Arbitron who sent the regional manager to see her. He had been in the area for years and didn't want any waves. He explained the rules to Clancey that actually allowed the sleazy competitor to get away with the practice of claiming credit for Mexican stations' identifiers. And he explained that it would happen again as long as they used the phrases once an hour on the air.

Now that they were caught, the competition began whispering the phrases once an hour, under their station promos. You could hardly hear them, but it was enough for Arbitron to bless the underhanded practice.

The daily paper got wind of the story. In their article, the competitor accused Clance of being on a 'witch hunt'. The article was more favorable to the home town long time station than to this newly arrived consultant.

Meanwhile, the Haze told Clancey about how I strutted around the station, bragging on the Queenly One pulling a 10.4 in Tucson within two months. Haze also reported that I had a girl on both arms. I must admit, I did strut about the station but the part about two girls was not true. I was wild with pride. My girl! What a great job she had done!

Clancey would be coming home soon; it was now time for me to rid myself of the young ladies that I had used to try making my beautiful Clance jealous. The model and most of the others had not been difficult to run off. I'd told all of the girls that Clance was coming home soon and that was that. "Clance is my wife and I'm sorry but, as I told you from the beginning, I was only trying to make her jealous," I explained.

Well, that didn't work with Barbara or the cosmetic executive, Michelle. Although Barbara was only a hair stylist, she had a pretty face, a perfect body and a quick mind. She was only 5' tall and she didn't mind sharing. She had a married friend that was voluptuous. I occasionally found them both in my bed. Barbara's pussy, although wet and slick, was so tight that when I pulled out it actually made a sucking sound. The other thing about Barbara was that she was a quick comer, two or three thrusts and she had made it! Her married friend, on the other hand, liked to go

and go. By the time the married friend had gotten off, Barbara was ready to go again. The difficult part with Barbara was that she was a clinger. I hated that.

Michelle was the most difficult to let down as lightly as possible. She was a nice young woman and very beautiful, but she wanted a husband. Not a chance. This was hard to explain, even though I had said all of this at the beginning.

Michelle had an incredible complexion, without a blemish; eyes that were almost dark honey and a lush body. The other notable fact was her lack of body hair. She didn't have to shave her legs and there was very little hair around her cunny. I told her to find a nice Jewish boy that would be acceptable to her family. Jeez, that brought on the water works.

But before Clance got back, in the words of I.P., I shucked those hides! That's I.P.

Clancey finally came home! Her birthday is July the 8<sup>th</sup> and I had a birthday present ready; on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July, we renewed our vows. I love this woman with all my heart, even though I'm a considerably fucked up guy. Still, I wanted to bind her to me as tightly as possible.

Terry gave Clance and me a present—a first class stateroom on the QEII cruise for two weeks in the Caribbean. I left O'Neil in charge. We had a great time. We sat at the Captain's table and enjoyed our second honeymoon in the same sea where we'd spent our first one.

We'd driven to Miami so of course we had to drive back. As we started rolling into Chicago, Clance was the first to mention that it felt like things were closing in on us. I felt the same way. We pulled into a White Hen Pantry with a pay phone and I called O'Neil to find out if the book was out yet. "Yes," he said. "We pulled a 2.8 and we're still number one." I was one very happy man. I had the number one rocker in the market and I had my baby back.

The station still wasn't ready to close. I talked to Terry and it wasn't even close to closing. Again I begged Terry to talk to his father about breaking the contract. The station was now worth much more than he'd agreed to. Ken also tried, but Terry's father wouldn't budge.

So I had to go through the fall book. Clance made a deal with J.D. to come back to Tucson once a month for \$1,000 plus expenses. She also

picked up some more clients for the consulting company. She had a station in Oklahoma City and became the official consultant for the Radio and TV department of a well known university.

J.D. taught Clancey the Consultant's number one lesson—get paid up front. He stiffed her on the last six months' of payments.

I went through the fall '78 ARB book blindfolded. I really didn't pay attention. We pulled another 2.8. I did the same thing for the '78-'79 winter book. Terry and I had run a Mediastat just to see what we were going to get in the winter book. We usually ran one before every book so we had some idea of what to expect in the ARB. Mediastat was always on the money. It told us we would pull a 3.0 in the winter book and we did.

Our last book was spring, '79. The station finally sold for \$5.2M, the second highest price ever paid for an FM. It was worth more like \$9M! The deal was done and the closing was scheduled for April '79.

The station closed and now had a new owner. It closed so close to the start of the spring book that there was little time for the new owners to change anything. Everything that Terry and I and the Loop Troop had put in place stayed in place.

In the spring book, WLUP pulled a 6.0. It was a hell of a ride.

I.P., Terry and I are all still good friends. Terry and I will continue trying to find another station to buy. There's an FM in Albuquerque that looks good. I.P. promised to rebuild it. Nowhere like Sandia Peak to put an antenna and transmitter shack.

This time I'm going to put Clance in afternoon drive. Fuck it. It's only Rock and Roll.

## EPILOGUE

Kenneth Alexander Camden told I.P. and me that several years ago a fellow with \$2 or \$3 million was considered a millionaire; now they're just middle class. This was after Ken had made his \$50 million.

I.P. and I are middle class. I.P. is still working; with his ability with languages, he works all over the world. He speaks fluent Spanish, Portuguese, Italian and French and he has a bit of German. I.P. kept up with the digital communication revolution so he's still in high demand. He also married into one of the First Families of Mexico and has a large and loving family.

Ken is still as vigorous as always and still works, mostly as an expert witness in communication trials. He spends his time between his homes in Maryland and Bermuda.

Sean Grabawski became very rich and is a happy man.

Penny married several times and still raises her horses.

O'Brian became one of the top programmers in the country; his pal Irish programs several streams of music at one of the satellite radio stations.

I don't know what ever happened to The Haze, but I hope she's having a great life.

Claude and Barbara Hall are still our great friends. Claude still writes every day and does an internet column weekly. I.P., Clance and I get together as often as possible with the Halls.

The Traveling Salvation Show has done alright. Believe it or not, radio people tend to be good people

## THE RADIO GYPSIES

Clance and I live quietly deep in Texas. We have a small Villa in Southern Italy. Clance promised to retire, but she bought an advertising agency instead. We've been married for 33 years. We are more in love now than when we spent all that time on Mona Island.

Sun Tzu? Well, he lived a long and heroic life. When Clance and I lived in Mission Viejo, CA we picked up another stray; a beautiful long haired, green eyed girl named Good Joss. Clance and I didn't know that there was a problem with coyotes around the golf course where we lived. Sun Tzu, trying to protect our Joss, took on a female coyote. The coyote was cut up badly, but Sun Tzu lost the fight. Yes, I miss him to this day. Sun Tzu was a great friend.

So there you have it. Six months is a Rock&Roll life time!

*The Radio Gypsies* recounts real and not-so-real stories about the turbulent and free-wheelin' radio wars of the 1970s as seen through the eyes of two programming consultants. These were the years when FM gained dominance and radio was truly creative and competitive.

It's a comical read about the real sex, drugs and rock and roll that happens on the other side of the microphone. It also recounts the triumphs and disappointments, which exemplify the Baby Boomers' early adult years. Ride along with Geoff and I.P. in an insane, rollicking adventure that takes them from Waco to Chicago, from London to Swaziland, and to the heights of the most competitive radio battles and markets.

It's written for those of us who lived through radio's most exciting years, who mark their youth with the tunes and jocks of the '70s, and for the young men and women still doing their best to get entertainment and music to their listeners, whether terrestrial, satellite or online.

*The Radio Gypsies* is J. Blackburn's third novel, but the first one offered for publication. He is a Vietnam veteran, and spent almost forty years in the radio business, in programming, management and consulting.

Blackburn put the legendary Loop on the air in Chicago in 1977. He owned and operated several radio stations for several years, selling the last one in 1988. Blackburn retired from radio in 1991 following a neck injury resulting from martial arts, which he practiced since he was fifteen, in military school.



Blackburn continues to write and collect art, and lives deep in Texas with his wife of thirty-three years Chancey and their cats.

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